Narratives of war in the poetry of Svitlana Povaliayeva and Yuliya Musakovska

OLHA VOZNYUK

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War literature. Women. Russia's war against Ukraine. Narrative. Trauma. Poetry.

The beginning of Russia's full-scale invasive war against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, shifted the focus of contemporary Ukrainian literature by placing the issue of war at its core, and the number of women authors writing about the war significantly increased. The female perspective on war represents a social trauma, since a lot of women are taking care of their children and close relatives while their husbands and other family members, among them also female relatives, are defending Ukraine on the front line. This article traces Ukrainian women's war narratives, based on the poetry of authors with various social roles. The poetry collections by the well-established Ukrainian writers Svitlana Povaliayeva and Yuliya Musakovska will be examined under the narrative topics and problematics. The focus of this research lies in revealing the changes of cultural and societal values during wartime and the representation of the war trauma narrative in contemporary Ukrainian poetry.

Olha Voznyuk
Institute of Slavonic Studies
Czech Academy of Sciences
Prague
Czech Republic
olha.voznyuk@slu.cas.cz
ORCID: 0000-0003-3548-3682

From the earliest days of the full-scale invasion, when shock was still widespread in Ukrainian society, women actively participated in volunteering, and many joined the defense of the country. Their social roles have undergone a significant transformation due to the dramatic circumstances of war, and this shift has immediately begun to be reflected in women's poetry. On the other hand, the trauma of war has been rooted in Ukrainian society since 2014 and is not new to contemporary Ukrainian literature.[1] Since the beginning of the *velyka viina*[2] (big war), Ukrainian women writers, like millions of other Ukrainians, have undergone profound changes in their lifestyles and life priorities. Ukrainian literature (particularly poetry) actively reflects these societal changes, as evidenced by the growing number of publications. Unlike prose, which typically requires more time for creation and publication, poetry possesses the unique ability to convey immediate responses to unfolding events and emotions. A notable feature of Ukrainian wartime poetry is the widespread use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, where many authors publish their new works in real time.[3] These platforms also facilitate immediate interaction between readers, poets, and publishing houses that enable the publishing of poems. With the time, such kind of publications resulted in poetry books published nowadays in Ukraine that will be analyzed in this article and this issue as well.

As Russia's war against Ukraine demonstrates, the role of writers, and especially poets, has become increasingly valuable in contemporary Ukrainian culture, particularly due to the rising number of book readers in Ukraine during the war.[4] As the scholar Andrii Krawchuk has claimed, "Working through horrific moments of the war, creative people are shouldering the trauma of others and serving, in a sense, as first responders of the spirit, whether on the front or in concert halls" (2024,191). This also highlights the role of writers as symbols of inspiration in the resilience and resistance of society against the aggressor. The writers emphasize the unique role of culture in Ukrainian society's fight for its rights and freedom. This tendency to value culture, and especially literature, is further reflected in the statistical increase in the number of books published following Russia's invasive war. Thus, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communication of Ukraine in 2023, 270 new publishing houses were registered, and book output increased by 73% compared to the previous year.[5] Therefore, women's experience of war, as presented in contemporary literature, seeks its legitimate position within the modern discourse of war in Ukrainian culture. This female perspective offers a new vision of life during the ongoing conflict, shifting the focus from the traditionally male-dominated perspective to a feminine narrative of war.

This article will investigate female poetry through narrative and cultural-historical approaches, focusing on the works of Ukrainian authors who depict life during and through the war. The goal of this study is to examine the societal changes brought about by the war and identify the narrative motifs of trauma present in contemporary Ukrainian war poetry. This analysis will focus on two prominent Ukrainian poets, Yuliya Musakovska and Svitlana Povaliayeva, who have dedicated their works to portraying the most sensitive aspects of war trauma within Ukrainian society and culture.

