

Title: "Dusty Helmets" Aside: Nabokov Reads, Translates Okudzhava
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It is well known that Vladimir Nabokov used a line from Bulat Okudzhava's "Sentimental'nyi romans" (later renamed "Sentimental'nyi marsh," 1957) in his novel *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* (1969) in addition to working on a translated version of the poem dated February 2, 1966 (published in *Verses and Versions*, Brian Boyd and Stanislav Shvabrin, editors, New York: Harcourt, 2008, p. 365).

While there is no dearth of attempts to interpret this remarkable example of Nabokov's creative dialogue with the Soviet literature and mass culture of his day ("...the first time Nabokov... ever translated any work by a Soviet author in a spirit of homage rather than scorn" [Brian Boyd]), little is known about the circumstances surrounding his coming into contact with Okudzhava's works. In what medium did Nabokov encounter one of Okudzhava's most famous and enduring poetic utterances? What was the writer's overall impression of Okudzhava's writings available to him? Was Nabokov's engagement with Okudzhava limited to his reading and translating of the poem he knew as "Sentimental'niy romans," the poem a tantalizing and equivocal echo of which he was to introduce into the text of *Ada*?

The proposed paper will seek to shed additional light on Nabokov's encounter with Okudzhava by establishing a number of facts about this event as well as by undertaking a reconstruction of Nabokov's reaction to the various aspects of the creative output and fame of the preeminent Soviet "bard."