

Title: Mothers, monsters and genres in Maria Stepanova's "Proza Ivana Sidorova"

Author: Maria Vassileva, Harvard University

Abstract:

My paper looks at Maria Stepanova's long narrative poem "Proza Ivana Sidorova," and the way it uses liminal identities to explore the emotional and symbolic dynamics of family and social structures. The uncanny combination of intimacy and otherness in both blood ties and chosen families is reflected in the language of the poem, which uses genre tropes in flux to present an encounter between the familiar and foreign. I argue that the nonhuman characters (animals, supernatural beings, and the like) in Stepanova's poem expose the tentative nature of all (ostensibly) fixed identities and challenge the reader to take on the imaginative work of recognizing and reading difference