

Title: My Strangely Loved Land

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Abstract:

If I do love my land, strangely I love it:
this something reason cannot cure.
Glories of war I do not covet,
but neither peace proud and secure,
nor the mysterious past and dim romances
can spur my soul to pleasant fancies

This poem by Lermontov, brilliantly translated by Vladimir Nabokov in *Verses and Versions*, depicts a well known Russian cultural and literary perception of the concept of Patriotism. Mainly it's understood as love for one's homeland but the disputed part is what it translates into. Is it saying beautiful words, writing glorious poems and being actively supportive? Is it being critical and refusing to be blinded by that love so not to see any imperfections?

Nineteen century Russia gave a lot of reasons for concern. One of the liberal intellectuals, a very prolific poet and translator, D. Minaev published many sarcastic and polemical poems. I leaned this name trying to authenticate the writer of a poem "Freedom." This poem was honorably placed by Vladimir Nabokov on the first page in the Black Album found in Berg Collection and dedicated to Nabokov's recently assassinated father, V.D. Nabokov.

What moved Nabokov to choose this poem out of many, including his own, on the topic of Freedom? What was the common perception of these two intellectuals to bring them together in defining major moral values?

I believe the answer to that is love of their homeland.

That is the topic I intend to explore.