

Dostoevsky

by [Thomas Banks](#) (July 2021)



Portrait of Fyodor Dostoevsky, Vasily Perov, 1872

Out of the depths of his uneasy eyes
Emerged a light, dejected, cold, and clear,
While all around him rang the assertive noise
Of golden bourgeois peace that gave no ear

To catch the incantations whispered by
The sullen ghosts that loitered all around,
Pedantic nihilists who thought in slogans:
Voices that muttered threats from underground.

He saw the demons men of broader views
Believed had finally been put to flight
By ballots, literacy, and law reforms,
Hiding beneath a passing world of light.

His strangeness made him easy to dismiss.
This fitful angel spoke and broke the seal
To show a smug and slumbering generation
A century that proved his visions real.

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