**KLIUEV, Nikolai Alekseevich (КЛЮЕВ, Николай Алексеевич) (1884-1937)**

A poet of peasant of origins who became a prominent figure in the Russian Silver Age, Kliuev grew up in Olenets province to the northeast of St. Petersburg, where he was exposed to the religious beliefs of ‘Flagellant’ and other sects as well as Orthodox Christianity. Largely self-educated, he began to publish verse in 1904 and soon attracted the attention of leading Symbolist poet Alexander BLOK, who promoted his work. Kliuev’s early work was influenced by Symbolism, though at the same time he cultivated a self-consciously ‘peasant’ identity and was close for a while to Sergei ESENIN, who acknowledged him as his mentor. Overall his verse offers a linguistically rich and complex combination of folkloric, religious and literary themes, which is only now beginning to receive full critical attention. Kliuev became rapidly disillusioned with the Revolution of 1917, which he saw as undermining the traditional peasant way of life. After years of hardship, he was arrested in 1934 for attacking collectivization in his allegorical long poem *Pogorelshchina* (The Burned Ruins). He was exiled to the Tomsk region in Siberia, where he was rearrested and executed in 1937. Kliuev was officially rehabilitated in 1957, though none of his poems were republished in Russia until 1977. Several important works, including the long poem *Pesn′ o velikoi materi* (Song of the Great Mother), were later discovered in the KGB archive.

**References and Further Reading:**

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Shentalinsky, Vitaly (1995). *The KGB’s Literary Archive*. London: Harvill Press (Section on Kliuev, pp. 197-209)

**Major Works:**

**Poetry:**

Sosen perzvon (*Chimes of Firs*) [1911]  
Bratskie pesni (*Brotherly Songs*) [1912]

Lesnye byli (*Forest Tales*) [1912]

Mirskie dumy (*Worldly Thoughts*) [1916]  
Mednyi kit (*Bronze Whale*) [1919]  
Pesnoslov (*Hymns*) [1919]  
Pesn’ solntsenostsa. Zemlia i zhelezo (*Song of the Sunbearer. Earth and Iron*) [1920]

Izbianye pesni (*Songs of a Peasant H*ut) [1920]

L’vinyi khleb (*Lion’s Bread*) [1922]

Chetvertyi Rim (*The Fourth Rome*) [1922]

Mat’-subbota (*Mother Sabbath*) [1922]

Lenin (*Lenin*) [1924]

Derevnia (*The Village*) [1927]

Izba i pole (*Hut and Field*) [1928]

Pogorel’shchina (*The Burned Ruins*) [1928]

Plach o Esenina (*Lament for Esenin*) [1954]

Pesn’ o velikoi materi (*Song of the Great Mother*) [1991]

Kain (*Cain*) [1993]

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