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| Bunin, Ivan Akekseevich (1870-1973) |
| БУНИН, Иван Алексеевич |
| The first Russian writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (1933), Bunin was best known as a master of the Russian short story who carried the classical traditions of Russian literature into the twentieth century. Born in a provincial capital southeast of Moscow, Bunin began his literary career as a poet, and his early prose stories and sketches reflect his lyrical orientation. After travelling to the Middle East in the first decade of the twentieth century, Bunin gained a heightened sense of historical cycles—the rise and fall of civilizations and empires—and he incorporated his perceptions in major new works on the decline of Russian country life such as The Village (Derevnia) (1910) and Dry Valley (Sukhodol) (1912). His work gained further philosophical depth through his interest in Buddhism and his travels to Southeast Asia. Bunin reacted with dismay to the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the Russian Revolution in 1917, and he left Russia in 1920, ultimately settling in France. Over the last decades of his life he created a series of exquisite short stories and novellas depicting the haunting power of sudden but fleeting passion as well as the impenetrable mysteries of life and death. |
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Over the last decades of his life he created a series of exquisite short stories and novellas depicting the haunting power of sudden but fleeting passion as well as the impenetrable mysteries of life and death.  **Timeline of Life and Works**  1870: born in Voronezh  1881: enrolls in school in Elets  1884: withdraws from school, lives with family at country estate in Ozerki  1887: first poem published in the journal *Native Land* (*Rodina*)  1889: joins staff of the *Orel Messenger* (*Orlovsky vestnik*)newspaper  1891: publishes first poetry collection, *Poems: 1887-1891*) (*Stikhotvoreniia: 1887-1891*)  1892: moves to Poltava  1896: publishes Russian translation of Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha*  1897: publishes first short story collection, *“To the Edge of the World” and Other Stories* (*“Na krai sveta” i drugie rasskazy*)  1898: moves to Odessa; marries Anna Tsakni  1901: publishes poetry collection *Falling Leaves* (*Listopad*)  1903: awarded Pushkin Prize for *Falling Leaves* and his translation of *The Song of Hiawatha*; travels to Middle East for the first time  1906: meets Vera Nikolaevna Muromtseva, his future wife  1909: wins second Pushkin Prize for his poetry and translations  1910: publishes novella *The Village* (*Derevnia*)  1911: travels to Ceylon (Sri Lanka)  1912: publishes novella *Dry Valley* (*Sukhodol*)  1915: publishes short story “The Gentleman from San Francisco (“Gospodin iz San-Frantsisko”); six-volume *Complete Collected Works* (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*) published  1917: Russian Revolution  1918: moves to Odessa  1920: leaves Odessa for Constantinople and France  1922: finalizes divorce from Anna Tsakni and marries Vera Muromtseva  1930: publishes *The Life of Arseniev: The Well of Days* (*Zhizn’ Arsen’eva: Istoki dnei*)  1933: awarded Nobel Prize in Literature  1934-36: eleven-volume *Collected Works* (*Sobranie sochinenii*) published in Berlin  1936: publishes *Cursed Days* (*Okaiannye dni*)  1939: publishes continuation of *The Life of Arseniev*, *Lika: A Novel* (*Lika: Roman*)  1943: publishes first edition of *Dark Avenues* (*Temnye allei*)  1946: publishes expanded edition of *Dark Avenues*  1953: dies in Paris, buried in St. Genevieve-des-Bois cemetery  Ivan Alekseevich Bunin was born on October 10, 1870 (Old Style) in the provincial town of Voronezh into a family of gentry landowners of modest means. Raised in the Russian countryside, Bunin began writing poetry at an early age, and published his first poems and short stories in 1887. He achieved significant fame with a verse collection entitled *Falling Leaves* (*Listopad*) in 1901 and with lyrical sketches about the decline of Russian gentry life such as “Antonov Apples” (“Antonovskie iabloki”), which features a Proustian emphasis on the senses as an aid to memory. Traveling to the Middle East in the first decade of the twentieth century, Bunin gained new insight into the way that major civilizations of the past rose and fell, and when he returned to Russia, he applied his insight to the depiction of the transformation of Russian country life. Two of his works, *The Village* ( *Derevnia*) and *Dry Valley* (*Sukhodol*), drew particular attention from critics and readers for their sober presentation of the gradual degeneration of the Russian village and gentry estate.  Bunin also travelled to Southeast Asia in 1911, and his contact with Buddhist culture and thought made a significant impact on the works he wrote in the mid 1910s. Several of his short stories, such as “Brethren” (“Brat’ia”) (1914) and “The Dreams of Chang” (“Sny Changa”), offer pointed commentary on the futility of desire and the evanescence of human life. A keen observer of literary developments around him, Bunin was disdainful of many of the artistic innovations he saw in Modernist movements such as SYMBOLISM and FUTURISM, and the outbreak of World War I confirmed his view that modern society was headed for calamity. It was in this spirit that he wrote a short story that is one of his most well-known works in the West, “The Gentleman from San Francisco” (“Gospodin iz San-Frantsisko” ) (1915), which traces the grand tour of Europe undertaken by a rich American businessman whose life is cut short by sudden death in Capri. The story provides a searing indictment of modern materialism.  The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 shook Bunin to the core. First fleeing to Odessa in 1918 and then to France in 1920, Bunin recorded his anxiety and shock at the changes he saw transpiring around him in a work later published under the title *Cursed Days* (*Okaiannye dni*) (1936). Once settled in France, however, Bunin returned to artistic literature and wrote several short stories and novellas depicting the power of passion and the enigma of the human soul. His most significant work was a novel based in part on his own childhood and youth, *The Life of Arseniev* (*Zhizn’ Arsen’eva*) (1930). His contributions to literature earned him the distinction of becoming the first Russian writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1933. Yet the satisfaction and financial stability afforded him by this prize did not last. With the onset of World War II, Bunin was forced to live an austere existence in Grasse, in the south of France. Even during this difficult time, though, Bunin managed to write a set of short stories that are among the finest of his career. This collection, entitled *Dark Avenues* (*Temnye allei*) (1943), contains wonderfully concise and evocative depictions of the power and fragility of love. These were the last major works Bunin finished before his death in 1953.  [File: bunin.jpg]  Figure Ivan Bunin  <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Bunin#/media/File:Ivan_Bunin-1901.jpg>  [File: bunin2.jpg]  Figure Ivan Bunin  <http://russiapedia.rt.com/prominent-russians/literature/ivan-bunin/> |
| Further reading:  (Baboreko)  (Bunin, Collected Stories of Ivan Bunin)  (Bunin, Cursed Days: A Diary of Revolution)  (Bunin, Dark Avenues)  (Bunin, In a Far Distant Land: Selected Stories)  (Bunin, Long Ago: Fourteen Stories)  (Bunin, The Elaghin Affair and Other Stories)  (Bunin, The Gentleman from San Francisco and Other Stories)  (Bunin, The Life of Arseniev: Youth)  (Bunin, The Village)  (Bunin, ight of Denial: Stories and Novellas)  (Burlaka)  (Connolly)  (Kryzytski)  (Marullo, Ivan Bunin: From the Other Shore, 1920-1933 : a Portrait from Letters, Diaries, and Fiction)  (Marullo, Ivan Bunin: Russian Requiem, 1885-1920 : a Portrait from Letters, Diaries, and Fiction)  (Muromtseva-Bunina)  (Priakhin)  (Woodward) |