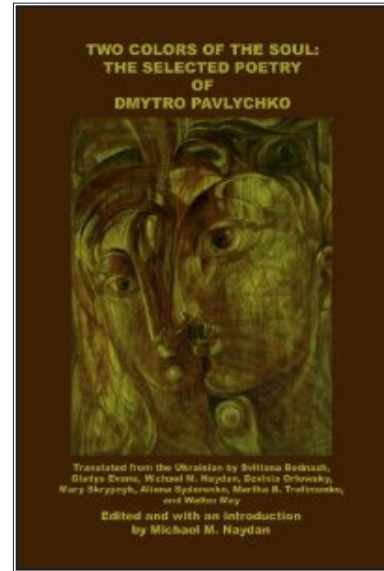


**Two Colors Of The Soul:  
The Selected Poetry Of  
Dmytro Pavlychko**  
Copyright 2012© by Dmytro Pavlychko  
Cervena Barva Press  
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by Michael M. Naydan  
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*Review by Zvi A. Sesling*

When reading a translation of poetry, usually one poet has translated. In this volume of Dmytro Pavlychko's verse the Ukrainian-to-English is accomplished by eight translators.

One would think that eight different people bringing a Ukrainian poet to the English speaking world would result in an uneven, choppy book. However, the opposite is true in this presentation by Cervena Barva Press. The eight translators have made a unified collection, bring to English readers a Ukrainian poet who deserves wider recognition.

In the poem *I Must*, translated by Dzvinya Orlowsky he presents us with what Americans would refer to as a "bucket list" but is more like a self-awakening:

*I Must*

*I must read books  
so that I won't become blind.  
I must speak  
so that I won't grow mute from grief.  
I must hear a song  
so that I won't fall deaf with silence.  
I must fall in love  
for joy to move toward me.  
I must see my friend  
for the day to become brighter.  
I must write a poem  
for my heart not to break.  
I must work  
to feel worthy of bread.  
I must die at midnight  
so the in the morning I may rise again!*

In a poignant encounter with the Chernobyl dead zone, Pavlychko tells us how a possession once owned by someone might feel about no longer being owned.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/1

*The Plaything*  
(translated by Aliona Sydorenko)

*In the Chornobyl dead zone  
in a hut on a bench  
there sits a man  
sculpted of clay  
the likeness of a god  
unafraid of the radiation*

*He has been sitting for fourteen years  
looking at the door with sadness  
waiting for it to be opened  
by his maker  
the blond-haired boy  
But the boy does not come  
does not open the door  
and the clay man  
continues to sit and wait*

A number of Pavlychko's poems have built in irony, none more ironic than *Too Late Too Soon* in which we discover how unnecessary we are:

*Too Late Too Soon*  
(translated by Aliona Sydorenko)  
*In whatever century  
you're born,  
it will always be too late and too soon!  
Too late, because everything most important  
in this world  
has already happened without you,  
too soon, because everything most important  
in this world  
will happen without you too.*

Pavlychko's poetry is truly in the Eastern European mold which if you have not discovered you should. The photograph of him on the back cover is one of a stern, hard person who has lived through a lot, seen even more. Graying, balding with thick eyebrows and deep set blue eyes, Pavlychko looks more the stern politician than poet.

However, make no mistake his poetry is deep, accessible and worth a reading – and to be sure you enjoy its fullness, read it twice.

*Zvi A. Sesling*  
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*Editor, Muddy River Poetry Review*