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Title: Iuliia Drunina: The “Svetlokosyi Soldat” on the Soviet Poetic Front

Upon victory in 1945, the Soviet Union swiftly demobilized almost all of its women soldiers. This demobilization was reflected in literature, as images of fighting women disappeared from works, which were primarily written by men. Within this literary world so dominated by male writers emerged a woman, Iuliia Drunina (1924-1991), a veteran who served as a medic during the war. Dedicated to truthfully memorializing her comrades-in-arms, Drunina developed the image of the woman soldier within Soviet literature and achieved surprising literary acclaim for her writing. Throughout her literary life, Drunina confronted society’s tendency to discredit women’s military contribution to the war. First published in 1940, she wrote dozens of volumes of poetry, mostly on war themes. Many of the women veterans who later wrote memoirs would reference Drunina, often choosing excerpts of her poems as their epigraphs. This paper argues that Drunina’s voice resonated with these women because she did not shape her war experiences into the overarching national myth. She refused to be demobilized as a war poet and wrote about the war in her poetry into the 1950s and through the subsequent decades. This paper examines how Drunina’s literary oeuvre deviates from the official myth by her subversion of clichés about female soldiers and her rejection of men’s portrayals of women’s bodies in postwar literature. Her juxtaposition of contradictory images presents a multi-dimensional picture of the woman soldier’s experience. Regardless of her role in Soviet culture, Drunina’s work remains neglected by Western literary scholars. The purpose of this paper, which approaches her work from the point of view of gender studies, is to shine a light upon the important contribution not only of Drunina’s oeuvre, but also of her persona as a literary woman *boets*.