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# Russia and Spain

*Robert H. Stacy*



Photo by Iglarsh

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In A.D. 711 Tariq ibnZiyad began the conquest of Spain, and in 1237 the Mongols under Batu began the conquest of Russia. In both areas a Christian regime was overrun: by Muslim Moors from North Africa, in the case of Spain, and in the case of Russia by the Mongols, who, if they were not Muslims when they made their first incursions, began to accept Islam later in the thirteenth century. In both instances the Christian rulers who were defeated were a minority and not entirely autochthonous: the Visigoths had themselves invaded the Iberian peninsula in the fifth century, and the Scandinavian Varangians had established their dominion in Russia in the ninth. In 1492, some 780 years after the *iftitāh al-Andalus* (the "opening," or conquest, of Spain) was initiated, the last Muslim kinglet, whom the Spaniards call Boabdil (Abu Abdullah), was defeated and dethroned; and in 1480, some 250 years after the first Mongol invasions, the humiliating *tatarskoe igo* (the "Tatar yoke") was thrown off by the Russians under Ivan III.

The precise effects of the periods of Arab and Mongol domination in Spain and Russia are properly a subject—and a complex one—of historical research and study. There are historians of Russia who ascribe to the Mongol period significant influences on subsequent Russian history and even on the Russian character, while other historians regard the period as a mere interregnum; and, correspondingly, some Spanish historians emphasize, while others minimize, the Arab influence. It is difficult, however, to believe that the periods of alien hegemony in Spain and Russia which cut these nations off for varying lengths of time from the community of Europe did not in some way leave their mark. And indeed some effects, differing of course in proportion to the duration of the hegemony, are clearly manifest in both cases. But they differ mostly in this respect: the Moors who entered Spain, religiously inspired zealots and warriors though they were, brought with them the rich intellectual and literary traditions of the Arabs—traditions which stemmed largely from the *jāhiliyya*, or pre-Islamic period; but the Mongols who invaded Russia were nomadic

warriors, pure and simple. In Spain the Moorish heritage is today eminently apparent not only in architectural monuments of great beauty and in a variety of poetic forms (e.g., the *casida*, *gacela*, and *zéjel*) but also in the language. Spanish contains a remarkable number of words of Arabic origin, while the degree of influence is indicated by the fact that even a common Spanish preposition and conjunction, *hasta*, derives from the Arabic (*hatta*). In Russia, on the other hand, there are neither Mongol architectural monuments nor Mongol literary forms; and although some words of Mongol/Tatar origin (chiefly terms relating to administration, horse breeding, and weaponry) entered the Russian language, very few such words are in use in the language today (the most notable specimen being the Russian word for "money," *den'gi*).<sup>1</sup>

**A**lthough, as we have noted, the exact nature of any lasting effects of the Arab domination in Spain and the Mongol period in Russia on the history of the two nations is still a matter of scholarly argument, it is interesting that both the Russian and Spanish writer quite often pose for their readers a rhetorical question (a kind of *petitio principii*), each asking for an explanation of his nation's peculiar fate. A good example from the Russian sphere is the following passage which occurs near the end of part 1 of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*. The author apostrophizes Russia, likening her to a troika, and asks:

*Rus, whither are you speeding so? Answer me. No answer. The middle bell trills out in a dream its liquid soliloquy; the roaring air is torn to pieces and becomes Wind; all things on earth fly by and other nations and states gaze askance as they step aside and give her the right of way.*<sup>2</sup>

A similar question is posed by José Ortega y Gasset in his *Meditaciones del Quijote*, where the author likens Spain to the prow of a ship:

*O God, what is Spain? What is this Spain, this spiritual promontory of Europe, this thing we may call the prow of the continental soul in the broad expanse of the globe, in the midst of innumerable races, lost in a limitless yesterday and an endless tomorrow, below the immense and cosmic cold of the twinkling stars.*<sup>3</sup>

And Ortega y Gasset comments elsewhere on an affinity between Russia and Spain:

*Russia and Spain, those two ends of the great European diagonal...Russia and Spain are alike in being the two "pueblo" races, races where the common people predominate—that is, races that suffer from an obvious and continuous lack of eminent individuals. The Slavic nation is an enormous mass of people on top of which trembles a minute head. There has always been a cultivated minority which moves at the top of Russian life, but it is so minute in comparison to the vastness of the race that it has never been able to saturate the gigantic popular plasma with its organizing influence. This is why Russia seems so amorphous and so persistently primitive.*<sup>4</sup>

And indeed the Russian writer Alexander Pushkin speaks with pride of the primitive nature (*pervobytnost'*) of the Russian language (which retains the aspect system of primitive Indo-European in its verbs),

1. The scanty Mongol legacy in Russia contrasts sharply with the Mughal (Mongol) heritage in India and the monuments of the Yüan (Mongol) dynasty in China.

