

for Dmitri

This is the rhyme scheme  
of "Oneyin"

To Pushkin

What is translation? On a platter  
a poet's pale-and glaring-head;  
a fool's mistake; a monkey's chatter —  
and profanation of the dead.

The parasites you were so hard on  
are pardoned if I have your pardon,  
O, Pushkin, for my stratagem:

I travelled down your secret stem,  
and reached the root, and fed upon it;  
then, in another tongue, I grew  
another stalk away from you,  
and turned your stanza from a sonnet  
into a metaphrase in prose —  
all thorn, but cousin to your rose

Karmi Nabokov

Dec. 1953

Yonkers, N.Y.