Svitlana Povaliayeva's poetry collection *Minlyva chmarnist' z proiasnenniam*[6] (Partly cloudy with clearing, 2022) was nominated in Ukraine for the Taras Shevchenko national prize in 2025 and is devoted to depicting the feelings of people in their daily life in wartime. Yuliya Musakovska's book *Kaminnia i tsviachy* (Stones and nails, 2024) represents and documents the time shifts between the epochs before Russia's full-scale invasive war against Ukraine and in its aftermath.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Although war has been traditionally portrayed in literature from a masculine perspective and focused on the male experience, researchers like Margot Norris (2023) argue that it cannot be fully understood without including the female perspective. However, Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick argues that women's writing during both world wars was undervalued in the war anthologies of the time, and asserts that much work remains to be done to incorporate women's wartime narratives into the context of war trauma (2011, 4). In wartime, women are actively engaged as servicewomen, despite being mostly placed in roles behind the front lines of battle, as Snizhanna Zhyhun claims (2022, 21). Also, the perception of women as "passive, innocent, and beautiful" (Włodkowska 2023, 158) echoes the common stereotype that "war is not women's business". Thus, in the case of Ukraine, the active role of women in defending the country against Russia's invasion, as well as their involvement in volunteering and shaping cultural production during the war, challenges these stereotypes. During Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, Ukrainian literature actively represents women's experiences of war, as noted by Iryna Nikolaichuk, co-founder of the *Creative Woman Publishing* reveals the perception of war from the female perspective, giving voice and space to women authors who narrate the war not only as witnesses and volunteers, but also as soldiers (Nikolaichuk and Kovaliova 2023). Therefore, Ukrainian literature has become a vital instrument for documenting the profound social transformations brought by the war. In this context, women writers have assumed an increasingly active role in shaping the narrative of these cultural and social changes in Ukrainian society. Through their works, they offer unique perspectives that challenge traditional representations of war and enrich contemporary Ukrainian readership and world literary discourse.

LANGUAGE OF RESILIENCE

Olha Dubchak argues that the Ukrainian language has undergone significant changes since 2014, reflecting broader sociopolitical transformations in the country, and has become "our weapon, which at the end of February 2022 was taken up by all" (2023, 17). Russia's occupation of Crimea and the onset of its war in the Donbas region led to a marked increase in interest in reading in the Ukrainian language.[7] In the aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasive war in 2022, the Ukrainian language has also transformed into both a symbolic shield and a weapon. Volodymyr Kulyk argues that "the main reason is the ongoing war against neo-imperialist Russia striving to subjugate Ukrainians and deprive them of their distinct identity" (2024, 14). In the context of war, the choice to use and promote the Ukrainian language has

become both a cultural and political act, reflecting resistance to aggression and a reaffirmation of national identity.

At the same time, Ukrainian literature has gained an additional role in documenting collective war trauma. The importance of narrating war experiences and trauma is evident in the poetry of Yuliya Musakovska, particularly in her recent book *Kaminnia i tsviachy*. She emphasizes the enduring strength of words during the ongoing war:

> Who said that words have no value now? […]
> Our words, hard and swollen with rage,
> black from grief,
> like the concrete covering of an old bomb shelter.
> There is nothing more durable,
> nothing less fleeting.[8]

In this context, the function of language extends beyond communication and becomes a means of defense and survival, conveying a message to society and future generations. Musakovska highlights how the essence of language shifts in response to the horrific realities of war, with words bearing the weight of resistance. In her preface, the poet refers to the old tradition of driving nails into stone to anchor a house, a practice that symbolized its structural unity. By using this metaphor of words as nails, she emphasizes the role of narration and language in keeping the life going on in spite of the war (Musakovska 2024, 54–55).

However, it requires courage to pronounce words, and only poets have the ability to do so in this protective way. In spite of a common tendency to become speechless from the atrocities of war, as people cannot accept the scale of tragedy and loss. This fact is also traced in the composition of *Kaminnia i tsviachy* that consists of two parts "*a priori*" and "*a posteriori*". This division refers to a world that will always be divided into "before" and "after" the war, and only words are able to hold it together. From the current perspective, the part "*a priori*" seems to be a mythical illusion, due to the wartime situation. In contrast, the part "*a posteriori*" shows that the world is inexplicable, and the uncertainty about how long anyone can survive due to the ongoing shelling underlines the temporality of life. The poet also presents the idea of a time gap with "*a priori*", where the narrative of the poems is focused on the premonition of something bad about to happen, versus "*a posteriori*", which reflects life after the war begins, emphasizing the significance of time in the aftermath of the invasion. A key feature is that each poem is dated, thereby contributing to the sense of documenting the emotions and events experienced on a daily basis. That implementation of a "different tone of poetry" according to Illia Rudiiko (2024) gives the feeling of the "materiality" of time. The passage of time during the war necessitates the recording and documentation of each episode of life, every moment, and each fragment of history.