2. Translated by Vladimir Nabokov in *Nikolai Gogol* (New York: New Directions, 1944), p. 113.

3. J. Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Quixote*, trans. E. Rugg and D. Marin (New York: Norton, 1961), p. 102.

4. J. Ortega y Gasset, *Invertebrate Spain*, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: Howard Fertig, 1974), p. 71. Emilia Pardo Bazán, in her *La revolución y la novela en Rusia* (Madrid, 1887), speaks in the most eloquent terms of the importance of the peasant in the Russian tradition and in Russian literature; but she contrasts this with her own Spanish people, "latinos desdeñosos, aristócratas por instinto" (p. 104).

while critic after critic, commenting on either Russian or Spanish literature, has noted the marked simplicity, down-to-earth quality, and even barrenness of the poetry in both cases. In his well-known essay "Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung" (1795), Friedrich Schiller distinguishes between "naive" poetry—poetry that is direct, objective, and unsophisticated—and "sentimental" poetry that is indirect, subjective, and sophisticated. In these terms I would hazard the statement that no two other major European literatures can supply, as do Spanish and Russian, so many examples of poetry representative of Schiller's "naive" category.

The earliest association between Russia and Spain occurs in the medieval period. It is especially interesting to encounter, in reading Carl Brockelmann's *History of the Islamic Peoples*, mention of the "Slav Najdah" leading a caliph's army against insurgents in tenth-century Muslim Spain; or, in reading Harold Livermore's *A History of Spain*, to meet with "Arabised Russians" bearing such names as Khayran, Zuhayr, and al-Mujahid. But the fact is that, beginning early in the ninth century, we hear of the so-called "palace Slavs," or "Saqalibah praetorians," as mercenaries at the court of the emir of Córdoba. The term *ṣaqālibah* (a plural form) is the Arabic version of the Byzantine Greek *Sklaboi* ("Slavs") and was first applied to prisoners of war, or "slaves" of actual Slavic origin obtained through flourishing slave markets, especially the one at Verdun. The word later came to include all such persons from many of the countries of Europe and, still later, assumed in Andalus the specialized meaning of those favored mercenaries employed by the emirs.

**T**he caliphate of Córdoba came to an end in 1031, the city of Córdoba declared itself an oligarchical republic, and Andalus broke up into a number of petty city-states which replaced the former administrative districts. These states are called the taifa-states or taifas, from the Arabic word for "party" or "faction," and the rulers are known as the "party kings" (*reyes de taifas* in Spanish). In the east were the Saqalibah taifas; of these Harold Livermore writes:

*Another group of taifas was formed by the palace Slavs; one Khayran and his successor Zuhayr held Almería and Murcia; al-Mujahid took Denia and the Balearics, and Nabil Tortosa. In the midst of these Arabised Russians, a grandson of Almanzor set himself up in Valencia.*<sup>5</sup>

5. Harold Livermore, *A History of Spain* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 120.

But the taifa-states lasted for only about fifty years. With the coming of the Almoravids they broke up, and new states and dominions arose. Soon the *Reconquista* was under way in earnest, and Islam fought a losing battle against the Christian princes. By 1492 it was all over, and it was in this turbid stream that almost all traces of the Saqalibah were lost.

In 1490 the Archbishop of Novgorod, troubled by the Judaizers (a sect which challenged the deity of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity) and the proliferation of proscribed texts, wrote the Metropolitan of Moscow and praised the firmness with which Ferdinand of Spain and the Inquisition were dealing with heretics. Russian ecclesiastics seem to have had a special interest in the Spanish Inquisition, and the unprecedented (in Russia) techniques of the examina-

tion, torture, and burning of heretics may well have been based on the Spanish model.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, certain similarities are apparent between Spanish Catholic and Russian Orthodox religiosity. Thus, in reading G. P. Fedotov's *The Russian Religious Mind*, with its harsh comments on Russian Byzantine Christianity, one cannot help being reminded of similarly severe judgments regarding Spanish Catholicism—those of Pío Baroja, for example, or of Gerald Brenan in the postscript to his history of Spanish literature.

