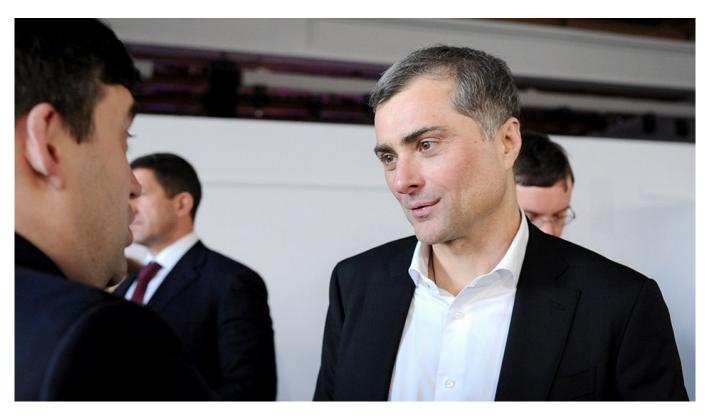


'Paradise Without Cocaine.' Ousted Kremlin Aide Surkov Publishes Poem

Reflections on freedom and the joy of breathing.

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Vladislav Surkov Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Vladislav Surkov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's longtime aide and Ukraine pointman, who was dismissed in February, has penned a poem on the virtues of freedom and loneliness.

In his poem, Surkov, 55, a noted <u>lyricist and rap aficionado</u>, reflected on being ousted after seven years of deciding Russia's Ukraine policy and cultivating the image of a Kremlin <u>puppet master</u>.

"You could almost fit a person's entire life in a poem like this," said Russia's monthly literary magazine *Russky Pioner* (Russian Pioneer), which <u>published</u> Surkov's poem in its September issue.

Below is a rough translation of Surkov's poem.

I'm aione again
I was given freedom
Who needs cocaine
When there's this air?
Take it and breathe in
That's it, wait for the high
This is what paradise looks like:
Desert freedom
Take it and breathe it in
With all your heart, with all your mind
All nights all days
All lands all stars
And all this May
Of all the soul's abyss
And don't breathe out
That's it, don't breathe
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