The title of Povaliayeva's *Minlyva chmarnist' z proiasnenniam* also revokes the feeling of temporality. Unlike Musakovska, Povaliayeva does not date her poems; instead, she divides the space of narration. The structure of her book is organized into several zones or lines that correspond to positions on the battlefield, catego-

rized as the "second line", the "first line", and the "zero line". This technique of spatial division also reflects the gradation of the complex issues addressed in the poetry collection. Hanna Ovsianyts'ka calls this technique the *poetics of boundaries* (2024, 85), which corresponds to the situation of the border-balance between life and death during the war. For instance, the "second line" consists in poems that reflect a way of life distant from the immediate battlefield, but even in these more removed spaces, the war leaves its indelible marks. In contrast, the "first line" section intensifies the emotional and thematic focus, bringing the reader closer to the battle between life and death. This shift is evident in the stanzas that document Russia's missile attacks on Ukrainian civilian buildings, illustrating the war's disruptive reach even in the heart of everyday existence:

> The boy didn't survive.
> The boy, I say, passed away.
> They're still resuscitating the girl,
> maybe they'll save her.[9]
> (Povaliayeva 2022, 16)

In this context, the narrative of a child's death is particularly harrowing, as children embody not only innocence but also the nation's future. Their loss signifies more than personal tragedy, it represents an assault on the generational transmission of identity, heritage, and collective hope. Such imagery underscores the war's capacity to fracture both the present and the future of Ukrainian society.

Musakovska also addresses the theme of children being killed during the war, revealing the daily tragedies endured by Ukrainians who live under the constant threat of shelling. Particularly poignant is the depiction of the shelling of Ukrainian children as the most vulnerable members of society. This theme is explicitly referenced in one of her poems, where she confronts the emotional and ethical weight of such loss:

> The sky shatters the scepter of the empire,
> that is dying,
> aiming one last time at the most precious,
> the most defenseless: the word "children" as a literal
> target marker.[10]
> (Musakovska 2024, 51)

Here reference to the word "'children' as a literal target marker" recalls Russia's army bombing of Mariupol's theater in March 2022, which resulted in the tragic deaths of hundreds of people, including many children, despite the fact that the word "children" was written on the square before the theater and was visible from the sky. Yet Russian children remain safe and well, and have the privilege of using goods looted from Ukraine by their fathers, as mentioned in Povaliayeva's poem "Katsapy"[11]:

> Their daughter, they call her "daugh",
> is going to school in sneakers,
> which her dad took off a Ukrainian girl
> who was killed in Irpin.[12]
> (Povaliayeva 2022, 18)

SAFETY DURING THE WAR

The war has transformed cultural and societal values in Ukraine, with the evolution of life values becoming evident in everyday language. To illustrate this, one need only consider the neutral and commonplace question "How are you?" (in Ukrainian, "як ти/iak ty?"), which has been transformed from a polite greeting to a way of expressing concern for others and gently wishing for their survival. The phrase #як ти? (iak ty?), which became a hashtag phenomenon in Ukraine in 2022, unfortunately remains relevant to this day. The fact that the section "*a posteriori*" in Musakovska's collection starts with the poem "Bezpechne misce" (Safe place) highlights the problem of safety during the war as well:

> How are you?
> Are you in a safe place?
> This is the prayer we repeat over and over,
> since February 24, 2022, to our loved ones and friends.[13]
> (2024, 48)

The author repeatedly raises the existential questions of what safety means during wartime, and whether a truly safe space can exist when even the soul and heart are no longer protected. This pervasive sense of vulnerability is powerfully conveyed in the poetry of Musakovska, who underscores the impossibility of feeling secure in the context of war. Her work reveals a psychological landscape marked by constant threat, where the notion of safety becomes both fragile and abstract:

> Can I be in a safe place,
> when my friends are under constant shelling in Kharkiv,
> Sumy, Irpin, Bucha,
> with no way to escape?[14]
> (2024, 48)

The cities mentioned in the stanzas refer to locations in Ukraine that have become enduring symbols of Russian military's acts of genocide against civilians. These geographic references function not only as markers of physical devastation but also as sites of collective trauma that will remain embedded in the cultural and historical memory of Ukrainian society for generations to come.