Much farther east and at a later date we find another point of contact between Spain and Russia. About 1590 a Spanish Dominican in China, Father Juan Cobo, produced the first translation still extant of a Chinese literary text: this was the *Espejo rico del claro corazón*, a translation of the *Ming-hsin pao-chien* ("Mind-Enlightening Precious Mirror"), a collection of aphorisms made by Fan Li-pen, a minor writer of uncertain date.<sup>7</sup> Over two hundred years later, early in the nineteenth century, a member of the Russian Orthodox Church Mission in Peking, Archmonk (later Archimandrite) Daniil, produced a Russian version of the same Chinese work. Father Daniil, who later was the first to hold the chair of Chinese at Kazan University, had somehow acquired a large collection of Chinese manuscripts and books which the Jesuits had left behind in China after the suppression of the order in 1773. Father Daniil's family name was Sivillov; it is interesting to speculate, since few facts are known, that he was a Spanish convert to Russian Orthodoxy. There are, incidentally, a number of Spanish names that occur in Russian history, the most famous being the name of a street in a Russian city: the Deribasovskaia in Odessa. The street was named in honor of Vice Admiral J. de Ribas y Boyons, who, in the service of Catherine the Great, founded the city of Odessa in 1794. The Spanish name was first Russianized as Deribas and then as Deribasov.

In the nineteenth century Russia and Spain came into contact—and very nearly into conflict—in the New World. In 1806 Count Nicholas Rezanov, acting in the name of Tsar Alexander I and the Russian-American Company (its headquarters were at Sitka in Russian Alaska), sailed into San Francisco harbor (Yerba Buena) with the intention of eventually laying claim to it and the entire western coast of North America, then under Spanish control. Rezanov ingratiated himself with the Spanish authorities and even had a love affair with the daughter of the San Francisco commandant. Though he and the Russians planned, through diplomatic machinations, on annexing this considerable territory and populating it with large-scale emigration from Russia, in fact only a small and temporary colony was established near Santa Rosa. The entire venture proved a fiasco, and Rezanov himself died suddenly in 1807. But the romantic nature of the planned undertaking produced one well-documented Russian historical novel (N. Sergievski's *Gishpanskaia zateia*, "The Spanish Enterprise") and a number of studies.<sup>8</sup>

I shall now turn to some general comments on Russian and Spanish literature and, without attempting to summarize the very substantial body of studies concerned with Hispano-Russian literary relationships and affiliations, consider several representative examples of the use of Spanish themes by Russian writers. There are, in a broad

6. See James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 70.

7. See Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 1:805-806.

8. Studies include that of Hector Chevigny, *Lost Empire* (New York: Macmillan, 1945).



sense, some notable similarities between Russian and Spanish literature. For instance, Gerald Brenan writes:

*The Spanish mind is riveted by its keen senses to the actual world and leaves it with pain and difficulty. Moralizing is a sort of ointment laid on to soothe the too sharp impressions. But it is also a consequence of the very deep and strong social sense of the Spaniards....The Spanish writer never loses a sense of social obligation.*<sup>9</sup>

9. Gerald Brenan, *The Literature of the Spanish People* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), pp. 115–116.

Compare this with what Dmitri Mirsky says of the Russian writer:

*The novelists were expected to react, sensitively and significantly, to the current life of the nation...and the critics demanded that every time a novelist gave his work to the world, it should contain things worth meditating on and worth analyzing from the point of view of the social issues of the day.*<sup>10</sup>

10. Dmitri Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), p. 180.

Brenan also comments on Spanish sententiousness and the Spanish love of proverbs; but the Russians, too, are a paroemiophile people who have, it seems, a proverb to cover every possible human situation. One can see the marked Spanish penchant for proverbs quite early, for example, in Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* (fifteenth century); while in one of the earliest Russian novels, Chulkov's picaresque *The Comely Cook* (1770), there is a proverb in almost every paragraph. There is a similarity, too, in the fact that the Golden Age of Russian literature coincided with the harsh and bigoted reign of Nicholas I with its severe censorship, while the Spanish *siglo de oro* flourished under the equally harsh and censorious reign of Philip II.

