

Stories for Good

“Life Stories”

New Russian Fiction: Translating Literature into End-of-Life Care

MONTPELIER, VT – *Russian Life*, in collaboration with the Russian Arts Foundation, Vera Hospice Fund, and Galina Dursthoff Literary Agency, has published *Life Stories*, a special short story collection of works by 19 of Russia’s most acclaimed contemporary authors, translated by 14 prominent American and British translators. All proceeds will be donated to benefit hospice care in Russia.

The Russian edition, published in March 2009, was hailed by critics in Russia as “the best of contemporary Russian fiction.” One of the year’s top fiction bestsellers in Russia, it has already sold over 40,000 copies. The English edition, *Life Stories*, showcases works by authors already well-known to English-speaking audiences, such as Eduard Limonov, Vladimir Makanin, Victor Pelevin, Ludmila Petrushevskaya, Vladimir Sorokin, and Vladimir Voinovich, as well as stories by accomplished Russian writers who are less widely known abroad, such as Andrei Gelasimov, Marina Moskvina, and Zahar Prelepin. The contributing authors represent the full gamut of styles, subjects, esthetics, and politics of Russian fiction today. Only one of the 19 works in the volume has been previously published in English.

Jay Parini, author of *The Last Station*, says: “Only once in a great while does such a rich collection of stories appear -- so many voices, moods, temperaments, takes. *Life Stories* lives up to its title: it’s a life-enhancing compendium, full of variety and color, humor, sadness, and -- in the best Russian tradition -- wisdom.”

The project began as an innovative way to support the nascent hospice movement in Russia. Oleg Vavilov, project coordinator and publisher of the Russian edition, said, “In putting out this book, we are trying to raise money for institutions that are in great financial difficulty, but which are really quite inexpensive to run. But we are also trying to raise awareness of the importance of hospice care within Russia and abroad.” Every writer he asked donated a short story for the collection. So far over 5 million rubles (approximately \$165,000) has been presented to the Vera Hospice Fund from the sale of the Russian editions.

The modern hospice movement, which began over 40 years ago in Britain and quickly spread around the world, is relatively new in Russia. The first hospice appeared in 1990, and today there are just over 200 organizations providing palliative care in the country..

“This is a truly non-profit collaboration between cultures,” said Publisher Paul E. Richardson. “Russian authors have donated their works, American translators, designers and editors all worked pro bono, and books will be sold worldwide directly to consumers, using the power of the internet and digital publishing to ensure that the maximum return gets back to Vera Hospice Fund. Readers of these books will receive some truly great works of modern Russian literature, and at the same time they will help provide end-of-life care for countless fellow human beings.”

Life Stories (ISBN 1-880100-58-4) sells for \$25 (plus s&h) via **storiesforgood.org**. It can also be purchased through **amazon.com**. All 100 percent of the profits from book sales will be donated to the Vera Hospice Fund, a Russian not-for-profit enterprise dedicated to supporting hospice care.

The authors included in this collection are: Dmitry Bykov, Vladimir Voinovich, Andrey Gelasimov, Boris Grebenshchikov, Yevgeny Grishkovets, Victor Yerofeyev, Alexander Kabakov, Eduard Limonov, Dmitry Lipskerov, Sergey Lukyanenko, Vladimir Makanin, Marina Moskvina, Victor Pelevin, Ludmila Petrushevskaya, Zakhar Prilepin, Dina Rubina, Dunya Smirnova, Vladimir Sorokin, Alexander Khurgin and Leonid Yuzefovich.

The translators who have given of their time and talent are: Alexei Bayer, Michele A. Berdy, Liv Bliss, Lise Brody, Nora Favorov, Anne Fisher, Deborah Hoffman, Michael Katz, Peter Morley, Susanna Nazarova, Anna Razumnaya-Seluyanova, Paul E. Richardson, Marian Schwartz, Bela Shayevich and Nina Shevchuk.

Russian Life is a bimonthly magazine published by RIS Publications (founded in 1990), which also publishes books, maps and the quarterly literary journal, *Chtenia: Readings from Russia*.

#