

Alexander Pushkin’s “I Loved You” – Translating The Untranslatable Feelings

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I. Introduction

The poem “I loved you” by Alexander Pushkin was originally written in the Russian language. Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin was a Great Russian poet born in Moscow Russia. Pushkin was believed to be incredibly intelligent and started writing his poems at an early age of 14. He wrote his poems in the Russian language and there have been several translations of his poems. Pushkin used his poems to address his feelings concerning the political views in Russia. Between 1814 and 1817 he published about 130 poems and for this the leaders did not like him much. Pushkin at the age of 27 married Natalya Nikolayevna Goncharova in 1826 who was 16 at the time and they had two kids. Pushkin got into great debt because of his wife’s luxurious life. Pushkin was shot and killed in 1837 by his brother in-law whom he suspected of having an affair with his wife when he confronted him about it. Alexander Pushkin expresses his affectionate feelings about a lady in his poem “I love you”. He is quite fascinated by the woman’s beauty and personality. This exceptional poet confesses his deepest and warmest feelings about this girl. The mood in the poem cannot be characterized as either being a sad one or happy one. It is simply the poet lost in his dreams of this girl who seemingly has paid little attention to how the poet feels about her.

From the poem one can clearly acknowledge that the poet is aware that the girl will no longer belong to him. From the manner the poet describes his passionate feelings in the last line “as May God grant you to be loved again” he seems to have lost this amazing girl. He is concerned about the happiness of this lady whom he idolizes as his love of his life. He is willing to let go of her if that is what would make her happy and does not “wish to cause her any pain”. The poet holds a very respectful attitude for this love that he seems to have lost. From line three “let my love no longer trouble you” the feelings of the poet seem quite sincere in the manner in which they are expressed. He truly wishes his heroine happiness yet it seems his delicate heart will be broken by the loss of his love. The poet does not wish to fight for this girl’s affections and therefore is not after selfish gains. Throughout the poem the poet is very sincere about his feelings. Even though he still carries a lot of love for this girl in his heart he is not just concerned his own happiness. “And for a while the feelings may remain” this shows he is still deeply in love with her. He does conceal his feelings “I loved you and hopelessly I knew” the poet is very open about his affections. He even reveals the fact that he is jealous, “the jealousy the shyness...though in vain”

The greatest expression of love is the willingness to let go despite obvious feelings of love. His prayer is that God grants another to love her. This last line gives the poem a true quality of love that it is not self seeking. Whatever may be the tone and meaning, the feelings of the poet has finely translated into another language. The first rendering of the poem is done by the poet himself and the other are by some other translators. The prime motto of the poet has been transferred by the translators. Though there may be some changes in the meaning or the tone the idea of the poet has been brought out without damaging the essence or the sense.

II. I Loved You

Alexander Pushkin

I loved you; even now I must confess,
Some embers of my love their fire retain;
But do not let it cause you more distress,
I do not want to sadden you again.
Hopeless and tongue-tied, yet I loved you dearly
With pangs the jealous and the timid know;
So tenderly I love you, so sincerely,
I pray God grant another love you so.
I loved you once, nor can this heart be quiet;
For it would seem that love still lingers there;
But do not you be further troubled by it;
I would in no wise hurt you, oh, my dear.

I loved you without hope, a mute offender;
What jealous pangs, what shy despairs I knew!
A love as deep as this, as true, as tender,
God grant another may yet offer you.

Another Translation by Babette Deutsch:

I loved you; and perhaps I love you still,
The flame, perhaps, is not extinguished; yet
It burns so quietly within my soul,
No longer should you feel distressed by it.
Silently and hopelessly I loved you,
At times too jealous and at times too shy.
God grant you find another who will love you
As tenderly and truthfully as I.
I loved you once; perhaps I should exclaim,
My love still lingers deep within my core.
But I do not want to cause you any pain,
So grieve thee not for me a moment more.
Silently and hopelessly I loved you,
Tormented, I was too jealous and too shy.
May God provide another who will love you,
Just as gently and as fervently as I.

Another version is at "A collection of poems by Alexander Pushkin":

I loved you: and, it may be, from my soul
The former love has never gone away,
But let it not recall to you my dole;
I wish not sadden you in any way.
I loved you silently, without hope, fully,
In diffidence, in jealousy, in pain;
I loved you so tenderly and truly,
As let you else be loved by any man

Reference

[1]. Pushkin, Alexander. *A Collection of Poems*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. Print.