So far as Russian literature in Spain and Spanish literature in Russia are concerned, there are some chronological and quantitative differences. Whereas the first item of Russian literature (Derzhavin's "Ode to the Supreme Being") appeared in a Spanish version only in 1838,<sup>11</sup> Russian translations of Spanish works began to appear considerably earlier. Thus a Russian translation of Cervantes's *Las dos doncellas* was published in 1763, while the first Russian version of *Don Quijote* dates from 1769 and the first Russian translation of *Lazarillo de Tormes* from 1775.<sup>12</sup> Though Russian themes and allusions appear occasionally in Spanish literature from the seventeenth century (e.g., Lope de Vega's *El Gran Duque de Moscovia y Emperador Perseguido*) to the twentieth century (Juan Goytisolo evokes romanticism by citing the name of Lermontov in his powerful 1970 novel *Count Julian*), in Russian literature, especially in drama and verse, allusions to Spain and Spanish themes are very frequent in the works of both minor and major writers, from Baron Anton Delvig's eighteenth-century sonnet on Cupid in Spain and Russia to one of Andrei Voznesenski's best-known poems, "Goya" (1959). But this is only to say that Spain, unlike Russia, has always had a more international appeal and has always served other European writers and artists as a source, almost like the Orient, of romantic and exotic themes. Music offers some striking examples: one can hardly think of any piece of Spanish music that evokes the steppes of Russia in the way that Glinka's *Jota aragonesa* or Rimski-Korsakov's *Capriccio espagnol* evokes Spain.<sup>13</sup>

When we survey the works of only the major Russian writers, we can clearly see the strong appeal of Spain and Spanish motifs. A leading

11. See G. Schanzer, *Russian Literature in the Hispanic World: A Bibliography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. xiii and item 35260.

12. See Ludmilla Turkevich, *Cervantes in Russia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 12ff.; and G. Schanzer, "Lazarillo de Tormes in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Symposium*, Spring 1962, pp. 55–62.

13. Glinka spent two years in Spain and became enraptured with Spanish music; see Richard Leonard, *A History of Russian Music* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), p. 53ff.

figure in Russian preromanticism, N. M. Karamzin, after reading the story of Conde Guarinos in a German anthology of Spanish literature, wrote his Russian version of the Spanish ballad in 1789. Mikhail Lermontov (died 1841), whose name is generally considered to be of Scottish origin (Learmont), knew of the family legend that connected it rather with the Dukes of Lerma. One of Lermontov's youthful works was a drama in verse, *The Spaniards*, a highly melodramatic play set in Castile against the background of the Inquisition.<sup>14</sup>

In the writings of Alexander Pushkin (died 1837), the greatest of the Russian poets, there are numerous Spanish allusions. Pushkin has a large number of poems on Spanish themes. One of his best-known tales in verse, *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel*, is based upon his reading (in French translation) of Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*. Pushkin studied Spanish and had the works of Calderón and Cervantes in Spanish in his library. Like so many writers of the nineteenth century, he was intrigued by the story of Don Juan Tenorio, and one of his "little tragedies," *The Stone Guest*, is a masterful variation on the theme of the *Convidado de piedra* and the don's death. The names of Cervantes and Don Quijote are especially important in the case of Pushkin, but they are in fact important throughout Russian literature down to the Russian modernist movement of the early twentieth century: in 1907 Sologub wrote the novel *The Petty Demon* with one of the most disturbing characters in literature, Peredonov, whose name may be interpreted as meaning "the don (i.e., Quijote) made over." In the Soviet period, too, *Don Quijote* has been of great interest in Russia; a most impressive film version of the novel was the 1957 Len-film production directed by G. Kozintsev.

