

Through the window stars quietly glistened.⁷
I read the words left on the wall;
We wrote them when youth seethed forever,
Before aspirations could fall.

Glad friendship grew up in this chamber,
And oh, the past joy that we knew.
But since then it's fallen to pieces;
In corners the spiderwebs grew.

And terror there suddenly struck me.
I went to the graveyard to moan.
I called to my loved ones departed,
But no one would answer my groan!⁸

Nostalgia dominates *The Past and Recollections*, as its title suggests. Time and again, Herzen compares the revolutionaries of the present, who have no respect for radical tradition, with the grand old figures of the past. For Herzen, the young nihilists of the 1860s did not know what they were destroying. . . .

As soon as he escaped from Russia, Herzen wrote *From the Other Shore* but was unable to get it published because no matter where he went they insisted it was no other shore. At last Herzen changed the title to *From the Other Bank* and approached his friend Baron Rothschild for funding. Herzen and the baron loved to sit around denouncing rich people, the nobility, and cowardly exiles, and so Rothschild helped Herzen set up a publishing house called Incendiary Literature in order to sneak pamphlets past the border guards. Following Herzen, many publications adopted names like *Spark*, *Conflagration*, and *Fire, Destruction, and Mayhem*. Reactionaries (in Russia, the term meant “a person one disagrees with”) countered with *Flame Retardant*, *Hose*, *Douse*, and *Smother* (also the name of a novel by Maxim Gorky). Radicals also published *Toxin*, followed by *Botulism*, *E-Coli*, and *McDonald's*.⁹

7. *Sic*.

8. This is *not* a parody. If anyone doubts this assertion, let him or her look up the poem either in the original or in the Juliet Soskice translation, used in the Garnett version of Herzen's autobiography.

9. These journals are not to be confused with the ordinary professional ones, giving advice and discussing technical innovations, such as *Medico*, *Secret Police Quarterly*, *Bulletin of the Russian Society for the Promotion of Torture and Capital Punishment*, and *Terrorist*.