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Shared Time and Imagined Community: Celebrating the Feat of the *Cheliuskin* in Verse Works

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1:00 pm
4217 Posvar Hall

The dramatic 1934 rescue of the crew of the *Cheliuskin*, stranded in winter ice during an epic attempt to navigate the northern sea route, was acclaimed as the ideal subject of Socialist Realism, the newly adopted unified aesthetic method of the Soviet Union. But what does that actually mean? Conventional representations typically elevated this event and similar feats temporarily to a state red-letter holiday for all to celebrate, at the same time, at every corner of the country. Critiquing this strategy, Il'ia Sel'vinskii, in the epic poem *Cheliuskiniana*, characterized such an idea of the state calendar as a weak mode of shared time that distracted from more constructive senses of progress. In doing so, he broached important questions about imagined community and, ultimately, about the coherence of the Soviet Union at all.

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