

CHAPTER VI

LIUBLIU

After lying dormant for some four to five years the theme of love is revived in *Liubliu* (1922). It is a poem of contented love, and like *Fleita-pozvonochnik*, the other minor exploration of the theme, it stays within this personal world without exploring the human condition more generally.

Metrical Composition

Like *Fleita-pozvonochnik*, *Liubliu* is a monometric poem; it is written in the four-ictus *dol'nik* with an amphibrachic tendency in the anacrusis which will be the main narrative measure in *Pro eto*. In *Pro eto* the potential ballad associations of this measure will be clearly highlighted; here, however, there is no overt indication of a ballad genre, although the life story approach could be considered balladic (as, perhaps, in *Chelovek*). The four-ictus amphibrachic *dol'nik* theme comes to *Liubliu* from *Chelovek*; *Liubliu*, too, is concerned with love in time, but it ignores the iambic conclusion of 'Maiakovskii vekam'.

The only problem of classification arises over one line with a displaced rhyme (according to the lay-out in the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*); in this case, given the metrical context of a fixed measure, the line is considered to end at the rhyming word with the next line beginning at the following word. A full rhythmical description is given in Appendix V.

The distribution of the poem's 164 lines according to rhythmical form is given, in percentages, in Table 1 (one line does not conform to the ictus scheme of the measure).¹

TABLE 1. Rhythm

222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
28.7	17.1	17.1	6.1	7.9	6.7	4.9	1.8	6.1	3.7	0.6	164

Starting from a comparison of verse texts and a prose model, Gasparov has identified four distinctive features of the four-ictus *dol'nik*: in the verse texts there are more fully-stressed lines, and more disyllabic intervals, the third metrical stress is more readily omitted than the second, and the third interval is more readily shortened than the first two. Accordingly, he has identified two

main tendencies in the measure: a tendency, based on the first two features, to approach ternary metre, and a rival tendency, based on the second two features, to maintain a regular ternary rhythm at the beginning of the line but to break it at the end. The decisive factor which distinguishes these two tendencies is the character of the final interval. The first tendency is associated with the 222 rhythmical form and its companion 122 and 212 forms, while the second tendency is associated with the 221 rhythmical form and its companion 24 and 121 forms.²

Table 1 shows clearly that the four-ictus *dol'nik* of *Liubliu* belongs very much to the first tendency. The 222, 122, and 212 forms account for over 60% of all lines, while the 221 and 121 forms are quite rare, as is the omission of stress (compare the figure of 6.1% here with that of 36.2% in Gasparov's prose model and an average of around 20% in verse).³ In six of the ten lines with an omitted stress it is the second stress that is omitted, in just three it is the third, and in one the first; one line with an omitted stress is also an incorrect line.

The distribution of the 164 lines according to anacrusis and clausula is given, in percentages, in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2. Anacrusis

0	1	3
13.4	86.0	0.6

TABLE 3. Clausula

m	f	d	h	Lines
1.2	67.7	29.9	1.2	164

The percentage of monosyllabic anacruses (86.0%) is easily sufficient to establish an amphibrachic tendency in the anacrusis; zero anacruses are only locally prominent, and, as Kolmogorov and Kondratov suggest (and as was the case in *Chelovek*), the rhythmical quickening at the start of the line seems to be used to signal a climax.⁴ A hypermetrical stress in the anacrusis is counted in one line, while the single trisyllabic anacrusis occurs in the line with an omitted first stress. Feminine clausulae, as Table 3 shows, also dominate, thereby reinforcing the poem's uniformity; dactylic clausulae are quite prominent, but there are just two masculine clausulae in the whole poem. There are fifteen heterosyllabic rhymes (18.3%) and one example of a hypermetrical stress in the clausula.

Maiakovskii's standard abab quatrain is still the dominant stanza form, but not quite to the same extent as before. There are thirty-two abab quatrains, but also eighteen couplets which can be interpreted as forming aabb quatrains since they always come in isolated pairs (Kolmogorov and Kondratov interpret them as such);⁵ within a pair, however, the individual couplets may be differentiated in the clausula. There seems to be no general significance in the use of one stanza form rather than the other, but the variety may arise in compensation for the greater metrical regularity of the verse and perhaps also the relative uniformity in the clausula.

The number of different types of clausula pattern and the distribution of the thirty-two abab quatrains and eighteen couplets (taken both individually and in pairs) among them are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Clausula Pattern — abab Quatrain							Types	Total
ffff	fdfd	dfdf	fdff	Others				
12	4	3	3	10	12	32		
Clausula Pattern — Couplet					Types	Total		
ff	dd	df						
8	6	4	3	18				
Clausula Pattern — aabb Quatrain							Types	Total
ffff	ddff	dddd	ffdd	dfdf	ffdf	dddf		
2	2	1	1	1	1	1	7	9

This table shows that the clausula pattern serves as often to differentiate the couplets as to assimilate them in aabb quatrains: dactylic clausulae are more prominent than in the abab quatrains, so the variation in the stanza form is accompanied by greater variety in the clausula too; in the abab quatrains only the ffff scheme is prominent.