POETRY AS COMMEMORATION

Another crucial function of language is its role in ensuring that the lives of those who perished are not forgotten. In this context, poetry safeguards the stories of those who died in the struggle for freedom and embeds their narratives in the collective consciousness. Through the power of words, Musakovska emphasizes the necessity of sustaining this memory, preventing the erasure of voices silenced by war:

> I wish to die, but I have to speak
> with a mouth full of stones and nails,
> a mouth full of blood.
> To say words instead of those
> whose soul has been taken out.[15]
> (2024, 62)

In this context, the poet assumes the role of a custodian of collective memory, commemorating those who were shelled and killed while defending their fundamental right to live in their own country, a right violently stripped from them. Among those whose voices have been silenced, and who now must be represented within the Ukrainian cultural memory, is the writer Victoria Amelina, whose death, caused by a Russian missile strike on Kramatorsk in 2023, is a poignant example of the irreplaceable losses suffered by Ukraine's intellectual community. In her poem "Zalyshyla(s')" (Left/Stayed), Musakovska commemorates Amelina with the stanza "only your unpresent presence remains" (88), pointing out Amelina's voluntary engagement to documenting the atrocities of war. Here the writer also mourns the loss of another Ukrainian poet and soldier, Maksym Kryvtsov, who died on the frontlines in 2024. His posthumously published collection *Virshi z bijnytsi* (Poems from the battlement, 2023) has been recognized as one of the most significant literary works of the year,[16] serving both as a poetic testament from within the war and as a cultural artifact that bridges artistic expression and lived combat experience.[17]

Following this, Svitlana Povaliayeva's book constitutes a poignant example of poetic commemoration dedicated to the fallen soldiers who defended Ukraine. More specifically, this poetry collection functions as a symbolic tribute to her son, Roman Ratushnyi.[18] This biographical context perspective of a mother grieving her soldier-son introduces an intimate, personal dimension that significantly shapes the interpretation of the work through the lens of private loss, simultaneously framing the text as an act of mourning. As Povaliayeva mentions in her preface to the publication:

> Let people remember you
> in this way as well –
> when they open this book[19]
> (2022, 5)

In this context, poetry functions not only as a testament of the collective trauma of war but also as an intimate tribute to personal loss. Conversely, the mere survival of a loved one emerges as the ultimate source of joy in wartime. The poet powerfully conveys this emotional polarity in her stanzas:

> No one has died yet in the war for her,
> and not even
> anyone has passed away
> among her classmates,
> relatives, friends, or acquaintances[20]
> (2022, 157)

The author underscores the inexpressible value of moments when a loved one returns alive from the front, which are redefined in the context of war as charged with emotional intensity and symbolic meaning:

> Because your son has returned from the war,
> and this is above everything that one could pray for,
> above all prayers –

gratitude to your comrades…[21]
(2022, 116)

These stanzas portray the brutal reality of war; the mere survival of loved ones is a source of profound gratitude. At the same time, the reader is confronted with a contrast between the normality of peacetime and the pervasive sense of loss in wartime, where it becomes increasingly rare to encounter anyone untouched by grief. In this context, life itself becomes a fragile yet immeasurable good whose worth is amplified by its precarity, but death is prevalent, and commemoration has become an unbearably difficult duty due to the enormous number of deaths:

Each news of death,
a broken fate,
a destroyed home –
is like a hole in the body,
quickly covered with a metal patch.
Soon, there will be no living place left there.[22]
(2022, 50)

War does not stop life or the journey toward resilience, so holidays remain on the calendar, though they are now different from what they were before the war:

Christmas in the midst of war.
A bright holiday in dark times.
The hum of generators, muffled voices.
Each person carries their own loss,
hidden under their coat.[23]
(2022, 75)

Here the stark contrast between the traditional warmth and joy associated with Christmas and the grim reality of life during wartime is poignantly illuminated. In place of festive music and carol singing, the mechanical hum of generators fills the air, necessitated by the bombing of Ukraine's power infrastructure and underscoring the disruption of everyday life. Each individual loss constitutes a deeply personal trauma, often hidden from public view due to its intimate nature, yet collectively mirrored in the silent grief of others.

