

THE   
GRIFFIS ART CENTER

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-in-RESIDENCE PROGRAM – MAISON des ARTISTES  
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT USA

## Lyubomir LEVCHEV

1994-1995 International Writer-in-Residence  
Bulgarian-American Creative Society  
Sofia, Bulgaria

Excerpts from **Sky Break** by Lyubomir Levchev

“...Sky Break is a kind of love letter to America, a brilliant rumination on the months he spent in New London while his wife was a Resident at the Griffis Art Center. It seems to have been a chance to put his life in perspective, to review the past and look to the future. In a remarkable six months he has given us wonderful new poems that detail his life there...”

From the preface by Richard Harteis and William Meredith

### Early Morning in New London

Clear skies prepare for sunrise,  
Birds and firstlight already a-quiver . . .  
Thus creatures everywhere await  
This hour of glorious promise.  
Such is the shared faith  
of peoples and plants,  
spaces and visions. Now  
the moon—Eastern dancer—  
bows at curtain call.  
Bare maple trees fight each other  
with squirrels. A crumpled leaf, falling,  
skitters into church.  
Invisible ships, loaded  
with night, creak loud and sail away.  
Surrendering now,  
swift gray-green shadows trail violet tails  
to hover and hide  
in the early settlers' graveyard.  
These stone gardens were planted long ago  
on the highest sites—below them  
a glistening river. Above them . . .  
(The sky is closer, that the soul may  
more easily find its way.)  
A gentle breeze heralds the arrival as I hear  
the last whispering of ghosts:  
“William is right, of course—  
the eighteenth century is far better  
than the twentieth.”  
And then the sun breaks  
on the white captains' houses.

### УТРИННО СКИТАНЕ ИЗ НЮ ЛОНДОН

Безоблачно небе очаква изгрева.  
Пригответни са птици и отблясъци.  
Тъй всяко същество очаква  
да му се случи нещо светло.  
Това е старата всеобща вяра -  
религия за хора и растения,  
простори и видения... И ето -  
луната - източна танцьорка,  
се е извила за поклон последен.  
Кленове голи се замерват  
с катерички. Някакво листо  
съсухрено е тръгнало на черква.  
Невидимите параходи, натоварени  
с нощта, надават рев - отплуват.  
Изпуснали и този шанс,  
сиво-зелени сенки с дълги виолетови  
опашки бързат да се скрият  
в малкото гробище на първите заселници.  
Някога тези каменни градини са садени  
на най-високите места. Надолу  
блести реката. А нагоре...  
По-близо е. По-лесно  
душата си намира пътя.  
Полъхва на пристигане. И чувам  
шептенето на чезнещите сенки:  
- Разбира се, че Уилям е прав.  
- Разбира се, че осемнайсти век  
е по-добър от този непогребан...  
Тогава слънце озарява  
белите, смели капитански къщи.

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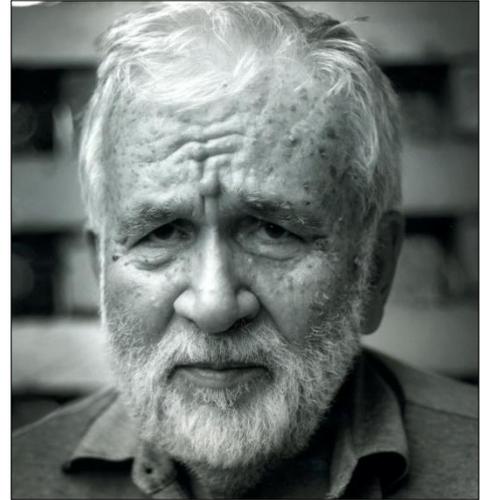


Photo by Xingxin Zhang



*People in the streets of Bulgaria greet their national poet "Lyubo" with love and respect.  
In him the words "poet" and "conscience" are twins.*