Commentary

The poem is divided into eleven chapters which range in length from four to twenty-eight lines, but with a concentration in the middle of that range: five are twelve lines long, and three are sixteen lines long. Since the poem is monometric, each chapter will be characterized (like the poem overall) according to the distribution of lines among the rhythmical forms of the four-ictus *dol'nik*; the individual character of each chapter is determined by the relative prominence of the various forms.

'Obyknovenno tak' (ll. 1–21)

TABLE 5

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
1)	4	2	1	—	1	1	—	—	2	—	1	12

The opening stanza of 'Obykovenno tak' introduces the subject of the poem:

1122d	Любовь любому рожденному дадена, —
1112d	но между служб, доходов и прочего
10f	со дня на день
322f	очерстывает сердечная почва.

(iv, 85, l. 1)⁶

The third line of this stanza is the only line in the poem which does not conform to the ictus scheme of the four-ictus *dol'nik*, and it highlights (from outside?) the process of time. Kolmogorov and Kondratov cite this stanza as an example of that initial deviation from the norm often found in Maiakovskii's poems:⁷ not only does the third line stand outside the ictus scheme of the measure but also the first stress is omitted in the fourth line and both rhymes are heterosyllabic.

The second stanza describes the normal encasement of the heart in body and clothes:

1122f	На сердце тело надето,
. . . 132f	на тело — рубаха. Но и этого мало!
1212f	Один — идиот! — манжеты наделал
1121f	и груди стал заливать крахмалом.

(l. 7)

The lay-out in the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* places the boundary between the first and second metrical lines within a graphical line; this may be a continuation of the initial deviation from the norm, but it could also be taken to reflect the theme of encasement.

The last four lines of this introductory chapter are all amphibrachic in rhythm:

1222d	Под старость спохватятся. Женщина мажется.
1222d	Мужчина по Мюллеру мельницей машется.
1222d	Но поздно. Морщинами множится кожаца.
1222d	Любовь поцветет, поцветет — и скукожится.

(l. 14)

The interpretation of these two couplets as a single stanza is supported by the similarity of the two rhymes, which differ only in the stressed vowel. The

amphibrachic rhythm itself arises in accordance with the normal failure to overcome the process of time, and, as Kolmogorov and Kondratov point out, the solemn and romantic tone which might be associated with this rhythm is here subverted.⁸

'Mal' chishkoi' (ll. 22–53)

TABLE 6

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
22)	6	1	3	1	1	2	—	—	2	—	—	16

The poem now follows the poet hero's life in chronological order, beginning, in 'Mal' chishkoi', with his childhood in the Caucasus. There is an amphibrachic anacrusis in all but one line of this chapter, and six of the sixteen lines are ternary in rhythm. The most striking rhythmical effect comes in the third stanza, which combines two amphibrachic lines and two lines with omitted stresses:

1222f	Без груза рубях,
	без башмачного груза
041f	жарился в кутаисском зное.
1222f	Вворачивал солнцу то спину,
	то пузо —
114f	пока под ложечкой не заност.

(l. 36)

These contrasting forms encompass the measure's rhythmical range. In the fourth and final stanza the sun, the centre of the natural world, wonders how there can be room for itself and the universe in the space of the poet hero's heart.

'Iunoshei' (ll. 54–80)

TABLE 7

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
54)	5	1	4	1	1	—	2	1	1	—	—	16

In 'Iunoshei' the poet hero is rapidly transferred from school to prison. This early crisis is marked by the presence of zero anacruses in six out of the sixteen lines. The most distinctive stanza of the chapter is again the third.

0221f	Что мне тоска о Булонском лесе?!
0111d	Что мне вздох от видов на море?!

0222f Я вот
в “Бюро похоронных процессий”
1211d влюбился
в глазок ЮЗ камеры.

(1. 68)

This stanza, which is set in prison, contains the first line with a 111 (binary) rhythmical form.

‘Moi universitet’ (ll. 81–133)

TABLE 8

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
81)	8	8	6	3	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	28

This and the next chapter are the two longest chapters in the poem. The poet hero’s university is out on the street, and in ‘Moi universitet’ rhythmical forms with two or more monosyllabic intervals are rare. In the middle of the chapter the poet hero turns from his practical experience to his hatred of the ‘жирные’:

1232f Берут Добролюбова (чтоб зло ненавидеть), —
1122f фамилья ж против,
скулит родовая.
00122f Я
жирных
с детства привык ненавидеть,
1122f всегда себя
за обед продавая.

(1. 111)

The intensity of his hatred is emphasized by the repetition of ‘ненавидеть’ in the rhyme and also by the hypermetrical stressing of ‘Я’ in the anacrusis of the third line (the only such hypermetrical stress in the poem); the opening line of the stanza is the first example of an incorrect line.