WAITING FROM THE WAR

According to traditional stereotypes, the role of women during wartime has been portrayed as one of waiting and enduring uncertainty as they hope for the return of their loved ones from the front. Povaliayeva powerfully underscores the emotional toll of this experience, revealing that the act of waiting itself becomes one of the most harrowing aspects of war:

It is impossible, intolerably, fiercely,
indifferently, drunkenly,
hysterically waiting,
waiting for someone to return
from war or for war to come.[24]
(2024, 82)

The experience of waiting for a soldier's return inevitably evokes the question of whether he will return alive at all. This suspended state of hope and fear is often mediated through the exchange of messages between the front and home, where language becomes both a lifeline and a fragile conduit of emotion. In this context, the act of communication acquires heightened significance:

> At first, he wrote,
> Then he only replied,
> Then he just read…
> Then the undelivered messages devoured
> his vision with a white circle,
> Eventually, they turned gray like snow…
> Suddenly, the messages stopped…
> The last one read…[25]
> (2024, 12)

Today's social media and technology play a crucial role not only as a mean of communication but also as a way of confirming whether someone is still alive or not. In this context, messages are telling the story without words, simply by changing the status of reception of a message – whether it has been delivered, received, read, not yet read, or will never be read. This gradation of message delivery and status represents the struggle of waiting and, at the same time, the fear of losing a loved one on the frontline. That also shows how electronic symbols take on new meanings in telling the stories of life or death without words.

In both poetry collections, despite the pervasive presence of war, loss, and the constant threat of missile and drone attacks, one of the central themes remains resilience and the unwavering inspiration to fight for freedom in the face of overwhelming adversity. The works of both authors are notably devoid of despair or hopelessness; instead, they offer powerful affirmations of collective strength and resolve. Povaliayeva, in particular, underscores in her poetry that, despite the devastation, Ukrainians must continue to fight:

> We are the salt of the earth, our tears – steel.
> Our hearts are of a strange shape, because our hearts are a map,
> our hands – swords!
> Are you crying silently? Complain aloud!
> But strike – do not be silent![26]
> (2022, 15)

The vision of Ukrainians is now as a strong people, who have become one with their native land. Their hands are metaphorically transformed into swords that will always defend the land. In the last sentence, the author uses the vulgar expression "iibash", which can be translated as "kill" in this context. This reflects a shift in language use during the war, when the standard language is perceived as insufficient to convey the intensity of the sentiment, leading to the use of stronger, more vulgar expressions. The importance of action and words is emphasized in the last stanza, where the poet demands: "do not be silent", as, otherwise, the silence will bring

death from the Russian side. Povaliayeva shows the power of defending the land through stanzas that show her faith in victory:

> Cursed pestilence of the enemy,
> I will destroy you to the last remnant.
> And I, Ukraine,
> will remain in the universe forever![27]
> (2022, 19)

The personification of Ukraine as an almost cosmic entity underscores the idea that nothing can extinguish the spirit of people fighting for freedom and the right to live in their own land. Musakovska also engages with the moral incomprehensibility of the invasion, seeking meaning in the face of senseless violence. In one of her poems, she writes: "God, how cramped the world is, / where they kill for / daring to live"[28] (2024, 70). This reflection captures the injustice of war and expresses the feeling of staying strong:

> We will emerge, scorched,
> eternal like this land,
> do you hear, the grain mourns
> God's little child?[29]
> (2022, 67)

Thus, by referring to a grain and soil as symbols of Ukrainian culture, the poet demonstrates the unity of the people and the land.

Both authors appeal to God as the ultimate source of justice, but these appeals reflect the desire to seek justice, rather than divine intervention. This also conveys a deep sense of disappointment, as the poets search for an explanation for the injustice of the war: "How the harsh God of the Old Testament temporarily replaces Jesus Christ"[30] (Musakovska 2024, 64). The poets raise the theological question: where was God while soldiers sacrificed their lives on the battlefield in defense of their homeland and freedom? This inquiry reflects a deep spiritual disillusionment and challenges the compatibility of war with Christian philosophy. Their verses express not only the incomprehensibility of such violence, but also a quiet indictment of divine silence in the face of human suffering and moral catastrophe. At the same time, there is an understanding that freedom is not something granted, but something earned and won through the blood and lives of thousands.

"CONCERNED EUROPE"

In the poetry of both authors, a shared sense of disappointment emerges regarding Europe's initial response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This sentiment is visible in the ironic expression "concerned Europe", now widely used within Ukrainian political and cultural discourse as a critique of the perceived passivity and delay in concrete action. In her poem "Dyvylysia" (They looked), Musakovska underscores this frustration by portraying the detached gaze of European observers, reflecting the indifference and hesitation that characterized early political responses.

