On the Death of Boris Nemtsov

Apparently, on the eve of the Sabbath, while angels are hurrying down to the Earth, murderers perform their cruel acts in secrecy and in darkness so that daring bold people should die like martyrs, and also like saints.

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It was not I who lay killed at night across from the Kremlin; it was not me that decent people mourned and buried as a hero; and it was not in memory of me that tens of thousands of people marched in my home city of Moscow, brought flowers and lit candles in London, New York, Paris, Prague, and Kiev. Not in memory of me, for I am not he.

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I don’t have the power to restore your life to you, nor do I have the power to take revenge for you. Now, in powerlessness and anguish, I can only write simple lines in your memory: may it be bright, blessed, and eternal. Amen.

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And why be afraid of death? If there is a next world, it’s not important how long one’s earthly life is, And if not, everything will disappear immediately—and that’s all.
It’s not to ourselves that our death is frightful,  
but to our dear ones and relatives,  
and especially to those  
who, in pain, gave us life.

Ah, how courageous and strong is your Jewish mother,  
both in the beginning, when she inspired you  
to walk fearlessly on that dangerous road,  
and now, after the murder,  
when she marched on the road of sorrow  
without any tears.

My mother is not like that—  
if I had died before her,  
she wouldn’t have been able to survive it.

So I will therefore always protect her,  
and while my mother lives, I will envy you your death.