

## POETESS ELISAVETA BAGRYANA

motherhood, love and a passion for travelling—run like leitmotifs through the poems in her collections "Sailor's Star" (1932), "Man's Heart" (1936), "Five Stars" (1953), "From Shore to Shore" (1963) and "Counter Point" (1972) and through the poems published in anthologies and periodicals.

After the revolution of September 9th, 1944, new subjects, characters and feelings appeared in her work. The most characteristic themes of these works are: the awareness of the justness of the cause for which the sons of Bulgarian women fought in the Patriotic War (1944-1945), the

struggle for peace, socialist construction, Georgi Dimitrov's contribution to the new life, love for the Soviet Union, the moral image of the Soviet people and the Soviet woman.

Bagryana has also written wonderful poetry for children. Some of the poems have been translated by the well-known poetesses Ana Ahmatova, Desanka Maximovic and Marina Tsvetaeva. Her works have been published in many languages. She was the first to be awarded the gold medal of the International Poetry Association. She was given the Dimitrov Prize in 1950 and the Georgi Dimitrov Order in 1963.

POETESS Elisaveta Bagryana's 80th birthday (she was born on April 29th, 1893 in Sofia) was a fresh occasion to evaluate her work which has for nearly six decades been like a symbol of the "eternal youth" of Bulgarian poetry.

Her first poems, published in 1915 in the Contemporary Thought Magazine were considered to be a "new event" in the literary life of Bulgaria. Her first collection of poems "The Eternal and the Holy" (1927) came as a confirmation of her original talent and of the strength of her poetic insight, which, years later, was termed "symptomatic" of the further development of Bulgarian poetry. She brought new elements into it, imbuing it with a fresh and simple lyrical atmosphere and her own fiery and passionate poetic temperament, given it a greater breadth of outlook and sweeping away all conventional practices in her treatment of the lyrical character. In Bagryana's work this character is embodied in a woman who is free of the centuries-long prejudices, true to the end to her yearning for love and steadfast in her striving to overcome philistine norms and restrictions. The women in Bagryana's poems are, however, not abstract beings but warm flesh and blood, firmly bound to their native land.

Her principal subjects—women.

### TWO POEMS BY BAGRYANA

## FROM AN UNWRITTEN DIARY

*I've got everything I need  
to live:  
a home, modest, but my own,  
I have no debts...  
I am loved by my relatives,  
and friends, I hope,  
and even by people I don't know.  
I am in good health,  
considering my age.  
Sometimes I travel—  
perhaps not as much as I'd like to,  
perhaps not where I would like to,  
but so many others  
haven't got even that.  
I have plenty of time.  
On the face of it*

*there's nothing  
standing in the way  
of my art.  
But more and more often of late  
my heart's been gripped by sorrow,  
my power and will  
are paralyzed...  
I do my best  
to fight them back  
with my reason,  
but the sleepless nights...  
No, no!  
I am not unhappy,  
but to be unhappy,  
and not to be happy  
are two different things...*

## ABROAD

*I am going back to my hotel alone.  
The river of men has flown away,  
and the sharp staccato of my heels  
is echoing along the street  
in the quiet night.*

*Now, when the hours are short as  
seconds,  
I can cross the hushed-up streets  
wherever I want.  
The yellow traffic-lights are blinking  
at 'Jaguars', and 'Citroens' and me.*

*Why do I feel in a state of weight-  
lessness,  
like a ship out of control,  
drifting in outer space?  
'Here, no one expects of me  
devotion, courage, or sacrifice.'*

*Hence, perhaps, this peculiar sense  
of emptiness and uselessness,  
in spite of all the brilliance, beauty, art,  
in spite of all the kindly people,  
and the azure of the southern skies.*



# A Story Of The Living Clay

IN the Troyan district of Bulgaria the art of pottery, in the modern sense of the word, developed some 150 to 200 years ago. The town of Troyan lies in the most beautiful part of the Balkan Range. Whole generations and families have handed down their skill and talent to sons and grandsons, new mastercraftsmen replaced the old and the pots hardened in the fire survived the men who made them.

The story of the potter Stoyan Yovkov is very much like a fairy-tale. Once upon a time there lived an old man... his grandfather. He is still alive and still working.