Her verses highlight the emotional and moral weight of inaction in the face of unfolding atrocity:

> They loudly mourned and cheered her on,
> amazed that she was still alive.
> They admired her resilience
> and bravery.[31]
> (2024, 56)

In the same poem, she underlines the unwillingness of Europe as political unity to defend Ukraine militarily, due to the fear and risk of being involved:

> A whole crowd gathered,
> people fully armed,
> but no one pulled the trigger,
> afraid it might suddenly shake them
> with the recoil…[32]
> (2024, 57)

Here, the poet reflects the public opinion in Ukraine, naming the European politicians as "spectators of the theater of war"[33] (59) and, in another poem, she ironically apologies for those "uncomfortable questions" of Ukrainian society that are "[s]uch uncomfortable, such terrifying poems, full of rage, so politically incorrect"[34] (58). Povaliayeva's poem "Pryvit, harna u tebe suknia" (Hello, you have a beautiful dress; 175) raises the problem of Europe's understanding of Ukraine. The lyrical heroine, representing Ukraine, is perceived by the lyrical hero-foreigner through the lens of common stereotypes, where Ukrainians are often indifferently and mistakenly conflated with Russians:

> Aaa Ukraine – o-o-o, it's power, such a wild power!
> How do you say…
> Shevchenko, Tolstoy,
> Slavs, it doesn't matter…[35]
> (2022, 175)

These examples illustrate a profound lack of understanding of Ukrainian history and identity, as they adhere to the imperial Russian cultural narrative of "brother nations". This perspective diminishes Ukraine's unique cultural, historical, and political identity by portraying it as an inseparable part of Russia, effectively erasing centuries of Ukrainian independence, struggle, and national development. The poet emphasizes that without a deep understanding of a nation's culture and society, it is impossible to comprehend the essence of that country. Such ignorance not only distorts historical events, but also jeopardizes the recognition and respect for the Ukrainian nation's sovereignty and self-determination.

CONCLUSION

Svitlana Povaliayeva and Yuliya Musakovska, who are witnessing and suffering from the everyday realities of life in wartime, powerfully express their social roles through their poetry. Among the recurring themes in their works is the act of com-

memorating relatives and loved ones lost in the conflict, which extends beyond its central theme of remembrance; it also involves giving voice to the memory of fallen heroes, both soldiers and civilians. Additionally, documenting the war through literature, especially poetry, is a fundamental aspect of their work, aligning with the broader efforts of contemporary Ukrainian writers. This documentation is intricately tied to the depiction of daily life amidst the war's upheaval.

Both writers delineate time and space into two distinct periods – before and after the war. Musakovska intensifies this division by dating each poem, thereby grounding the experience of war in specific moments of time and place. Both vividly portray the atrocities that resulted in the loss of countless lives. A particularly poignant theme is the death of children during the conflict, as they symbolize not only the next generation but also the very memory of Ukraine. These themes deeply shape the tone of their poetry, making it both sensitive and profound within the broader narrative of trauma. Consequently, the women's war narrative emerges with a deeply embedded message of resilience, and serves as a form of documentation of Ukraine's struggle for freedom against Russia.

NOTES

[1] See more about combatant literature in Riabchenko 2025.

[2] The term "*velyka viina*"/ "big war" has been used in Ukraine since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, distinguishing it from the initial phase of Russia's war against Ukraine, which began in 2014.

[3] See Facebook and Instagram accounts of Yaryna Chornohus, Halyna Kruk, Iya Kiva, Yuliya Musakovksa, Yuliia Iliukha, Svitlana Povaliyayeva and many others.

[4] See further official results of reading interests in Shurenkova and Prochukhanova 2024.

[5] See the results here: "Protyahom 2023 roku v Ukrayini zareyestruvalosya 270 novykh vydavtsiv, a vypusk knyzhkovoyi produktsiyi zbilshyvsya na 73%." https://mcsc.gov.ua/news/protyagom-2023-roku-v-ukrayini-zareyestruvalosya-270-novyh-vydavcziv-a-vypusk-knyzhkovo-yi-produkcziyi-zbilshyvsya-na-73/?fbclid=IwAR3bRfbI-0DROvff7x6_Xio-0ZJuNnTuLUNuCJIN04QH9rsv4kYgYhSDEVQ.

[6] The transliteration from Ukrainian to English in this article was done by the author following the Library of Congress guidelines (https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/ukrainia.pdf).

[7] The bill 2309-IX from June 19, 2022 prohibits the distribution and import of published materials from Russia and Belarus, and also restricts publishing in the Russian language in Ukraine. See further https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2309-20#Text.

