

Title: The Life of a Poet: Elena Shvarts's Biography of Gabriele D'Annunzio
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Abstract:

A central figure of the Leningrad underground of the 70s and 80s, Elena Shvarts became a widely published and publicly heralded poet in the post-Soviet period, producing six books of verse between 1995 and 2007. This new work, while continuing to explore themes from her Soviet-era verse, is more closely tied to her personal life, particularly after the death of her mother in 1998. This autobiographical turn is made explicit in her prose writings, particularly her 2003 memoir *Видимая сторона жизни*. Shvarts continued to write verse until the last days of her life, but her final book was a biography of Gabriele D'Annunzio, the Italian poet, war hero, and politician. A massive undertaking, it was published posthumously in May 2010. In the biography, Shvarts pays relatively little attention to D'Annunzio's verse, instead focusing on his life as its own form of artistic creation. Throughout the chapters, she intersperses impressionistic italicized sections which resemble her entries in *Видимая сторона жизни* and suggest connections between D'Annunzio's life-creation and her own. In this paper, I examine these sections and argue that the book extends the autobiographical direction of her late poetic and memoiristic work, tracing her own poetic biography alongside D'Annunzio's.