

**And Quiet Flows the Vodka, or
When Pushkin Comes to Shove**

**The Curmudgeon's Guide
to Russian Literature and Culture**

with

**The Devil's Dictionary of
Received Ideas**

**Alphabetical Reflections on the Loathsomeness of
Russia, American Academia, and Humanity in General**



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Three New Stories by Daniil Kharms

The Plummeting Professor

A professor wrote a book arguing that argument was impossible. He did not get tenure. Then another professor wrote a book analyzing the first professor's book, which he interpreted as showing that interpretation is impossible. He did not get tenure. Then a third professor evaluated both books and showed that evaluation is impossible. His own case is still being evaluated. And that is all that happened.

Spelling

The other day I forgot how to spell the word "I." I asked three friends who happened to be visiting, and all of them said, "I don't know." They wrote down this answer. Then we looked up the word in the dictionary, but not knowing how to spell it, we couldn't find it. We went to the public library, and the librarian suggested that since "I" was the opposite of "you," it must be spelled *o-u-y*. We were overjoyed but on the way home realized that she must be wrong because "I" is a one-letter word. We sat down on a park bench to think. Then a man passed, eating a salami.

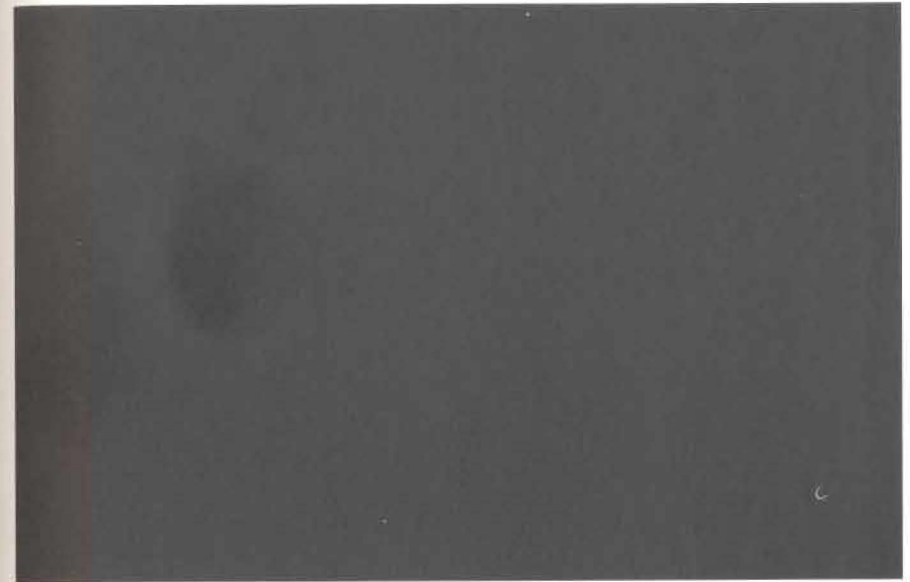
Anecdote from the Life of Bakhtin

One day Bakhtin's friends visited him. His wife served herring, and Bakhtin smoked. At last Boris Gagiografov threw himself at Bakhtin's feet and asked, "Mikhail Mikhailovich! Tell us how to live!"

Bakhtin just smoked.

Then Sergei Krocharov threw himself at Bakhtin's feet and said, "Mikhail Mikhailovich, is it true you once said that the meaning of life is a cigarette butt and a spent match? What did you mean?"

Bakhtin continued smoking.



Stalin Prize winner, 1937, Strive for the Bright Future!

Then Vadim Lozhinov²⁶ threw himself down and said, "Mikhail Mikhailovich! I believe you wrote the books of Voloshinov and Medvedev. If you did not, tell me!"

Bakhtin rolled up another cigarette and lit it.

Then they all left. Lozhinov said to the others, "Bakhtin is the wisest man in the world."

26. In a draft version, Igor Antizhidov.