These old master-craftsmen seem to have a magic touch, sitting like conjurers behind the small, turning wheel, around which their forefathers sat, too. The wheel turns, kept in motion by foot treadle. It looks as though the potter does nothing in particular, yet the clay seems to come to life as its form undergoes different transformations obedient to the potter's hands. There is indeed magic in this craft: a few routine movements, so it seems to the observer, and the pot is ready.

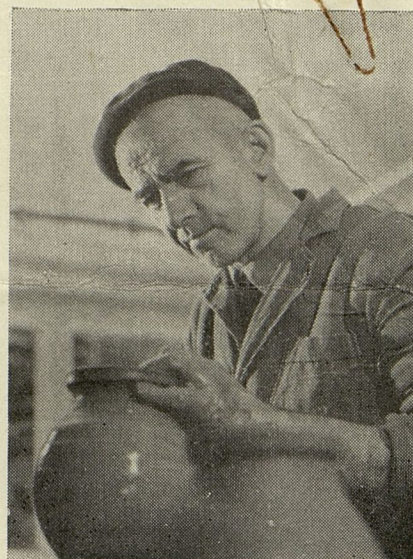
Stoyan Yovkov studied pottery under his father. After the people's victory on September 9, 1944, the skilled craftsman taught pottery at the Troyan school of ceramics. For many years he worked as a teacher as well as a potter, cultivating in his students the values of Bulgarian art, the sense of genuine beauty as it is found incarnate in the works of the old self-taught master-craftsmen of yore....

Stoyan Yovkov is now a pensioner but he continues to work at the Society of Masters of the National Arts and Crafts. His home in Troyan is visited by many. There is a room in this house, in which visitors tend to linger. It is filled with all kinds of clay articles, by himself, his father and his son Nikola, a student at the Nikolai Pavlovich Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia. One is indeed astounded by the wide range of their works! Heavy wedding jugs out of which wine was poured some 150 years ago, old, gaily-coloured milk jugs, small flat pots with spouts for Troyan brandy, dinner plates alive with the colours of summer flowers. There are also scores of new articles made at this house, the wonderful products of the master-craftsman Stoyan Yovkov. One can witness the revival of the fine old tradition and sense it not only in the form, but in the deli-

cate lines incised with horn, in the 'drops' and 'feathers' chiselled with an innate feeling for rhythm and colour. One can discern it in the colour schemes reflecting the greens of spring, the gold of summer and orange tint of the apple-ripe Bulgarian autumn.

Stoyan Yovkov's art is, known throughout Bulgaria. The skilful introduction of new, modern traits into old patterns and his contribution to the creation of new ones have earned his art wide recognition. The father, son and grandson have several exhibitions to their credit, held in Sofia and other towns in the provinces. Their art meets everywhere with the public's appreciation and praise. Stoyan Yovkov was twice awarded the first prize at the traditional fair of the national arts and crafts held in Oreshak, a village near Troyan. He won a gold medal at the national fair held in the picturesque town of Koprivshitsa in the Sredna Gora Mountains. His works were shown at exhibitions in Moscow, Tashkent, Faenza, Prague and elsewhere. The Ethnographic Institute and Museum in Sofia have bought two of his collections.

For his outstanding achievements, the master-craftsman was twice awarded the Cyril and Methodius



Potter Stoyan Yovkov

order, and last year the Troyan potter was among the delegates to the Second Congress of Bulgarian Culture....

There have been potters at all times, everywhere, but there is something unique and inimitable in the art of every one of them. Among the works of Bulgarian potters everyone can easily distinguish those of Stoyan Yovkov, which stand out with their truly original qualities and beauty.



Iva Dzaniki of Italy  
at Slunchv Bryag

## GOLDEN ORPHEUS IN 1973

The International Festival of Pop Songs—the Golden Orpheus—took place this year, as usual, from June 3 to 7 at the Bulgarian holiday resort Slunchev Bryag on the Black Sea coast. The interest in the event, which has gained wide popularity at home and abroad, was tremendous. The Festival concerts were broadcast not only over the Bulgarian Television, but also by a number of foreign TV and Radio companies, and were recorded by gramophone companies and shot by film studios.

During past years' record of unpeaceable organisation of the Festival its international prestige has grown much and every year the competition is having entrants from new countries.



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