

Russophone poetry

# Disbelief

## 100 Russian Anti-War Poems

**Poetry selection.** Smokestack Books. UK 2022. 198 pages  
bi-lingual Russian-English, available in full English

Putin's war in Ukraine has been met by outrage and disbelief around the world. Since the start of the war, writers in Russia, Ukraine and the Russian diaspora have been expressing their opposition to the invasion. An international group of poets and translators have been collecting these poems as the Kopilka project.

DISBELIEF presents 100 of the most moving and hard-hitting of these poems by poets including Polina Barskova, Vladimir Druk, Tatiana Voltskaya, Mikhail Aizenberg and Tatiana Shcherbina.

Julia Nemirovskaya, the editor, in her introduction:

For those in Russia who withstood Putin's omnipresent propaganda machine and opposed the war the horror also included struggling with a sense of deep personal responsibility for the outrage taking place before their eyes. Russophone poets from everywhere have been ravaged by the sight of their native tongue, the Russian language, wielded by Putin as an instrument of suppression and cultural erasure in Ukraine... Russophone Ukrainian and diaspora poets, many of them bilingual, insisted on using the Russian language for their poetry of protest, in order to subvert Putin's use of Russian in propaganda and state control; as one bilingual poet put it, „I refuse to abandon the language to the Putinites!“

Poetry adds an important dimension to our understanding of the war, exposing its inhumanity and absurdity in a form that is immediately accessible and relatable... Each poem adds its own perspective on the events of this year and turns our experience into something deeper, more subtle, or more macabre than just grief.

“Captures the initial shock of the invasion, and the rage, shame, lament and prayer.”  
TLS

“Opens a treasure trove of Russian anti-war poetry.” MOSCOW TIMES

“Proof that the Russian language can still carry an antidote to the poisons disseminated by the Kremlin.” ROBERT CHANDLER, LITERARY REVIEW

“The depth of poetic vision on display in this remarkable anthology reverberates with a sense of culpability and disenfranchisement.” WRITE OUT LOUD

“An astonishing book... a Noah's Ark of an enterprise... These poems needed to be written, and they need to be read too.” EAST-WEST REVIEW

Julia Nemirovskaya is a Moscow-born poet and author. She was part of Kirill Kovaldzhii's Poetry Seminar, as well as a member of the Moscow Poetry Club of New Wave Poets. Her books include poetry, short stories, a novel and *Inside the Russian Soul: An Historical Survey of Russian Cultural Patterns*. Her work has been translated into several languages. She currently teaches at the University of Oregon.



# J. Nemirovskaya