I too spent time among the Don-Cossaks,
And I too drove away the Osman's gang,
In memory of the battle and the tents
I brought home a nagaika.*

On the march, at war,
I preserved my balalaika —
Next to it, on the wall
I will also hang the nagaika.

Why hide from friends —
I love my khoziaika,**
Often I thought about her
And took care of my nagaika.

* nagaika — a whip
** khoziaika — a housewife
In this poem, written most probably in 1829, i.e., during or after Pushkin's trip to the Caucasus with General Pashkevich's army that was fighting the Turks, the most peculiar features are the rhymes and rhyming pattern.

1) All the primary rhymes, i.e., those that carry the main theme, are of Turkic origin:

shaïka—nagaïka—balalaïka—khoziaïka.

2) They are all feminine, both in grammatical gender and in prosody (—').

3) Among them only one—nagaïka—is repeated three times, i.e., once in each stanza.

4) It is placed at the end of each stanza, always in the same, accusative case (all other primary rhymes are in the accusative as well).

5) The same rhyming word is in a privileged position syntactically: ending a stanza, it also ends a sentence—since each stanza is a sentence.

We said above that the rhymes in the poem carry the main theme. What is that theme? Obviously, it is the role of a man in life: a knight, or soldier (first stanza), a man of profession—here: a poet (mid-stanza, with the key-word balalaïka), and a master of his own house (the last stanza with the two key-words: khoziaïka and nagaïka). An important component of the theme is obviously nagaïka, which dominates the poem statistically, compositionally and syntactically. It is also, and always, immediately connected with the house (dōm), and in the last stanza—with khoziaïka (the housewife). Thus the last stanza uncovers the main function of a whip (nagaïka) as a tool of punishment, fighting or taming. The question arises: why did Pushkin touch upon such a theme while "na pokhode, na voine" ("on the march, at war")? From the same period he left two more pieces—"Voyage to Erzerum," a kind of diary in prose, and another poem, "Delibash"—both of which are related directly to the Caucasus, Turkey, and war.

In the same year, 1829, the poet made a proposal of marriage to the renowned Moscow beauty, Natalia Goncharova, was rejected and left for the Caucasus. The second time, the following year, he proposed again and was accepted. Marriage had been Pushkin's preoccupation for some years: he courted a number of women and