

A Toast

The vintage, friends, is over,
And here sweet wine makes, once again,
Sad eyes and hearts recover,
Puts fire into every vein.
Drowns dull care
Everywhere
And summons hope out of despair.

To whom with acclamation
And song shall we our first toast give?
God save our land and nation
And all Slovenes where'er they live,
Who own the same
Blood and name,
And who one glorious Mother claim.

Let thunder out of heaven
Strike down and smite our wanton foe!
Now, as it once had thriven,
May our dear realm in freedom grow.
May fall the last
Chains of the past
Which bind us still and hold us fast!

Let peace, glad conciliation,
Come back to us throughout the land!
Towards their destination
Let Slavs henceforth go hand-in-hand!
Thus again
Will honour reign
To justice pledged in our domain.

To you, our pride past measure,
Our girls! Your beauty, charm and grace!
There surely is no treasure
To equal maidens of such race.
Sons you'll bear,
Who will dare
Defy our foe no matter where.

Our hope now, our to-morrow -
The youths - we toast and toast with joy.
No poisonous blight or sorrow
Your love of homeland shall destroy.
With us indeed
You're called to heed
Its summons in this hour of need.

**God's blessing on all nations,
Who long and work for that bright day,
When o'er earth's habitations
No war, no strife shall hold its sway;
Who long to see
That all men free
No more shall foes, but neighbours be.**

At last to our reunion -
To us the toast! Let it resound,
Since in this gay communion
By thoughts of brotherhood we're bound
May joyful cheer
Ne'er disappear
From all good hearts now gathered here.

Translated by Janko Lavrin

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Zdravljica (A Toast) – history

France Prešeren (1800-1849) is Slovenia's greatest and most celebrated poet. The national awards for culture bear his name, and are awarded on the **National Day of Culture** (8th February), an official holiday.

A widely renowned figure of European Romanticism, Prešeren established through his prodigious work a focus for Slovenia's first national programme.

Zdravljica represents the peak of Prešeren's political poetry. It was written in autumn 1844, removed from the manuscript of the collection of poems **Poezije** (1847) by the censors, and published on 26th April 1848 in the newspaper **Novice** after the collapse of Metternich's absolutism and the termination of censorship. Its dominant idea, a radical demand for freedom of the Slovenian nation, arises from the humanistic vision of equality and friendly coexistence of all nations, and all people's right to independence. It originates from the concepts of the French Revolution of equality, freedom and brotherhood, which were adjusted to the basic political needs of the Slovenian people at the time of the 'Spring of Nations' and concerned their independence. However, Prešeren's "Marseillaise" reaches beyond the nature of a political manifesto and bears a strong note of intimate humanity.

In the history of constituting the Slovenian nation Prešeren's *Zdravljica* was of extreme conceptual significance. It became particularly topical during the occupation and

National Liberation Struggle from 1941 to 1945, and in the period of what was called the 'Slovenian Spring' in the eighties when it started to be sung as the national anthem on state holidays and major public events.

Zdravljica was proclaimed the new Slovenian anthem on 27th September 1989 when the Slovenian Assembly adopted the Amendments to the Slovenian Constitution. The Law on the National Anthem of the Republic of Slovenia adopted on 29th March 1990 specified the seventh stanza set to the music of Stanko Premrl as the actual anthem.

<http://www.ukom.gov.si/eng/slovenia/insignia/anthem/>