

Title: “Так сочинилась мной элегия”: Elegiac Intonations in Oberiu poetry
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In “An Invitation for me to Think” (1931–4), Aleksandr Vvedenskii asks a question central to his own poetry: “Искусство, что ты чувствуешь/находясь без нас?” A similar concept of art as existing somehow “without us”—that is, at a certain divide from the human beings who create and consume it— informs the early verse of fellow oberiut Nikolai Zabolotskii. Moreover, in both cases, the elegiac tradition continually provides an impetus for asking what such a work of art “feels.” While Vvedenskii and Zabolotskii eschewed any style that could be characterized as “intimate” or “personal,” they also made use of standard elegiac language, *topoi*, and imagery: from the “погост унылый” where Khlebnikov’s body rests in Zabolotskii’s “Triumph of Agriculture” to the farewell addressed to the ocean in Vvedenskii’s “Where. When.” If these elegiac citations are mostly jarring, even somewhat ironic, their function extends well beyond mere comic effect. Indeed, as one might expect in an elegy, they are employed to reflect on life, death, and the human being’s place in the universe—although these reflections become estranged and self-referential in a way that constantly verges on simple parody. This paper will discuss the importance of the elegiac tradition (particularly of the early nineteenth century) for these poets, focusing on Zabolotskii’s first collection and Vvedenskii’s final work “Where. When.”