



БЕЛАРУСКАЯ ЛІТАРАТУРА ў АНГЛІЙСКІХ ПЕРАКЛАДАХ

## MIKOLA AROCHKA

### Elk Calf

A crack in the silence, sharp as a shot.  
A rumble of hoofs through the saplings ranks.  
The mother elk broke aside at a trot,  
And shielded her calf behind her flanks.

She lightly leaped across each old stump,  
Across the trench with water like pitch.  
Well, tottery long-legs, make the jump!  
But he couldn't – he couldn't just overcome  
His primary fear of the deep dark ditch.

And having returned to her offspring there,  
The elk leapt again over waters black.  
But he stood and quietly mooded in her track,  
And almost cried in the depths of despair.

With safety, with rose-willow smelled that side,  
And behind him rough steps were rustling near.  
Then she, with her forehead firm and wide  
Gently prodded her progeny – under his rear!

Head over heels, topsy-turvy went he.  
'Mid the yellowish reeds she lay on the ground.  
But still, from her knees, was able to see  
How in milky-white mist  
Her young calf skipped around!

1970

*Translated by W. May*