



ALEXANDER PUSKIN (1799-1837)
VLADIMIR NABOKOV (1899-1977)

Ode III.30: Puskin, “that god before whom all Russian authors bow” (according to Isaiah Berlin), published in 1836, then translated into English by Nabokov (best know as the author of *Lolita*) in 1944.

“No hands have wrought any monument; no weeds
will hide the nation’s footpath to its site.
Tsar Alexander’s column it exceeds
in splendid insubmissive height.



“Not all of me is dust. Within my song,
safe from the worm, my spirit will survive,
and my sublunar fame will dwell as long
as there is one last bard alive.

“Throughout great Rus’, my echoes will extend,
And all will name me, all tongues in her use:
The Slav’s proud heir, the Finn, the Kalmuk, friend
of steppes, the yet untamed Tunguz.

“And to the people long shall I be dear
because kind feelings did my lyre extoll,
invoking freedom in an age of fear,
and mercy for the broken soul.”

Obey thy God, and never mind, O Muse,
the laurels or the stings: make it thy rule
to be unstirred by praise as by abuse,
and do not contradict the fool.