‘Vzrosloe’ (ll. 134–76)

TABLE 9

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
134)	6	7	2	—	4	1	1	1	1	1	—	24

The theme of ‘Vzrosloe’ is not hatred but love, although the poet hero’s love still has no object. The rhythmical profile is quite diverse, and in the penultimate stanza there is a binary rhythmical tendency:

1111f	У прочих знаю сердца дом я.
1112f	Оно в груди — любому известно!
1112d	На мне ж с ума сошла анатомия.
1122f	Сплошное сердце — гудит повсеместно.

(l. 164)

The ordinary heart is confined in the chest, but there is no containing the poet hero's heart and by the end of the stanza the verse is moving out of the binary rhythmical tendency.

'*Chto vyshlo*' (ll. 177–99)

TABLE 10

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
177)	4	1	2	1	—	1	1	1	1	1	—	12

In '*Chto vyshlo*', as its title suggests, the poem moves into its dénouement. This is marked by a shortening both of the chapter length and of the anacrusis, with a zero anacrusis in four out of the twelve lines, while the rhythmical profile remains quite diverse. The opening stanza contains the only example of a hypermetrical stress in the clausula:

0212f	Больше чем можно, больше чем надо —
0222(1)d	будто поэтовым бредом во сне навис —
1122f	комок сердечный разросся громадой:
1211d	громада любовь, громада ненависть.

(l. 177)

The emotion in the poet hero's heart has grown into an enormous burden and the rhythmical stride contracts in the first half of the second stanza:

1121f	Под ношей ноги шагали шатко —
1111f	ты знаешь, я же ладно сложен —
1212f	и всё же тащусь сердечным придатком, плеч подгибая косую сажень.
0221f	

(l. 184)

So the poet hero keeps going, but in the final stanza of the chapter he confesses to exhaustion from the constant flow of lyric verse.

'Zovu' (ll. 200–27)

TABLE 11

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
200)	4	1	3	—	1	2	—	—	—	1	—	12

In 'Zovu', another short chapter, the poet hero calls for someone to accept his love but there are no takers. It is, therefore, an indecisive, transitional chapter, and it lacks any distinctive rhythmical tendency.

'Ty' (ll. 228–54)

TABLE 12

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
228)	2	—	2	1	3	—	2	—	1	1	—	12

In 'Ty' the poet hero's love is finally accepted. There are just two lines of ternary rhythm in the chapter (the first line and the last), and the 122 form is not represented at all; the incorrect line, in the second stanza, involves an interval of four syllables. In the third stanza, when the poet hero celebrates his liberation, a stress is omitted:

1112f А я ликую.
 Нет его —
 ига!
 131f От радости себя не помня,
 1112f скакал,
 индейцем свадебным прыгал,
 0222f так было весело,
 было легко мне.

(l. 247)

The 31 rhythmical form of the second line of this stanza is very rare in the four-ictus *dol'nik*, which generally avoids such intervals of three syllables.⁹

'Nevozmozhno' (ll. 255–80)

TABLE 13

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
255)	2	3	2	2	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	12

The title 'Nevozmozhno' refers to the impossibility for the poet hero of taking on the burden of his heart again (if it is rejected). The opening stanza, which makes this point, is distinguished by the only use of masculine rhyme in the poem:

1221f	Один не смогу — не снесу рояля
142m	(тем более — несгораемый шкаф).
1221f	А если не шкаф, не рояль, то я ли
0121m	сердце снес бы, обратно взяв.

(l. 255)

As in the preceding chapter there are only two lines of ternary rhythm, but the companion 122 and 212 forms are prominent again and there are no incorrect lines.

'Tak i so mnoi' (ll. 281–306)

TABLE 14

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
281)	5	3	2	1	1	2	1	—	—	1	—	16

'Tak i so mnoi', the climactic chapter of the poem, is one stanza longer than the preceding four chapters. Zero anacruses are again prominent, especially in the opening stanza:

0212d	Флоты — и то стекаются в гавани.
0211f	Поезд — и то к вокзалу гонит.
0212f	Ну, а меня к тебе и подавней
0202f	— я же люблю! — тянет и клонит.

(l. 251)

Each line in this stanza has a zero anacrusis, the only time this happens in the poem, and the title verb is highlighted by the striking rhythmical effect of a zero interval in the stem. In the rest of the chapter, however, there is just one other zero anacrusis and the rhythm becomes much more regular.

'Vyvod' (ll. 307–16)

TABLE 15

	222	122	212	221	112	121	211	111	OS	Inct	Not	Lines
307)	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	4

In the single quatrain that sums up the poem the poet hero swears the constancy of his love:

1212f	Не смоят любовь ни ссоры, ни вёрсты.
124d	Продумана, выверена, проверена.
1222f	Подъемя торжественно стих строкопёрстый,
1122f	клянусь — люблю неизменно и верно!

(1. 307)

The amphibrachic rhythm of the third line is now associated with a solemn tone (compare the apparent subversion of just such a possible tone in the amphibrachic lines of 'Obyknovenno tak'). Apart from this amphibrachic line the stanza also features a line with an omitted stress (the third) and the two main secondary forms, with one of which, the 122 form, it ends; this profile gives the poem's metrical theme a conclusion that is broad, yet open.