



*A tiny poetry collection from Sasha A. Palmer, which selects from her blog posts
as*

The Happy Amateur.

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"There is an echo for poetry: somewhere and sometime it will respond to her voice."

P.A.Vyazemskiy (1792-1878)

The original quote in Russian:

"На поэзию есть эхо: где-нибудь и когда-нибудь оно откликнется на её голос".

Вяземский П.А. (1792-1878)

Contents

The Most Beautiful Thing

4

Sea

5-6

Perhaps

7

Homecoming

8

Crash Course

9

Faith, Hope, Love

10

Shadows of The Past

11-12

I would have said

13

I'll believe it

14

Shell

15

Walking with my father

16

The Most Beautiful Thing

Those rare tangible moments
when you feel so alive,
when every cell of your being
overflows with joy,
when your love for life
transcends the shell of your body,
enwraps you, sets you afloat,
presents you with myriads of senses
you do not know the name of,
yet know so intimately,
when this all-consuming love lifts you up
and shows you the world as it is,
in its simple glory of existence –
those fragile moments of truth
are the most beautiful thing.

Sea

All four of us,
the whole compartment is ours –
our cozy home
for twenty four hours.
My sister's lucky:
got to sleep all the way up,
I'm sure old enough,
but they said, "No."
During the day, though,
they let me climb there,
I lie listening
to the railroad's heartbeat:
ta-dum, ta-dum... ta-dum, ta-dum...
Dozing off,
waking up to the tinkling
of glasses – hate the tea,
love the glass holders:
silvery-shiny, sun catching.
There's more sun as we get closer,
during stops
babushkas sell corn on the cob
and sweet cucumbers –
won't be long now.
I'm waiting, plastered to the window.
When I first spy it,
I mistake it for part of the sky –
just another shade of blue.
When I realize what it is,
it starts playing games:

peeking out, and hiding again,
teasing, but in a good way.
It is there, I know it now.
Soon, very soon we'll see it.
There'll be a station first,
a small town with a salty breath,
a house painted white,
we'll live in for a very long time—
a month—
a kind quiet woman
will greet us at the gate,
she'll feed us pelmeni
(the food I dread, I call it jelly fish)
and her husband—if sober—
will play the accordion, and sing.
Then there will be a hot path,
and ice cream you have to eat real fast,
before it melts,
sun hats – yes, but sunscreen – what is it?
And finally, we'll see it.
All consuming, dreamlike,
inviting and generous, like a promise.
We'll run towards it,
and it'll wrap all around us,
take us in—
my sister watching over me—
I'll look up, wet and happy,
and see Mama and Papa,
their impossibly young faces,
smiling at us from the shore.

Perhaps

She knows the secret now,
the marrow of existence.
Perhaps beyond the grief,
the doom of massive strokes
and broken hips,
amidst the soothing stillness
of swirling colors
she floats permeable,
perpetual worry gone,
and does not miss
her window painted white,
the clatter in the kitchen
or that tiny
emerging flower –
a shard of purple sky.
Perhaps.
Or maybe she's the one
who guides my hand,
as I kneel before the crocuses
to touch them for her.

Homecoming

When solitude drives you insane,
carry on singing:
rejection is inherent
to life's drama.

When it pushes you to the limit,
keep on going,
ignore the foul play
of glad-handers.

Follow my voice, not their gestures,
I will guide you back
through the dim hallways,
beyond the past echoes,

beyond the previous pain of your own
delivery –
to the source of truth
and acceptance.

Crash Course

When I turned fourteen,
the Earth skidded on its axis,
went into an uncontrollable spin
for eleven years that followed.

When my world would end,
it would be resuscitated
by a smile, a look, a hint of promise,
trivial nothings – everything.

When the spinning stopped,
I thought that I finally died.
Instead I saw my life right next to me
waiting patiently to be lived.

Faith, Hope, Love

It's hard to keep the faith
with chances slim, and hope –
a dying candle. Love

is what sustains us. Love,
awakening the faith,
life breathing into hope.

Soon burning flames of hope
will join the fiery love,
and set alight the faith.

Three sisters: Faith, Hope, Love.

Shadows of the Past

Forgetful,
blissfully ignorant,
we stroll through life
shielded by a naïve conviction
that nothing came before us.

No one ever lived,
or loved,
or suffered,
we are the first ones
to breathe and wonder,
the chosen ones,
who will know no death.

But then one day
we feel the rough texture
of an old tree,
caress the smooth coolness
of a weathered stone,
watch grains of sand
escape through our fingers
and vanish.

All of a sudden
a gust of memories
engulfs us,
a somber revelation

that there indeed were others,
who came, and passed,
and wait somewhere ahead
to comfort us
and teach us what they know.

That death will be.
And there will be no death.

I would have said,

“It was the day I saw you.”

I’d rather not: the phrase is beat and common,
and it was not that bold ‘first sight’ sensation
that comes in movies, rarely in life.

But that’s the day when filled with quiet wonder,
and unaware still of what was coming,
I caught a glimpse of life that lay before me,

for me to take,
without looking back.

I'll Believe It

When I perceive music as an assortment of decibels,
when the palette of the morning is reduced to one color,
when I attribute that look to the mixture of pheromones,
when I deny the miracle imprinted on a child's face –
then I'll believe it. I'll believe that there's no God.

Shell

“She sells
seashells,”
take one –
one is none,
one, two – I love you,
one, two, three – family,
one, two, three, four – go to the sea shore,
five, six, seven, eight, nine – picking up shells of beauty divine,
ten...twenty...thirty...riches abound – an infinite number of blessings we’ve found!

Walking with my father along the Moskva river embankment a long time ago.

Dandelion wine spilled by some giant hand,
sticky stalks, bitter-sweet,
the yellow suns everywhere you look.

The silent murmur of the close water,
the flowing ribbon obscured by trees,
time runs steadily, following our pathway.

To my right –
the giant himself, walking in huge strides,
a headful of hair scrapes the sky,
scattering the sheepish clouds.

He projects strength and wisdom, but I smell danger.
He's scared, he wants an answer, so I tell him,
"All of this won't just end."