

Will cross a final boundary  
And all things shall revert  
To their rightful owner — God.

This attempt plays with linguistic resources available in English but not in Russian (such as the choice between Latinate and Germanic words). Sound play like "revert" and "rightful" attempts to echo the alliteration of the original, while making explicit the force of "хозяин" that the poet does not state directly. I have even tried to suggest rhyming sounds without making a rhymed poem out of an unrhymed line. I've also restored a regularity of rhythm missing from the anonymous English translation.

Perhaps I over-specify the image implied in *прорастет*, and this is a serious problem, because that image breaks the otherwise coherent one of greed and auction, which I've intensified with the emphatic and legal-sounding "shall" in place of "will" and the legalistic "revert." Perhaps even more serious is the transposition of agency: "We" are not only those who are selling the Third Rome, as in the original — "we" are now the auctioneer conducting the sale. Only the poet himself can tell whether this is a legitimate interpretation or not.

Reading what I've written, I don't like "The accumulation of evil / Will cross a final boundary." The word "accumulation" contributes to an anapestic rhythm that makes the line too long and light. The cognate "sum," of course, is too short. I need something trisyllabic, and this will force me to choose among possible alternate interpretations of "сумма." "The full amount" would fit, but it doesn't make sense with my rendering of going beyond limits. "The reckoning of evil / Will finally go too far" gives me a pleasant alliteration on "f," as well as contributing to the alliteration on "r," which now echoes all the way down from "Rome" to "rightful." "Reckoning" provides its own ambiguities, with overtones of Biblical vengeance. The last phrase creates a nice, antithetical near-rhyme "near / far." But "go too far" compels me to change "go" in the first line to "fall," and to re-order that line, avoiding the infelicitous "all fall."

The overall effect creates a poem that nearly rhymes *abcbacbd*, with "God" being the odd, unrhymed word out. This is perhaps an effective way (if an astonishing one, as if the negative of a photo can take the place of the print) of mimicking the effect created by "Бору" being an only rhyme in the original: In both cases, the word stands out suddenly, so much the more a surprise.

All Third Rome will fall  
Under our hammer bit by bit,  
And chaos will draw near,  
Take root in us and sprout.  
The reckoning of evil  
Will finally go too far  
And all things shall revert  
To their rightful owner — God.

After this, it may startle the reader of these notes that I now go back to the beginning and wonder about "fall / Under our hammer." The phrase on its own can mean something more violent and physically destructive than an auction-block, and perhaps the anonymous translator has made a wiser decision than mine, glossing it (as I did with "rightful") rather than trusting the phrase to carry its own weight. There is one risky way out of this. If I change "bit by bit" into the specific language of the way an auction is conducted, I make it clear just how "our hammer" is to be read, even though at the same time I lessen the non-rhyming effect I've just been so proud of.

That will do.

← not quite  
me!  
пропачена  
+  
vengeance

For now.

It remains for the reader of the original Russian to determine how much of Mark's epigram survives.

All Third Rome will fall  
Under our hammer lot by lot,  
And chaos will draw near,  
Take root in us and sprout.  
The reckoning of evil  
Will finally go too far  
And all things shall revert  
To their rightful owner — God.

**За столами дородные жены..**

**Corpulent wives sit around the tables.  
An anæmic righteousness is sleeping  
in their bowed, semicircular faces.  
At their breasts they hold their chubby babies  
who suckle, and smile dreamily...**

**A lisping, silly, blessed wind,  
swollen with sonority, groans,  
licks at the children's round heads.  
Air in the corner over the ikon moulders,  
The Divine Countenance shines tenderly on them.**

**And the millennium draws to a close...**

***Grigory Mark***

**translated by  
J. Kates**