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**Body, Letter, Ritual: Poetic Performances by Ry Nikonova and Rimma Gerlovina**

This paper examines the performance practices of Ry Nikonova and Rimma Gerlovina as forms of poetic ritual. Both artists position their work explicitly as poetry: Nikonova's poetic actions, Gerlovina's sculptural "poem" *Group Sex* (1975). I argue that their performances enact a return to an archaic understanding of poetry as inseparable from ritual, body, and voice, while constructing this ritual anew. In Nikonova's *Paper Harp* (1983), destruction becomes creation: she silently cuts paper strips with a razor, producing "no blood of the text." In her *Body Poetry* (1993), letters are inscribed directly onto the skin. In Gerlovina's cubes marked M and Ж, the hands of the artist generate combinatorial "erotic groupings" from minimal letter-signs. Both works operate through oppositions — gender, violence/creation, visible/invisible — and dissolve them. The ritual serves to resacralize the bond between body and poetry.