

# ~vanishing journal~

*by aksania xenogrette*

Aksania X, 17 July 1919

My only rest from this waking nightmare is the slope of my sweet Alyosha's nose. He arrived at the farm three months ago like Daniel Divine. I watch him chop cherry stumps from the orchard that have gathered moss for 20 years and ache for one wisp of his maul. I don't know where he came from. It is like the sky opened up and showed me a palace above the clouds. He told me he has traveled south beyond the black sea, to Constantinople where the ocean is clear green, even to the straits of Gibraltar. It is my heart's mystery how things so heavy can levitate when he commits his body, his heavy head covered in the dust of stars. I fear for my life because I love him so much.

My daughter Tatyana is beautiful, not like me. I have nothing to do all day but dote on her. I wake up in the morning to the sound of my ergot sham husband Peotr whipping MY black horses. He tramples away in MY family's carriage with MY black horses on 'official business'. Oh yes, he tramples away to go fuck his whores and consort with evil men, and I sit here with my daughter Tatyana my very own dove, and we watch the harvest from my mother's porch. I miss my mother dearly.

Tatyana and I go for walks through our orchards, I show her what the goldfish eat, tiny snails and bread. We feed the swans dried up bread and they soak it in the pond and goldfish eat the crusts with relish. They open like a sponge. They kiss the surface of the water and take bread from our fingertips. She asks me simple and complicated questions such as, why are cherries sour, and I let her do whatever she pleases, because I love her and she is beautiful.

Myself, I want to wither and die when she asks me why the sun bothers to shine. I tell her the sun wakes up early in the morning to

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watch over us because he loves us very much. She says Momma? Doesn't the stream ever get tired of flowing? I tell her the stream loves it because it is fast going downhill. Why does it never turn around and go uphill? She is a very smart child.

I read Turgenev again last night and wrote this...

*this lake frozen black  
this body of rage  
split lightning  
on buckled ice  
cursing this so called man...  
tiny ball of spite  
I tried to love you when  
you had half a heart to love.  
now until the sweet moment  
I am rid of you  
every breath  
is wasted.*

But there is no time for sentiment in my life. I envy our servants. Gory, my old livery man, my father's friend, before my father died, I watch him gut fish in the stream and bleed their guts out, and I know the trout thank god there are men in this world. He hands them in a basket to Olga, my darling, and she cooks them with magic. I know nothing...and everything except how to live on the surface of things.

Before I lived this waking nightmare, I was that little girl laughing down there by the pond with mud on her dress. now I sit here drinking lemonade on the porch wearing dresses from St Petersburg, not knowing how to explain to my daughter Tatyana that she cant just go around running through the fields when its harvest time. She doesn't even know how to keep from smothering in the smoke from the hemp fields when the wind changes direction, or how to dodge fire running uphill in the hot sun.

I must teach her how to catch a frog. Because I am the mistress of this estate, killing a hog is a simpler task than to find a private moment. Still, I am capable of many things, even though I accomplish precious little. At the very least I will take her away with me into the forest, into the thrushes.

Lady of the house. This title. I would trade all my dresses, my wedding gown especially, throw this vile ring into the river, go running through the reeds and over brooks, teach her how to find a willow branch with a good fork, how to cut the forks with a clasp knife, how to strip the bark, how to thread the handle through the mouths of fish, catch them on a knot, anchored alive in the roots that hold the brook in place.

What painter can hold this color and remain living like gills? I thirst for the moment I am able to splash beneath these lies. One clean breath to go deeper than blood, a catalog rose, velvet on the sitting room chair, even a blackbird's throat. When Peotr speaks, I want to see his punctual mouth split open in a fistfight on a sunny day.

Tatyana is nine, and I am a failure. I drink chamomile tea, with ice, this shallow novelty. The day is too short and the nights are too long for me to hold my voice in my throat any longer. Aksania X  
~111 years and 17 hours ago~  
~translated from the fine cursive on wax scalded notebook~

