

**Анна  
Андреевна  
Ахматова**





**Anna  
Akhmatova  
(1889 – 1966)**

"The whole woman, the whole poet is in these two lines; the whole Akhmatova, unique, unrepeatable, inimitable.«

(M. Tsvetaeva)



Anna Akhmatova ( Gorenko) was born in Bolshoy Fontan, near Odessa, Ukraine, the daughter of a naval engineer. She began writing poetry at the age of 11, and adopted a pseudonym to allay her father's fears that as a " decadent poetress" she would dishonor the family. The pseudonym was the Tatar name of Akhmatova's great-grandmother. When she was sixteen, her father abandoned his family. Akhmatova attended a girls' gymnasium in Tsarskoe Selo and the famous Smolnyi Institute in St. Petersburg. She continued her studies in Kiev in Fundukleevskaia gymnasium (1906) and in a law school (1907) before moving to St. Petersburg to study literature. Among her teachers were the poet, dramatist and essayist Innokenty Annensky (1856-1909), who influenced her deeply.



Anna began to write poetry at the age of 10 with her well-known poem “Grey-Eyed King”. When Anna’s first book, “Evening”, appeared in 1912 she became famous.



## The Grey-Eyed King

Hail! Hail to thee, o, immovable pain!  
The young grey-eyed king had been yesterday  
slain.

This autumnal evening was stuffy and red.  
My husband, returning, had quietly said,

"He'd left for his hunting; they carried him  
home;  
They'd found him under the old oak's dome.

I pity the queen. He, so young, past away!...  
During one night her black hair turned to  
grey."

He found his pipe on a warm fire-place,  
And quietly left for his usual race.

Now my daughter will wake up and rise --  
Mother will look in her dear grey eyes...

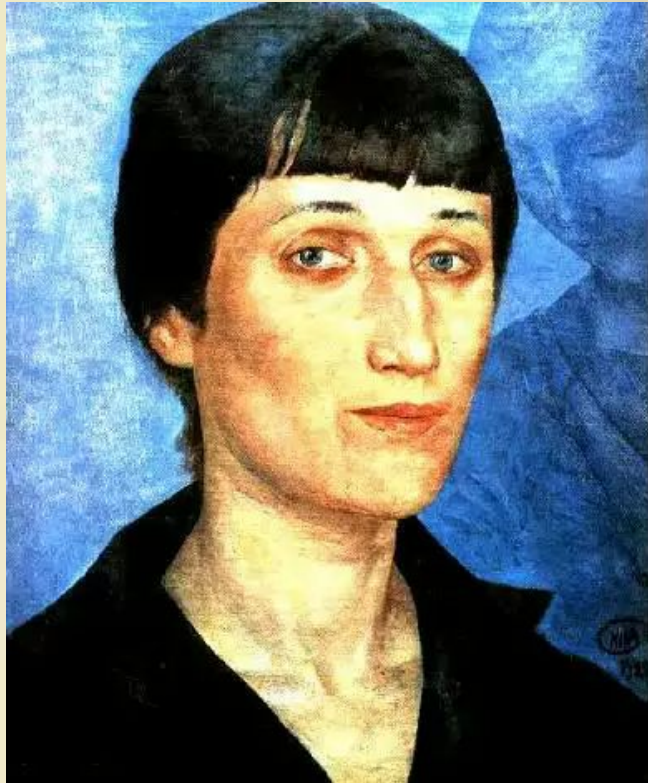
And poplars by windows rustle as sing,  
"Never again will you see your young king..."

1910

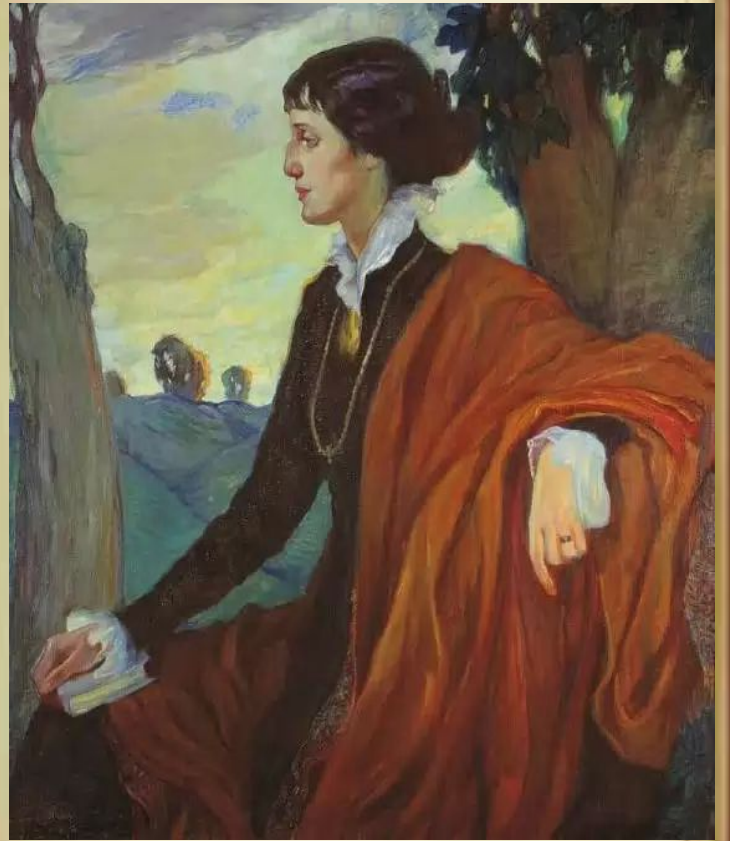
At the age of 21 Akhmatova became a member of the Acmeist group of poets, whose leader, the poet and literature critic Nikolai Gumilyov she married in April 1910, in a church near Kiev. Nikolai was also friend of Annensky, and from Tsarskoe Selo. Nikolai, three years her senior, had fallen in love with Akhmatova when she was just fourteen. Akhmatova became "Gumi-lvitsa" (Gumi-lioness) and her husband was "Gumi-lev" (Gumi-lion).



