

Ekaterina - The colours of Moscow



By Harry Jivenmukta

First published 2008 by Loosewords Publishing Company

www.loosewords.org

Copyright © Harry Jivenmukta 2008

The right of Harry Jivenmukta to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

Foreword

Ekaterina was my guide, supplied by the company. She became a very good friend, and at about twenty five was a very lively person. Besides the sightseeing, we played games, like the colours game, and I expressed my exuberance in a cold and getting colder Mockba (Moscow). It was very different from the last time I had been there, in mafia Moscow. I was glad because I had always dreamed of Moscow in winter, ever since I became a communist at the age of thirteen.

White

The snow that we
Always imagine being
Virgin white, wasn't.
The cleared snow from
The runway of Sheremetyevo II,
The airport, looked white
But I couldn't walk on it.
The snow in the city
Was smudgy grey,
Not like the sludge
In a melting dirty
Mass we get in the UK,
But although it was dirty
It wasn't sludge.
I couldn't
See myself throwing
Snowballs that were
That colour.
The snow in Mockba
Wasn't as advertised.

Red 1

I was looking for the red
Like the lipstick worn by
A street corner whore.
But the closest I got was
A purply pink
That didn't glisten
In the lights of the night
On the walkways of
The Mockba I dreamed of.
Even when you stopped
To try to get the right colour
To please me,
They didn't have that raw,
'Take me quick'
Kind that I like.

Red 2

On the TV programmes,
When someone is shot
The blood is always
Bright red,
But when you see it for real
As it dries,
It turns a browny colour.
I was getting more
And more
Disillusioned by the
Colours that I saw.
But for comfort,
We did get a Russian
Version of hot dogs
And poured really red
Tomato sauce on them,
Even though you
Didn't like
Tomato sauce.
Now that's what I call
Real friendship!

Transparent

Transparent isn't a colour,
I told you.
You thought that it
Must be
Because everything has
A colour.
I liked that idea
And tried to fathom out
The correct way
To describe a colour
That wasn't.
It got easier as the transparent
Vodka hit home
And although we never did
Define it,
We agreed that further
Investigations might
Be needed tomorrow.

Zavtrak

Zavtrak is not a colour,
Or is it?
Your breakfast is called
Zavtrak
And I think it should
Be a colour.
Our pancakes were beige
And so was our porridge,
Although not even I can say
That sour cream and cheese
Is beige.
My determination to
Define things by colours
Led me to this beige conclusion.
I was a bit perturbed though,
That you did eventually
Find the street corner where
Red lipstick
That I fantasised about,
And wore it at breakfast.
I was glad we were just friends
Or the Zavtrak would have
Had to wait,
And might have gone cold!

Blue

I thought that your mother
Had a thing about blue.
It was beautiful;
The curtains, and the table cloth.
And the simple
Generous hosting,
As if I was someone important.
Your sister even had
A blue ribbon
Tying her hair back.
Although I don't speak Russian
I realised that most important
Things must start with the letter Z.
Zakuski, the lunch starter,
Wasn't at all blue,
But was salty fish,
Lovely and fresh.
And hard boiled eggs.

Yellow

Nothing was particularly yellow
Although I claimed the colour
As you told me I had spelled
Your name wrong.
It's not Ekaterina, you said,
But it was spelled Yekaterina.
And the Y signified yellow to me.
You said that you thought
I was beginning to cheat
At our game of colours
But I said it was only because
I had thought of yellow first
And anyway, a bit of
Corruption is allowed
In Russia,
Like a sprinkle of herbs
On the bifstroganov
Just before it is served.
And I didn't complain at your
Spelling of beef stroganoff,
Did I?

Gray

I won this game easily
Because there is only
A smattering of red
In Red Square,
So I called the colour
'Grey, with a handful of
Rose petals scattered around'.
You demanded a redefinition
Of what a colour was
In this increasingly
Competitive game of ours.
I almost had to hold
You, to calm you down.
Really! You Russians
Can be very excitable!

Ekaterina

I declared that
I had discovered a new colour.
By this time Ekaterina
Had gone off the colours game
Because she said I kept
Changing the rules
And she didn't understand
Any more.
I asked her if she
Wanted to know the new colour.
Since she was supposed to be my
Host and guide she probably
Felt obliged to listen
And with a tired wrinkle
Of her forehead
And raising of eyebrows
Asked me to tell her.
The new colour, I said,
Is Ekaterina.
It is browny black like your hair,
And extra creamy like
Milky coffee,
Like your complexion.
It is beautiful like
A strawberry ice cream
Sitting on a table
Waiting to be eaten.
And it is rosy like a sunrise
On a winter's morning,
Like your blushes
At this very moment.