





I'd tear  
     like a wolf  
     at bureaucracy,  
 For mandates  
     my respect's but the slightest.  
 To the devil himself  
     I'd chuck without mercy  
 every red-taped paper.  
     But this ...  
 Down the long front  
     of coupés and cabins  
 File the officials  
     politely.  
 They gather up passports  
     and I give in  
 My own vermilion booklet.  
 For one kind of passport -  
 smiling lips part  
 For others -  
     an attitude scornful.  
 They take  
     with respect, for instance,  
     the passport  
 From a sleeping-car  
 English Lionel.  
 The good fellows eyes  
     almost slip like pips  
 when,  
     bowing as low as men can,  
 they take,  
     as if they were taking a tip,  
 the passport  
     from an American.  
 At the Polish,  
     they dolefully blink and wheeze  
 in dumb  
     police elephantism -  
 where are they from,  
     and what are these  
 geographical novelties?  
 And without a turn  
     of their cabbage heads,  
 their feelings  
     hidden in lower regions,  
     they take without blinking,  
     the passports from Swedes  
     and various  
     old Norwegians.  
 Then sudden  
     as if their mouths were  
     aquake  
     those gentlemen almost  
     whine  
 Those very official gentlemen  
     take  
     that red-skinned passport  
     of mine.  
 Take-  
     like a bomb  
     take - like a hedgehog,  
 like a razor  
     double-edge stropped,  
 take -  
     like a rattlesnake huge and long  
 with at least  
     20 fangs  
     poison-tipped.  
 The porter's eyes  
     give a significant flick  
 (I'll carry your baggage  
     for nix,  
     mon ami...)  
 The gendarmes enquiringly  
     look at the tec,  
 the tec, -  
     at the gendarmerie.  
 With what delight  
     that gendarme caste  
     would have me  
     strung-up and whipped raw  
     because I hold  
     in my hands  
     hammered-fast  
     sickle-clasped  
     my red Soviet passport.

I'd tear  
     like a wolf  
     at bureaucracy.  
 For mandates  
     my respect's but the slightest.  
 To the devil himself  
     I'd chuck  
     without mercy  
 every red-taped paper,  
     But this ...  
 I pull out  
     of my wide trouser-pockets  
 duplicate  
 of a priceless cargo.  
     You now:  
 read this  
     and envy,  
     I'm a citizen  
 of the Soviet Socialist Union!

## My Soviet Passport

### Vladimir Mayakovsky

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7140