After honeymoon in Paris, Gumilyov left his young bride and went to Africa. "He loved his mother and was a good son," said Akhmatova much later on her unfaithful husband. However, in 1912 they had a son, Lev Gumilyov. He became also a writer.



Between the years 1910 and 1912 Akhmatova visited Paris, where she met the painter Modigliani. He drew sixteen portraits of Akhmatova, some of them nudes. The numerous portraits – by Modigliani, Annenkov, Petrov-Vodkin – show a beautiful woman with proudly raised head and sad eyes.



Upon Evening's publication in 1912, Akhmatova became a cult figure among the intelligentsia and part of the literary scene in St. Petersburg. Her second book, *Rosary* (1914), was critically acclaimed and established her reputation. With her husband, she became a leader of Acmeism, a movement which praised the virtues of lucid, carefully-crafted verse and reacted against the vagueness of the Symbolist style which dominated the Russian literary scene of the period.







She and Gumilev divorced in 1918. Akhmatova married twice more, to Vladimir Shileiko in 1918, whom she divorced in 1928, and Nikolai Punin, who died in a Siberian labor camp in 1953. The writer Boris Pasternak, who was already married, had proposed her numerous times.



Nikolai Gumilev was executed in 1921 by the Bolsheviks, and, although Akhmatova and he were divorced, she was still associated with him. As a result, after her book *Anno Domini MCMXXI* was published in 1922, she had great difficulty finding a publisher. There was an unofficial ban on Akhmatova's poetry from 1925 until 1940. During this time, Akhmatova devoted herself to literary criticism, particularly of Pushkin, and translations.



During the latter part of the 1930s, she composed a long poem, Requiem, dedicated to the memory of Stalin's victims. In 1940, a collection of previously published poems, From Six Books, was published.





Though Akhmatova was frequently confronted with official government opposition to her work during her lifetime, she was deeply loved and lauded by the Russian people, in part because she did not abandon her country during difficult political times. Her most accomplished works, *Requiem* (which was not published in its entirety in Russia until 1987) and *Poem Without a Hero*, are reactions to the horror of the Stalinist Terror, during which time she endured artistic repression as well as tremendous personal loss.

Чётки  
(Сборник  
стихов)

androidzoom.com

АННА АНДРЕЕВНА АХМАТОВА

Chetki, 1914

*Наталии Александровне  
Сосновской*

**БѢЛАЯ СТАЯ**

*на Новый Год*

*Зимбаря*

СЪИХОТВОРЕНИЯ

1965

*Анне Ахматовой*

АННЫ АХМАТОВОЙ.

ПЕТРОГРАДЪ.

Издательство Гиперборей.

1917.

White flock, 1917



Анна Ахматова

ПОДОРОЖНИК  
Константину Александровичу  
Редкину

на память отъ

сочинительницы.

ПЕТРОГРАД  
1921

1922. Весна.  
Петербург.

Wayside grass, 1921

АННА АХМАТОВА



ЧИТАЕТ АВТОР  
СТИХИ И ПРОЗА  
записи 1963-1965 гг.

СТИХИ  
О  
ЛЮБВИ

АННА  
АХМАТОВА



Poems: 1909 - 1960



Her son, Lev, was arrested in 1949 and held in jail until 1956. To try to win his release, Akhmatova wrote poems in praise of Stalin and the government, but it was of no use. Later she requested that these poems not appear in her collected works. She began writing and publishing again in 1958, but with heavy censorship. Young poets like Joseph Brodsky flocked to her. To them, she represented a link with the pre-Revolutionary past which had been destroyed by the Communists.





Akhmatova also translated the works of Victor Hugo, Rabindranath Tagore, Giacomo Leopardi, and various Armenian and Korean poets, and she wrote memoirs of Symbolist writer Aleksandr Blok, the artist Amedeo Modigliani, and fellow Acmeist Osip Mandelstam. In 1964 she was awarded the Etna-Taormina prize and an honorary doctorate from Oxford University in 1965. Her journeys to Sicily and England to receive these honors were her first travels outside Russia since 1912.



Two years before her death at the age of 76,  
Akmatova was chosen president of the  
Writers' Union. Akmatova died in Leningrad,  
where she had spent most of life, in 1966.



Requiem

1935-1940

Not under foreign skies protection  
Or saving wings of alien birth –  
I was then there – with whole my nation  
–  
There, where my nation, alas! Was



## Internet Resources:

1. [www.poetryloverspage.com](http://www.poetryloverspage.com)
2. [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org)