—Yevgeny Yevtushenko

Lyubomir Levchev was born in Troyan, Bulgaria, on April 27, 1935 and is regarded as one of the great poets of Eastern Europe with international renown. He has a long and distinguished history of commitment and service to literature and culture. He served as Chairman of the Bulgarian Writers' Union (1979-1988), First Deputy Secretary of Culture of Bulgaria, and Editor-in-Chief of the literary weekly of the Bulgarian Writers' Union, "Literature Front". He is a member of the European Academy of Science, Art, and Culture, and the European Academy of Poetry. His many international awards include the Gold Medal for Poetry of the French Academy and the honorary title of 'Knight of Poetry' from the French Government (1985); the Medal of the Venezuela Writers' Association (1985); the Máté Zalka and Boris Polevoy awards, Russia (1986); the Grand Prize of the Alexander Pushkin Institute and the Sorbonne (1989); the Fernando Rielo World Prize for Mystical Poetry (1993); the Golden Wreath of the Struga Poetry Evenings, Macedonia (2010); the Bulgarian State Award Order of the Balkan Mountains 1<sup>st</sup> Class (2006).

Levchev is the founder and editor of the International Literary Magazine "Orpheus". He has over thirty poetry books and three novels published in Bulgarian. The latest two among those are the biographical novel Lament of the Dead Time (2011) and the collection of selected and new poems 77 Poems (2012). Over 58 of his books have been translated and published in 36 countries worldwide.

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*The Bulgarian-American  
Creative Society*



Forged from the powerful dream of Lyubomir Levchev, renowned Bulgarian poet, writer, diplomat and visionary, the Bulgarian-American Creative Society has created a bridge between two cultures since 2002. Established as an artist exchange program, participants reside in either the enchanting village of Polkovnik Serafimovo in the mysterious Rhodope Mountains in the Republic of Bulgaria or the small, bohemian City of New London, Connecticut in the United States of America.



In a collaboration between three entities;

- 1) The Orpheus Foundation  
in Polkovnik Serafimovo,  
Bulgaria,
- 2) The Griffis Art Center  
in New London, CT USA, and 3)
- 3) The Griffis Foundation  
in New London, CT USA,

invited painters, poets and cultural ambassadors are welcomed to their host countries to be immersed in the art, ideas, culture and spirit of their new communities.

As Hugh Kenneth Hill, former United States Ambassador in Sophia, Republic of Bulgaria said:

"They take away the beauty of this special place on their canvases and the deeper impressions that are left in their senses and in their souls, and they also leave a part of themselves behind."

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**Bulgarian Poet Lyubomir Levchev, SPE Golden Wreath Laureate**



(MIA, 05.03.2010) - Bulgarian poet Lyubomir Levchev is the "Golden Wreath" laureate at this year's 49th Struga Poetry Evenings (SPE), reads the unanimous decision of the festival's steering board.

"Levchev is without a doubt one of the biggest living Bulgarian poets, who keeps the poetry magic fresh and attractive, aesthetically and thematically surprising and civilizationally wise, nurturing the human's faith for an extended hand, in the elevated literary message and the creative unity of languages, which richness makes the world more powerful in its mission to bring people and cultures closer", reads the SPE board decision.

The international poetry affirmation of Lyubomir Levchev (75) began in Macedonia, with his poem "Prisoners Listen to Music", translated by Gane Todorovski, and published in literary magazine "Razgledi".

Levchev has written 50 poetry collections in Bulgarian language, along with 70 other books in 34 countries. The Bulgarian poet has won 17 national and international poetry awards at almost all continents.

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Lyubomir Levchev was born on 27 April 1935 in Troyan. He graduated from the History-philosophic Faculty at the University St Kliment Ohridski in Sofia. He was an editor and editor-in-chief of the magazine Literary Front (1961-1971), first Deputy Minister of Culture of Bulgaria (1975-1979), President of the Writers' Association of Bulgaria (1979-1989). Since 1991 he has been editor and owner of his Publishing House Orpheus and the same-named international magazine. His first poetry book "The Stars are Mine" was published in 1957. In 2007 he publishes his poetry book "The Last Poems". In that period of 50 years he published over 30 books of poetry, as well as the novels "Kill the Bulgarian!" (1988) and "You are the Next" (1998). In 2008 the last volume of his selected works named "Dangerous Freedom" was published.

Levchev's works have been published in 34 countries in 70 separate books. He is a significant activist of culture (1997), honourable PhD of the Bulgarian Free University, full-time member of the European academy of art, science and culture in Paris, member-founder of the European Poetry Academy in Luxembourg member of the international House of Poetry in Brussels, member of the International literary fund of Moscow and a honourable member of "Kasa Internacional de Poesia" from Lima