

The Death of the Bear

The balalaika rings silent from Minsk to Red Square
The cortege assembles to bury the bear
Nadia Rostropovich looks on in despair
With Irina, Catharina and Olga

And quietly remembering her brother Ivan
Shot in the back in Afghanistan
The Stalinist purges, the snowy white grave
That claimed Boris, Dimitri and Igor

She remembered how proud she cheered with the crowd
When Yuri Gagarin sailed over the clouds
Nadia and Ivan shouted aloud
We put the first man in space

But that was before the feared KGB
Put a question mark over her own loyalty
To keep an eye on her comrades one two and three
Irina, Catharina and Olga

And poor uncle Vlad' whom the Doc declared mad
For refusing to leave his beloved Leningrad
She stood in the doorway tearful and sad
When they frog-marched him off to the Gulag

He took a last look at his own native hills
Where grew the red dogwoods and wild daffodils
The look on his face was haunting her still
Comrade Nadia Rostropovich

Sometimes alone she'd think of the West
Ladies with opals adorning their breast
Park Avenue poseurs who behave like the Tsar
With silver coke spoons for their caviar

She'd reflect back to when she'd just turned ten
And faithfully subscribed to fair play for all men
But seventy odd years of Bolshevik dreams
Had worn down her pride and left her no means
To cope with her own disillusion

If Trotsky and Engels saw the Dachas and Zils
The Politburo boys with their hands in the till
The bear was long dead before he got ill
Was it the cure or was it the fever?

No more reds under beds to freak out the Feds
A defunct Superpower in tatters and shreds
The marks left by Karl leave them queuing for bread
In the Caucasus, Baltic and Urals