Have you ever asked yourself a seemingly simple question: «Why and what for do I love my country?» I’m sure you’ll find enormous difficulty trying to give a proper answer.
 There’s hardly anyone, who will be positive about the matter.
 There’s hardly anyone, who will sense the matter in its entirety.
 There’s hardly anyone, who’ll be able to describe the blue of the sky, or the peculiar flavor of the home wind, or the specific softness of the native soil, or the inexpressible beauty of the people around us. What we shall probably be able to say, is that it all belongs to us and that is where we belong. And we can claim that it all has been given to us by God. And God along can take it away from us.
 You know, I was born in Belarus and have lived here ever since. Why is Belarus called Belarus? You see, in the 13th century the territory of present Belarus was free from Tatar- Mongol yoke, and that part was called Byelaya Russ, because in ancient times to be «white» meant to be «free».

It’s also known that the locals were dressed in white clothes made of flax and had blonde hair, so some historians put the name of our native land down to these facts.
 Not without a reason did Vladimir Karatkevich sing a song of praise to our Motherland and call it «a fairy-tale country», since the landscape of Belarus is really picturesque. Our native land is remarkably beautiful with its endless expanses of fields, meadows and swamp, with its varied and plentiful animal and plant kingdom. As far as the eye can see, a gently rolling patchwork of fields, interspersed by pockets of woodland, stretches into the distance. Everything, it seems, is a pleasant shade of green. The surprising thing is that for such a small country, providing home for some 10 mln people, is has so much open space. The weather is beautiful, the atmosphere is clear and the late afternoon light is warm and magical. Another poetic name that suits our country very much is «the land beneath white wings». It is so, because the stork is the symbol of Belarus. Their nests are seen everywhere. Vladimir Muliavin even dedicated one of his ballads to them and called it «A bird’s cry». When it’s being performed the spectators are completely absorbed in the dramatic atmosphere of the song and stay in dead silence till the end. Furthermore, you can hear their overwhelming
farewell cry at the end of October each year.
 One more name that our country has gained for a good reason is «a blue-eyed land». It’s called so due to its pale blue lakes and ribbons of rivers. Belarus can boast some 3000 rivers and 10000 lakes. Lake Naroch is the biggest one, while Lake Svitsas is the gem of Belarusian lakes. One can’t help admiring the marvelous beauty of it and its delightful surroundings.
 Adam Mitskevich dedicated his poem to this lake. According to a legend a village disappeared in its water long ago.
 Thanks to vastly stretching forests our country is called «the land of woods». The most widespread example is its national reservation — Belovezhskaya Puscha. It’s not just a woodland, it’s as it’s called puscha. This word is one of the most expressive and euphonic in the Belarusian language. This word makes the listener imagine a primeval forest which has preserved its prehistoric nature. The Puscha is fully covered with ancient forests. It’s the area of outstanding natural beauty. Wild dear still roams the park. It also has an impressive number of bird species. But the unquestionable king there is the European bison, which strikes the visitors by its unlimited power and strength. One can enjoy listening to the everlasting noise of tsar-oaks and feast your eye on golden pine woods, where mushrooms made themselves comfortable. By the way, Belovezhskava Puscha is included into the UNESCO list of The World’s heritage sites.
 Need I say that Belarus has a complex and fascinating history. When learning history as a child, I remember thinking about courageous knights and elegant ladies. But in reality, Belarusian history is much more complicated. A great number of wars were held there, after each it was left in utter ruins. But each time it rose from the ashes like a mythical bird Phoenix.
 Due to our historical past, there are still gloomy ruins of castles, sunny palaces, magnif¬icent cathedrals which add to the beauty of our republic. Take the Mir Castle for example, which is situated in Grodno region. Seeing it you’ll be absorbed from head to toe in the impressive sight of the castle and its stunning surroundings.
Talking about present-day Belarus, I can’t but say a few words about this well-developed country, its education and culture.
 Nowadays Belarus can take pride in its high-quality products such as: tractors and lorries, dairy products and bicycles, mineral fertilizers and synthetic fiber, mineral oil and furniture. Belarusian goods are well-sold not only in the republic itself, but on the world market as well.
 Scientific and intellectual potential is the strategic resource of our country. There are a good many educational establishments in Belarus. The republic is reforming its educational system today with a view to creating a new national school, corresponding to international standards and ensuring each and every citizen the right to high-quality education according to their abilities.
 What I love most about my Motherland is that so much attention is paid to growing souls. Sport clubs and various organizations for talented youth are being established with striking frequency. In other words, if you are born a gifted kid in Belarus, be sure your talents will be developed. There are numerous youth organizations in Belarus. Apparently, the most popular is the Belarusian Union of Youth. The main goal of it is to unite patriotically thinking young people for active participation in social life.
 And to complete the picture I would like to mention, that the Belarusians take great pride in their cultural heritage and keep their traditions thoroughly. If you want to experience real joy — the joy that isn’t spoilt by falling snow and severe frost, you should come to Belarus, when Kalyady is being celebrated. And if you want to live a long and happy life, come here in July and join hundreds of young people who are seeking for the fern-flower in the forest. I firmly believe, that it’s great that in the endeavour to reassert their national identity young people are eager to revive the national customs and traditions.
 All in all, what does it mean «I love my country»? I’m inclined to think, to love my motherland means knowing its history, taking interest in what’s going on in it, preserve its national language and being useful to it. I understand, that a man isn’t like a mushroom growing by the side of the road. I’m a person and I am not so easily uprooted from my birthplace and crushed, because I have my Homeland.