**From Pushkin’s “Eugene Onegin”**

Translated from the Russian

By Vladimir Nabokov

Chapter I

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Diana’s bosom, Flora’s dimple

are very charming, I agree⎯

but there’s a greater charm, less simple,

⎯the instep of Terpsichore.

By prophesying to the eye

a prize with which no prize can vie

’tis a fair token and a snare

for swarms of daydreams. Everywhere

its grace, sweet reader, I admire:

at long-hemmed tables, half-concealed,

in spring, upon a velvet field,

in winter, at a grated fire,

in ballrooms, on a glossy floor,

on the bleak boulders of a shore.

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I see the surf, the storm-rack flying. . . . .

Oh, how I wanted to compete

with the tremulous breakers dying

in adoration at her feet!

Together with those waves⎯

I wished to kiss what they could touch!

No⎯even when my youth would burn

its fiercest⎯never did I yearn

with such a torturing sensation

to kiss the lips of nymphs, the rose

that on the cheek of beauty grows

or breasts in mellow palpitation⎯

no, never did a passion roll

such billows in my bursting soul.

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Sometimes I dream of other minutes

by hidden memory retold⎯

and feel her little ankle in its

contented stirrup which I hold;

again to build mad builders start;

again within a withered heart

one touch engenders fire; again

⎯the same old love, the same old pain. . . .

But really, my loquacious lyre

has lauded haughty belles too long

⎯for they deserve neither the song,

nor the emotions they inspire:

eyes, words⎯all their enchantments cheat

as much as do their pretty feet.

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