

both Mayakovsky's blessing and his curse. Mayakovsky killed himself in 1930, and his writings were later coöpted by the state, who many believe (his daughter included) was responsible for his death. Daniil Kharms only saw two of his adult poems published during his lifetime; Symbolist poet Alexander Blok died of a heart condition after Lenin refused to allow him to leave the country for medical treatment fearing he would speak against the state.

In an interview with Alice Notley in this issue, we are reminded that for many contemporary American writers there may be a kind of social amnesia. She says, "it's not like we're standing in front of that building for two years waiting for news of a son. Nobody's lives are very hard, but on the other hand everyone acts as if they are."

Speech is still not free, contemporary Russian poet Ilya Kaminsky reminds us of this in his poem, "We Lived Happily During the War,"

*in the street of money in the city of money in the country of money  
our great country of money, we (forgive us)  
lived happily during the war.*

Toni Morrison says it is the job of the free to free others. We can do this by supporting other artists and those others working for change. We need to do this now more than ever, we need to do it today. We here at the Henry Miller Memorial Library are doing it now. Join us.

Hot frogs,  
Maria Garcia Teutsch

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