[8] The fragment of the poem "Words" translated by Ella Yevtushenko and Olena Jennings in http://www.verseville.org/poems-by-yuliya-musakovska.html.

[9] "Хлопчик не вижив. / Хлопчик, кажу, пішов. / Дівчинку ще качають, / може, спасуть."

[10] "Небо проламує скіпетр імперії, / що помирає, / цілячи наостанок у найдорожче, / у найбезахисніше: напис «діти» – як буквальна / позначка мішені"

[11] *Katsapy* is a Ukrainian ethnic slur historically used to refer to Russians, often carrying connotations of aggression, backwardness, or imperialist attitudes associated with them.

[12] "Їхня доця, вони звуть її «доча», / йде до школи в кросівках, / Які тато зняв / з убитої в Ірпені української / дівчинки"

[13] "Як ти? / Чи ти в безпечному місці? / Так звучить молитва, / яку повторюємо знову і знову / з 24 лютого 2022 року близьким і друзям"

[14] "Чи можу я бути в безпечному місці, / коли мої друзі – під постійними обстрілами в Харкові, / Сумах, Ірпені, Бучі, / без можливості виїхати?"
[15] "Хочеться вмерти, але доводиться говорити / ротом, повним каміння і цвяхів, / ротом повним крові. / Вимовляти слова замість тих, / із кого вийнято душу?"
[16] See further about Maksym Kryvtsov PEN Ukraine 2024.
[17] The Ukrainian PEN has launched a project to commemorate cultural figures killed in the war. It seeks to preserve the memory of what I call it as the "missiled generation", living under Russia's relentless shelling of Ukraine. See further about this commemorating project here https://theukrainians.org/spec/peopleofculture/.
[18] Roman Ratushnyi was a well-known Ukrainian journalist and public activist. He died in June 2022 at the age of 24 while serving as a soldier defending Ukraine. His brother Vasyl Ratushnyi also was killed on the frontline in 2025, aged 28.
[19] "нехай люди пам'ятають тебе / ще у такий спосіб – / коли відкриватимуть цю книжку."
[20] "у неї ніхто ще на війні не загинув / і навіть іще не помер / ніхто з однокласників, / родичів, друзів, знайомих"
[21] "Бо твій син повернувся з війни / і це понад усім, за що можна було б молитися, / понад усіма молитвами – / вдячність твоїм побратимам…"
[22] "Кожна звістка про смерть, / зламану долю, / зруйнований дім – / наче дірка в тілі, / швидко закрита металевою латкою. / Скоро там не залишиться / живого місця."
[23] "Різдво посеред війни. / Світле свято в темні часи. / Музика генераторів, приглушені голоси. / В кожного своя втрата, схована під пальтом."
[24] "неможливо нестерпно люто / байдужо п'яно / істерично чекати / чекати із війни або на війну."
[25] "Спочатку писав, / Потім відповідав лише, / Потім тільки прочитував… / Потім недоставлені повідлмлення виїдали / зір білим кружальцем, / Врешті сіріли як сніг… / Раптом повідомлення припинялися… / Останнє прочитане…"
[26] "Ми – сіль землі, наші сльози – сталь. / Наше серце дивної форми, бо наше серце – мапа, / наші руки – мечі! / Плачеш мовчки? Жалійся вголос! / Але їбаш – не мовчи!"
[27] "Проклята пошесть ворожа, / Я тебе знищу до останньої решткти / І пребуду у Всесвіті вічно / Я, Україна!"
[28] "Боже, як тісно у світі, / де убивають за те, / що насмілився жити"
[29] "вийдемо обгорілі / вічні як ця земля / чуєш протяжно квилить / збіжжя боже маля?"
[30] "як тимчасово підміняє Христа / суворий бог Старого Заповіту"
[31] "Гучно вболівали і підбадьорювали, / дивувалися, що ще жива. / Захоплювалися стійкістю / і хоробрістю."
[32] "Зібрався цілий натовп / людей при повному озброєнні, / але ніхто не натиснув на спусковий гачок, / аби його раптом не струснуло / віддачею"
[33] "глядачі театру війни"
[34] "такі незручні, такі страшні вірші, повні люті, такі неполіткоректні"
[35] "А Україна – о-о-о, це сила, така дика сила! / Як це у Вас… / Шевченко, Толстой, / слов'яни, не має значення…"

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