**A**mong the major novelists, the works of Gogol (died 1852), who may have visited Spain in 1837, also show the influence of Cervantes. The Russian Hispanist F.V. Kelin noted the striking similarity between Gogol's madman in *Notes of a Madman* and Cervantes's *Coloquio de los perros*. And Professor Turkevich shows the marked influence of Cervantes on Gogol's masterpiece, *Dead Souls*.<sup>15</sup> Tolstoi in his notorious essay "What Is Art?" pays tribute to Cervantes by excluding *Don Quijote* from his ruthless decimation of literature and by including it among the very few representatives of what he considered good universal art. Ivan Turgenev, who preferred Calderón to Shakespeare, wrote an essay entitled "Hamlet and Don Quijote" (1860) in which he divides literary characters (and real men) into two categories: those whose interminable rumination and hesitation prevent resolute action; and those naive idealists who dare to act, but often in a ludicrous fashion. Turgenev spoke and read Spanish, his interests here having been aroused by his association with Louis Viardot and Viardot's Spanish wife, the singer Pauline Viardot-García.<sup>16</sup> Salvador de Madariaga, incidentally, calls Ortega y Gasset the "Spanish Turgenev" in his introduction to Miguel de Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life*.

Fëdor Dostoevski took the figure of the grand inquisitor in the still-controversial "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov* from Schiller's drama *Don Carlos*, and he considered *Don Quijote* "the last and greatest word of human thought." References to Cervantes's novel occur frequently in Dostoevski's letters, notebooks, and diaries as well as in his fiction. In *The Idiot*, for exam-

14. See A. Manning, "Lermontov and Spain," *Romanic Review* 3 (1931): 126-129.

15. Turkevich, *Cervantes in Russia*, p. 46ff.

16. See A. Zviguilsky, "Turguénev et l'Espagne," *Revue de littérature comparée*, Jan.-Mar. 1959, p. 50ff.

ple, Aglaia Epanchina recites, with one slight alteration, a famous poem by Pushkin, "The Poor Knight" (itself a favorite of Dostoevski's and thought by one Russian critic to be a translation of a lost Spanish ballad), and compares Prince Myshkin to the "poor knight" and to Don Quijote. But the novels of Dostoevski and especially the presence in them of such stormy and passionate *femmes fatales* as Grushenka in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Nastasia Filipovna in *The Idiot* eventually played a role in the change that Mario Praz notes: "It was Mérimée who localized in Spain the type of the Fatal Women which towards the end of the century came to be placed more generally in Russia."<sup>17</sup>

Although I have mentioned briefly the cases of Lermontov and Pushkin, Spanish imagery is prominent as well in a very large body of nineteenth-century Russian romantic verse. The Spanish element remains strong in the poetry of the neoromantic movement, beginning towards the end of the nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth. Out of a large mass of material I shall cite two examples by two Russian symbolist poets. Konstantin Balmont (died 1943) has a sonnet entitled "Sin miedo" in which, urging the poet to temper his thoughts in the flame of passion, he employs the figure of the famed Toledo blades:<sup>18</sup>

*Have you seen the daggers of old Toledo?  
You will see no better, wherever you may look.  
On the figured blade an inscription reads Sin miedo:  
"Be always fearless—they are powerfully tempered.*

Balmont explains that the steel blades of Toledo were inlaid with gold, and he advises the poet also to inlay his steel with gold—to pour into resonant words the controlled fire of inspiration.

Alexander Blok (died 1921), the greatest of the Russian symbolists, treats the Don Juan and "stone guest" theme in his poem "The Steps of the Comendador," which begins:

*A heavy, thick curtain at the entrance,  
Outside the window the misty night.  
Of what avail now your tedious freedom,  
Don Juan, now that you know fear?*

The tone of the whole poem is somber and menacing and is given a modern setting: as the Comendador enters the house in the dark of night, a motorcar speeds by in the deserted street. There is no description of the macabre dinner or of Don Juan's descent into hell but simply a reference to Doña Anna still asleep in the early hours of the morning.

**T**he Russian symbolists availed themselves of various esoteric verse forms, such as the Persian *ghazal*, the Malayan *pantun*, and the Japanese *haiku*. One poet, Vyacheslav Ivanov, has in a major collection of his verse a poem which he calls a *glossa*. This verse form, a *rara avis* not only among the Russian symbolists but among modern poets in general, is the Spanish *glosa* (sometimes called the *mote* or *retruécano*). Ivanov's poem meticulously observes the canons of the gloss: there is an introductory stanza of four lines (called the *cabeza* in Spanish), followed by four more stanzas, each ending with a refrain drawn from each of the lines of the *cabeza*.

