

Genius.

Every year a new genius swims into view. This year it is Brodsky (and Roth but more of him later). Also Platonov but he will require more study as his mixture of irony and obedience within Stalin's machine gives a totally original perspective from the inside.

Of course there are geniuses and geniuses and this whole definition is wonky. However the unique genius, in language, not only practically creates the language but brings it to its highest form (Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Pushkin). But there are the follow up geniuses (I don't like geniie it sounds like out of a bottle- which perhaps it is!). To mention only the current influences on me- Rilke, Mandelstam, Tsvetaeva, Auden, Mishima, Proust, Celan, Ahmatova, Radnoti, Lorca, Eliot, and this is not exclusive. They are not as rare as hens teeth. Some are very longstanding like Proust and Valery, James and Eliot, Holderlin and Keats.

Brodsky is the least contrived of all. Like Auden he brings a natural flow to hide his ever-pressing concerns. It is wonderful with these Russians to hear a defense of religious consciousness again. But a consciousness full of intellectual precision and cultural concern. From here we can defend the autonomous individual and not be lessened or traduced by the view of man as a complex chemical machine. That the autonomy is chemical at the DNA level only tells us we are made up of molecules which we knew 2000 years ago, now we know with more precision how it works. Then you put it into the world and that interaction that feedback creates a soul. Where does this come from you ask? We are forced into a seraphic order as Being and Mind interact with Time. Time changes the molecular configuration into an eternal image. What more succinct definition of Christianity than a typical throw away line of Brodsky "a tribute to guilt and our deliverance from it". He is the most aphoristic of authors, each one like Wilde, opening up new seams of exploration.