

Children of Hope

- pictures from an exhibition

From distant north, an icy blast
Blows yet again, as in the past.
And Moscow's mad and brooding Tsar
Spits death, destruction from afar.
On black earth lands dark shadows fall
And spread out like a funeral pall.
The skies rain death by night and day,
Men, women, children swept away.
Their only crime is to exist,
Their only option – to resist.
The nation chooses to be free
And live in human dignity,
To fight with what may come to hand
In defence of their native land.
The men must all go off to war;
The old have seen it all before.
It falls to all those left behind
Some other ways to fight to find.
Children reflect so honestly
What the nation seeks to be,
A land at peace, a world apart,
An aspiration set in art
So each the empty page has filled
With deepest thoughts and cares distilled.

A boy walks through a golden field,
He will resist; his fate is sealed.
The sky is blue, a world apart.
His only arm, a paper dart.
The sky, the field, the nation's flag,
His right hand holds hope in a bag.



A child, marooned upon the shore,
Picks flowers as she did before.
Her dream of gentleness is clear;
Her blue and yellow flag is near,
And yet there is a gulf between
Her and that world, safe and serene.



Marko, with the sun behind
Him, seeks the national flag to find,
Among the sunflowers, nestling there,
Defiantly, in a world of care.
The sunflowers, open to the sun,
Will be there when war's course has run.



Khrystyna's girl wears national dress;
 Despite the tragedy and stress,
 The small heart shows love still remains,
 A rainbow, sunshine after rains.
 Yellow and blue, her face we see,
 'Pray for Ukraine' her earnest plea.



Angelina's child stands in a field.
 The crop is gold, blue sky revealed.
 Her smile, her hope, are plain to see;
 This child would live in liberty:
 'Pray for Ukraine', with Ukraine 'stay';
 She'd live to see a better day.



To Ukraine, 'Glory', Adriana
 Portrays a boy, support to garner.
 Upon a podium he'll stand,
 His voice will ring across the land.
 He sees there's glory to be won,
 But first the foe must be undone.



Adriana paints anew
 A picture with a different hue.
 Two children scan the sky above;
 Their heart gives primacy to love,
 It says, whatever may befall,
 That in the end love conquers all.



A soldier, in a pool of light,
 Readies himself to stand and fight,
 His rifle over his shoulder slung.
 Around him fruits of the land are flung.
 Gun in one hand, flower in the other,
 He's someone's father, someone's brother,



Another picture, the same themes,
 The man who would be peaceful seems
 Resigned to have a gun in tow.
 The flower he'd prefer to grow
 When peace comes, presaging once more
 An end to the accursed war.



A girl with flowers in her hair,
 The image Olina wished to share.
 She waves the flag of her Ukraine.
 She smiles, and waves the flag again.
 The land is verdant, full of blooms,
 And will be so, though carnage looms.



Veronika peace symbols shows,
 The dove of peace, the cross she chose,
 The bible, open on the ground
 Far from the battle's savage sound.
 The war, though, is not far away;
 The urgent call to us is 'pray'.



Karina's child, like many, found
Below blue sky, on yellow ground,
Stands in a blue and yellow arch.
She asks for prayer, while armies march
To seize, or to protect the land,
Their folk; their loved ones understand.



A soldier flies his flag up high,
While heart balloons float to the sky.
Lina's children on parade,
In blue and yellow all arrayed,
All sing united one refrain
Of glory, glory to Ukraine.



A saint or super-hero he,
Daruna's character will be
Smiting the foe on angel's wings,
While 'Glory to Ukraine' he sings.
His halo marks where he has gone,
With angels on high looking on.



Alsu's angel, hands held to pray,
Is so serene, but her eyes betray
Her depth of care. The tears that well
Speak so much more than words could tell.
Her golden halo, backdrop blue,
Her dress's hem, confronting you.



Another girl is lost in prayer.
She wears red poppies in her hair.
She's poppies on her sleeve cuffs too;
Her scarf's a yellow strip and blue.
The golden sun is shining bright,
Banishing the dark clouds of night.



A girl steps out from a safe place.
She feels the warm sun on her face.
A blindfold covers up her eyes.
Her flag, her scarf, are no surprise.
By faith and hope she's borne along;
Her heart tells her 'Stay safe; stay strong'.



A heart is held in loving hands.
The heart's Karina's native land.
The backdrop is the darkest night,
Although the heart is bathed in light
The message here is very plain,
Imploring us 'Pray for Ukraine'.



A girl surveys a land aflame;
 Grey smoke clouds show this is no game.
 But tiny specks of sky remain
 Where soars a dove of free Ukraine.
 His blue and gold outsoars the grey,
 The message clear: 'For Ukraine, pray'.



Storm clouds obliterate the sky.
 Saint Josaphat holds them back on high.
 Beneath his arms, the sky is blue,
 The land displays a golden hue.
 His heart bleeds as he fights the gloom,
 And down on earth, still, sunflowers bloom.



Angelina a medallion posed.
 On Ukraine's flag it's superimposed.
 A soldier, humble, his head bowed,
 Kissed by the land, the people proud.
 The medal is by poppies girl,
 He has no choice, risks death, risks hurt.



The land's surveyed by Ukraine's eye.
 Fruits of the soil it can espy.
 Red and blue flowers, ears of grain,
 Seen through the lens, flag of Ukraine,
 The nation's symbol, in the sun,
 New season's growth has just begun.



A woman caught in deep distress,
 What's in her mind we can but guess.
 A floral garden, duck-filled pond,
 Danina speaks peace; we respond.
 While evil tears her land apart
 Her hands hold tight her nation's heart.



Alsu's woman is rapt in prayer.
 A band of flowers holds back her hair.
 The hearts she calls up, yellow and blue,
 Suffuse, surround her, through and through.
 Her face is serious, pensive, sad,
 For the lost peace that once she had.



A heart that's all encompassing,
 A land that blooms in everything,
 In sunflowers, apples, poppies, grain.
 This land will surely bloom again,
 While prayer, and courage, hold the line,
 And we a world at peace define.



The war goes on while the world sleeps.
 A woman watches, prays and weeps.
 Blood oozes from a broken heart,
 Where she lives is a world apart.
 She longs for peace to come again.
 Meanwhile, she prays 'Protect Ukraine',



The children all have made their choice;
They speak with one united voice.
Wickedness will pass away,
The brave will fight another day.
A faith that's based on hope and love
Impels them through the storms above.
As evil succumbs to their nation's stand,
The young will inherit their black earth land.

Derek Pheby