The Soviet Russian poets, operating within prescribed aesthetic and

17. Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 197.

18. Translations from the Russian poets Balmont, Blok, Antokolsky, and Aseev are by Robert H. Stacy.



political limitations, employ Spanish themes and imagery which have "social significance" or which reflect clearly a definite point of view. Thus Pavel Antokolski has a long poem entitled "The Portrait of an Infanta," in which Velázquez is doing the portrait of a royal child; but the child is a symbol of a decrepit and corrupt Spanish aristocracy:

*A fragment of an effete line*

*Mouldered before his eyes. An abortion of divinity.*

*Demure. Sweet-toothed. The passion of sexless dwarfs.*

*And the scourge of priests.*

Even the scholars of Bologna and the Sorbonne could not, the poet says, calculate the number of deaths by which the life of the ten-year-old girl was maintained. During a break in the painting, the Spanish king tells Velázquez that he will be fed below stairs. Centuries pass and the portrait stands in the Louvre:

*And the child infanta in the sad portrait*

*Looks past one's eyes, as the artist ordered her to do.*

*Before her is the empty Louvre. The hoary gallery.*

*The sheen of parquet floors. And silence, as in the*

*Escorial days.*

*And pitilessly dressed in the same heavy silk,*

*Mindless as an idol, incontrovertible as the grass*

*On the cemetery graves, older than father and grandfather,*

*The little girl smiles. She is strong because she is dead.*

Another favorite theme of the Soviet Russian poets is the Spanish Civil War and, especially, the death of García Lorca. Nikolai Aseev in 1957 wrote his "Song about García Lorca," which begins:

*Why did you, Spain,*

*stare at the sky*

*When they took away*

*García Lorca to be shot?*

After Lorca's execution

*The soldiers sat*

*sipping lemonade*

*And humming to themselves*

*the words of his songs.*

However, since the number of Russian poets who perished during the Stalinist terror far exceeds the number of Spanish poets who died at the hands of the Falangists, García Lorca had, prior to his death in 1936, many more deaths of Russian poets to lament than Aseev had deaths of Spanish poets. And, had Lorca been so inclined, he might have filled a volume of verse with *llantos* for the deaths of fellow poets in Russia. Aseev's poem on Lorca's death, like so many others of a similar nature, is essentially an exercise in hypocrisy, and it points up an area of equivocation and distortion of the truth in which Soviet Russian literature is grievously faulted—an area in which it has few, if any, rivals in the world today. The Russians have a word for prevarication, *vranyo*, which applies so well to the monumental development of insincerity in all aspects of Marxist-Leninist life in Russia that it has become a technical term of Sovietology.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, I know of no better comment on *vranyo* and the notorious role it plays in Soviet Russian life and literature than the words of a Spanish writer. I have in mind the following passage at the end of Unamuno's essay

19. See, for example, Ronald Hingley, *The Russian Mind* (New York: Scribner, 1977), *passim*.

“Verdad y vida” (“Truth and Life”), written (it should be noted) in 1908:

*The believer who refuses to examine the fundamentals of his belief is a man living in insincerity and in falsehood. The man who is unwilling to consider certain eternal problems is a hypocrite and nothing but a hypocrite. And thus, both in individuals and in people, superficiality is usually found side by side with insincerity. An irreligious nation, that is, a nation where hardly anyone is interested in religious problems—whatever the accepted solutions—is a nation of hypocrites and exhibitionists, where it is important, not to be, but to seem to be.*<sup>20</sup>

20. Translated by Stuart Gross in Miguel de Unamuno, *Perplexities and Problems* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 74.

## Working Alexandria Bay for Bass



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Whether open water is a better spot or weed-choked margins, where pondgrass floats in mats like hair (as if someone floated under it), I can't say but can guess our fish won't have a pearl in it, or promise us who knows what if one of us hooks it (anyway, with knowing malice it would keep its bargain); and whether those long-snouted pike are meanest (survivors from some primordial flood, they are mean enough), I can't tell you, except that bass will snap the finest test, thicker than head hair, and will strike down from the water's surface any starling that gets careless.

—Stephen M. Gibson