



# Joseph Brodsky: Conversations (Literary Conversations)

*Joseph Brodsky, Cynthia L. Haven, Richard Avedon*

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Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996) is unquestionably the greatest poet to emerge from postwar Russia and one of the great minds of the last century.

After his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1972, Brodsky transformed himself from a stunned and unprepared émigré into, as he himself termed it, "a Russian poet, an English essayist, and, of course, an American citizen."

In interviews from 1972 to 1995, *Joseph Brodsky: Conversations* covers the course of his exile. The last interview dates from just ten weeks before his death. In talks, he calibrates the process of his remarkable reinvention from a brilliant, brash, but decidedly provincial Leningrad poet to an international man of letters and an erudite Nobel Prize laureate.

Brodsky's poetry earned him a Nobel, and his essays won him awards and international acclaim. This volume shows that there was a third medium, in addition to poetry and essays, in which Brodsky excelled--the interview. Although he said that "in principle prose is simply spilling some beans, which poetry sort of contains in a tight pod," he nevertheless emerges as an extraordinary and inventive conversationalist. This volume includes not only his notable interviews that helped consolidate Brodsky's international reputation but also early and hard-to-find interviews in journals that have since disappeared.

Cynthia L. Haven is a literary critic at the *San Francisco Chronicle* and a regular contributor to *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, the *Cortland Review*, and *Stanford Magazine*. Her work also has been published in *Civilization*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Georgia Review*.

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