Twitter Thread by Maurice Casey



Maurice Casey
@MauriceJCasey

I am reading through reams of late-1920s communist poetry and easily my favourite title so far is: "To a Lady who Rejected a Poem about Spring as a Petit-Bourgeois Deviation"

The last lines:
"So here's my hat into the air,
Three cheers for your amazing hair,
For coal mines, and for turbines, too,
For steel, the Comintern and you!"

A not exactly graceful (though possibly satirical) title: "Lines Disassociating Myself from Yessenin and Supporting the Otherwise Unfounded Legend that I am a Foremost Proletarian Writer"

An excerpt:
"Goodbye verses of Yessenin
Goodbye literary slop-
You are not the line of Lenin
You are not the line of WAPP

Never shall I moan a
simple lyric from the heart
I'll devote my new corona
to the proletarian art"

The poet was Joseph Freeman, who published much of his revolutionary verse in the New Masses, a stylish journal of the interwar American literary Left.

There's an interesting history behind "Portrait of a German Comrade", a 1926 tribute to the Polish-German revolutionary Elise "Sabo" Ewert, who lived with Freeman in Moscow's Hotel Lux.

Right, here's some more excerpts from the Comintern Tractor Love poem, since everyone's enjoying it:

"There is the turbine and the steel,

The coal mine and the tractor wheel;
Let them continue to be there,
So long as I can see your hair"

"Industry that's running snappy
Is good it it makes mankind happy
But men not only work with steel,
They sometimes even think and feel"