

## VERSES ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE

from “ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE WORKS” printed by Ganatleba Publishers, Tbilisi –  
1987, and translated from the Georgian by Marjory Wardrop<sup>1</sup>.

### ELEGY

The pale light of the full moon  
Was streaming on the fatherland  
And its white ray among the mountains  
Hovered in deep blue space.

Nowhere a sound, nowhere a cry  
Nothing born of parents stirred  
Save sometimes crying in pain  
Some Georgian sobbing in his sleep was heard.

Again alone... and the mountain's shade  
Caressed my native land in sleep  
Still sleep O God! Sleep, always sleep  
When shalt thou deem us worthy to awake?

### SPRING

The wood is clothed in leaf?  
The swallow twitters again,  
In the garden the solitary vinestem  
Weeps with excess of joy.

The mead is in bloom,  
The mountains blossom,  
O beloved fatherland  
Why dost thou not bloom?

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<sup>1</sup> Autograph of Marjory Wardrop on the following translated verses of Prince Iliia Chavchavadze (all printed first time) is preserved in the Oxford University: ‘Elegy’ (04/04/1893), ‘Spring’ (19/08/1894), ‘O Our Aragva...’ (fragment from poem ‘Vision’, 04/04/1893), ‘The Sleeping Maid’ (13/03/1895), ‘Ah!... She to whom my dear desires’ (13/03/1895), ‘Bazaleti’s Lake’ (first four rows) (see details in “Completed Works” by Guram Sharadze, page 143).

## O OUR ARAGVA...<sup>2</sup>

O our Aragva how I love thee!  
Thou art the witness of our ancient life  
On thy banks my, fatherland  
Was at one time a glory.

The ancient greatness of my native land  
Flourished before thy holy eye.  
I love thee for this, that I a Georgian  
There on thy banks was born.

In thy waves in the midst of my land  
A long history lies buried  
And pure Georgian blood  
Has been poured forth on thy banks.

There where thy powerful stream  
Mingles with the troubled slow Kura  
There once was spilt Georgian life  
There thundered the voice of Georgia for  
for fatherland's sake.

Centuries have passed over thy waves  
And centuries over — those Georgians  
With overflowing heart on thy holy waters  
How many times have I gazed with grief —

What sought I ? my country's past,  
In thy sight my ancient fatherland has  
sunk in the stream.  
And only the tears of blood from my wearied  
eyes  
Give frequently broken-hearted answer.

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<sup>22</sup> The river Aragvi

## THE SLEEPING MAID

I gaze on thee so calm at rest,  
And look upon thy crystal breast;  
Thy heart beats like the placid waves,  
When summer shores the water laves.  
On thy soft cheek's a gentle flush;  
Thy smiling lips like rubies blush;  
Like glimpse of heaven's thy pure sleep,  
While o'er thee angels vigil keep.  
Thy breath's as sweet as thy pure heart,  
Oh! blest is he whose love thou art!

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Ah!... She to whom my dear desires  
Life's longings — even self — were given —  
This dark land now she ne'er inspires  
She dwells beyond the highest heaven  
The star of my fair fortune's gone  
An orphan am I here — alone —  
The only joy for me that's left  
Is tears — of all else I'm bereft.

## BAZALETHI'S LAKE

Deep down in Bazalethi's lake,  
'Tis said a golden cradle lies,  
And there beneath the welling waves,  
An orchard blooms, and never dies.

That garden gay is always green,  
Its blossoms never know decay;  
The changing seasons of this earth,  
That region rare need not obey.

Nor summer's sun, nor winter's cold,  
Can harm that em'rald orchard gay  
For, in those sunlit glades of gold,  
Eternal spring doth hold her sway.

In that fair garden's very heart  
The golden cradle aye doth rest,  
There man hath never dared to go —  
That spot has never known a guest.