



Russia's Lost Literature of the Absurd
————— *A Literary Discovery*

SELECTED WORKS OF

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The Norton Library

W · W · NORTON & COMPANY · INC ·

NEW YORK

Blue Notebook No. 10

There was once a red-haired man who had no eyes and no ears. He also had no hair, so he was called red-haired only in a manner of speaking.

He wasn't able to talk, because he didn't have a mouth. He had no nose, either.

He didn't even have any arms or legs. He also didn't have a stomach, and he didn't have a back, and he didn't have a spine, and he also didn't have any other insides. He didn't have anything. So it's hard to understand whom we're talking about.

So we'd better not talk about him any more.

Falling-Out Old Women

An old woman fell out of a window because she was too curious. She fell and broke into pieces.

Another old woman leaned out the window and looked at the one that had broken into pieces, but because she was too curious, she also fell out of the window—fell and broke into pieces.

Then a third old woman fell out of the window, then a fourth, and then a fifth.

When the sixth old woman fell out of the window, I became fed up with watching them and went to the Maltsevsky Market, where they said a blind man had been presented with a knit scarf.

An Event on the Street

Once a man jumped out of a streetcar, but so clumsily that he fell under an automobile.

Traffic on the street stopped, and a policeman tried to find out how the accident had happened.

The driver was explaining something for a long time, pointing with his finger at the front wheels of the automobile. The policeman felt the wheels with his hand and wrote the name of the street in his little book.

A fairly large crowd gathered round.

A man with dim eyes kept falling off the policeman's stand all the time.

A woman kept looking around all the time at another woman, who in her turn kept looking around all the time at the first woman.

Then the crowd dispersed and traffic started moving again.

The citizen with the dim eyes kept on falling off the stand for a long time, but in the end he, too, clearly despairing of getting himself securely seated on the policeman's stand, simply lay down on the sidewalk. At that moment a man who was carrying a chair fell down hard, under the streetcar.

A policeman came again; again a crowd gathered, and traffic stopped. The man with the dim eyes again started falling off the policeman's stand. Well, and then everything became all right, and even Ivan Semyonovich Karpov went into a restaurant.

Incidents

Once Orlov ate too many ground peas and died. Krylov found out about it and died too. Spiridonov up and died all by himself. Spiridonov's wife fell off the cupboard and also died. Spiridonov's children drowned in the pond. Grandma Spiridonov took to drink and hit the road. Mikhailov stopped combing his hair and caught a skin disease. Kruglov drew a picture of a lady with a whip in her hand and lost his mind. Perekhrestov was sent four hundred rubles by telegram and put on such airs that they fired him at his office.

Good people, but they don't know how to take themselves in hand.

Petrakov

The other day Petrakov wanted to go to bed, but he missed the bed and plopped down beside it. He bumped the floor so hard that he lay on the floor and couldn't get up.

So Petrakov gathered himself together and with all his strength pulled himself up on all fours. But his strength gave out, and he fell down again on his stomach and lay there.

Petrakov lay on the floor for five hours. At first he simply lay there; then he fell asleep.

Sleep put strength into Petrakov. He woke up feeling perfectly fine, got up, walked around the room, and lay down carefully on his bed. "Well, now I'll sleep," he thought. But he didn't feel like sleeping any more. He turned from side to side and couldn't fall asleep at all.

That's about all.

Anecdotes about Pushkin's Life

1

Pushkin was a poet, and all the time he was writing something. Once Zhukovsky found him writing and shouted at him, "You really are a scribbler!"

From that time on, Pushkin loved Zhukovsky and in friendly fashion called him simply Zhukov.

2

As is known, Pushkin could never grow a beard. This bothered him a lot, and he always envied Zakharyn, who on the contrary really had a properly growing beard. "His grows and mine doesn't grow," Pushkin often complained, pointing at Zakharyn with his fingernails. And each time he was right.

3

Once Petrushevsky broke his watch and sent for Pushkin. Pushkin came, looked at Petrushevsky's watch, and put it back on the chair. "What do you say, Brother Pushkin?" Petrushevsky asked. "The wheels stopped going round," Pushkin said.

4

When Pushkin broke his legs, he got about on wheels. His friends liked to tease Pushkin and caught the wheels. Pushkin

became angry and wrote poems in which he swore at his friends. He called these poems "erpigarms."

5

Pushkin spent the summer of 1829 in the country. He would get up early in the morning, drink a pitcher of milk, and run to the river to bathe. After bathing in the river, Pushkin would lie down on the grass and sleep till lunch. After lunch Pushkin would sleep in his hammock. When he met smelly peasants, Pushkin would nod to them and hold his nose with his fingers. The smelly peasants would take off their caps and say, "It's nothing."

6

Pushkin loved to throw rocks. As soon as he saw a rock, he would throw it. Sometimes he became so excited that he stood, all red in the face, waving his arms, throwing rocks, simply something awful.

7

Pushkin had four sons, all idiots. One didn't even know how to sit on a chair and fell off all the time. Pushkin himself also sat on a chair rather badly. It was simply killing: they sat at the table; at one end, Pushkin kept falling off his chair continually, and at the other end, his son. Simply enough to make one split one's sides with laughter.