



Lina Kostenko (born March 19, 1930 in Rzhyschiv, Kiev Oblast, in the Ukrainian SSR of the Soviet Union) is a Ukrainian poet and writer, recipient of the Shevchenko Award (1987).

Kostenko is a leading representative of Ukrainian poets of the sixties known as *Shestydesiantnyky* (dissidents). This group started publishing during the 1950s and reached its apex during the early 1960s. It was during the 1950s in which Kostenko published her first poems in major Ukrainian periodicals.

Kostenko was born in a family of teachers. In 1936, she moved from Rzhyschiv to Kiev, where she finished her secondary education.

Lina graduated with distinction from the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow in 1956. Following her graduation she published three collections of poetry in 1957, 1958, and 1961. These books became immensely popular among her Ukrainian readers, however they also forced her into publication silence as she was unwilling to submit to Soviet authorities.

It wasn't until 1977 (16 years later) that her next major collection was published. She followed this with several more collections and a children's book called *The Lilac King*. In 1979 she followed with one of her greatest works the historical novel in verse, *Marusia Churai*, about at

17th century Ukrainian folksinger. Her most recent collection is Berestechko, a book length historical poem.

Famous works

Rays of the Earth (1957)

Sails (1958)

Wandering of the Heart (1961)

On the Shore of the Eternal River (1977)

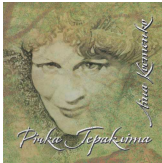
Originality (1980)

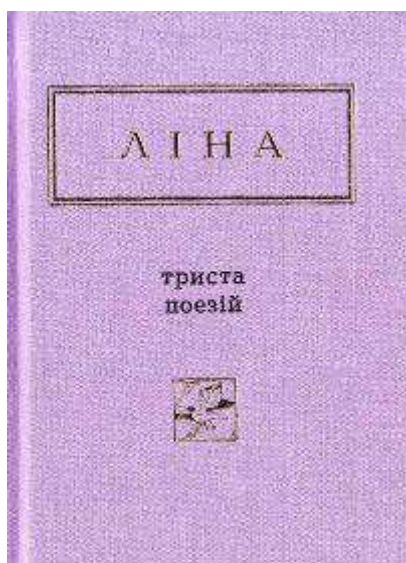
Marusia Churai (1979)

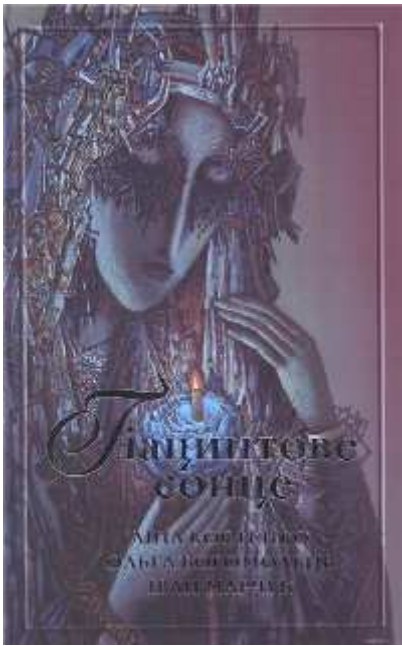
Garden of Unthawed Sculptures (1987)

The King of the Lilacs (1987)

Selected Works (1989)







Her life is not exactly happy. The rebellious spirit of a poetess explains her almost fifteen-year silence during the period of our stagnation. It was a sad episode in the history of Ukrainian literature. Within this time there grew up an entire generation of people who did not know Lina Kostenko's poetry.



She published her books of verse “On the Banks of the Eternal River”. This book is extraordinary penetrating in its force of feeling and concentration of thought. It is sincere in everything- feelings, thoughts and words. Such works are important for literature because they restore the creative impulse and moral wholesomeness in fiction.



Then appeared the books of verses “Inimitableness” (1980) and “The Garden of Unmelting Sculptures” (1987). Using a subtle, emotive and a colloquial and aphoristic manner of writing, ranging from playful irony and humour to satire, Lina Kostenko is acknowledged as one of the best contemporary Ukrainian poets. Her collections of poems are published in many European countries.

Here’s a verse of Lina Kostenko translated into English.

The silent world are frightening and mean
They hide at times to make the fears steady,
And you don’t know how to begin,
For someone all these words has used already.

They keep somebody’s tears, torture, pain,
The cry of birth and that last dying sound.
People are milliards, stocks of words’re the same,
But yours must ring as if for the first time found.

Things are repeated: ugliness and beauty.
The paths and highways aren't new at all.
The Poetry's unique, its sacred duty's
To wake immortal chords of our soul.

