

# Sukhomlinsky News



## Focus on stories

Dear reader,

*I hope you are keeping well.*

*Now that I have completed my translation of **Our School in Pavlysh**, I will be turning my attention to translating a more complete collection of Sukhomlinsky's stories. Many of Sukhomlinsky's stories have been published in Ukrainian, but I will initially focus on Russian language publications, commencing with **An Ethics Anthology**. I have already translated some stories from that book and published them in past issues of Sukhomlinsky News. I will now translate those that I have not previously translated and share a selection each month with subscribers. Once I have completed all the stories in **An Ethics Anthology**, I will publish them as a book.*

*So, instead of the usual single page of four or five stories, this month's edition of **Sukhomlinsky News** contains fifteen stories from the first section of **An Ethics Anthology**, a section entitled "Beauty – the joy of life". I hope you enjoy Sukhomlinsky's lyrical and evocative little descriptions of nature, which, among other things, served as exemplars for his students' creative writing.*

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill



## Stories from *An Ethics Anthology*

**This issue (and most probably several issues to follow) will be devoted to translations of little stories and vignettes from Sukhomlinsky's *An Ethics Anthology*.**

### The lily and the moth

On the quiet surface of a pond grew a water lily, a beautiful white flower. All day her petals warmed themselves in the sun.

Evening approached, and the sun was setting. The sky turned purple, and everything around took on a purple hue.

Suddenly a moth settled on one of the water lily's delicate petals.

"Kindly permit me to spend the night on your petal," requested the moth.

"Dear moth, I would gladly give you shelter, but I cannot. Every night I sink under the water."

"Why?" asked the moth in surprise.

"I have a soft bed there," answered the water lily, "But tomorrow, as soon as the sun rises, I will get up. Fly to me then, moth."

The white lily folded her petals and quietly sank into the water, and the moth flew to the bank of the pond.

In the morning, as soon as the sun rose, the water lily rose from her bed and unfolded her petals. She waited for the moth, but it did not come. She waited for it all day, but it was nowhere to be seen. It only came flying in the evening, when the sun was setting, and the whole world was turning purple. Through her tears the lily said, "I waited for you all day, but now I have to sink under the water."

The moth fluttered its wings and flew to the bank of the pond. The lily looked for a long time at the darkening sky, and her heart ached.

# Stories from *An Ethics Anthology*

## The clever glazier

One morning Yurko came to the pond and saw something amazing. The whole pond was covered with thin glass. Under the glass, the water was still moving. Yurko asked his father, "Who covered the pond with glass?"

His father laughed and said, "There is a very skilled and clever glazier. He came and covered the pond with a huge piece of glass. That glazier lives a long way from here, in the north, but he came and visited us."

"Who is that glazier?" asked Yurko in surprise.

"The frost."

## The lark is helping the sun

In the dense forest, and in the deep gully, there was still snow on the ground. The snowdrops were still sleeping under last years leaves. Blue ice covered the pond.

Only on the hillsides had the snow melted, causing streams to flow. Steam was rising from the earth, and the sun was shining brightly in the sky.

A little girl named Marinka came out of her little house and saw a grey bird in the sky. The bird sang, and it seemed as if a silver bell was rising into the sky on wings, and was ringing continuously.

"Mum, what sort of bird is that singing?" Marinka asked her mother.

"It's a lark," her mother replied.

"Why has it come so early? Why is it singing so joyfully? There is still snow on the ground."

"The lark is helping the sun," her mother answered.

"How can it help the sun?" asked Marinka in surprise.

"When a lark flies up into the blue sky, it gets warmer," replied her mother.

## The lilac bush

A lilac bush grew near a pond. In spring it was covered with light blue flowers.

Whenever anyone came to the pond, they smiled as soon as they saw the lilac-coloured flowers. It was as if a piece of the blue sky had fallen to Earth. That is what the colour was like.

But one day a gloomy man came to the pond. He broke several branches off the lilac bush and took them somewhere.

Some young hikers were in the area. They came to the pond, washed themselves, and had a rest. As they left, they broke off many of the flowering branches.

There was no longer a flowering bush by the pond, and it seemed as if there was a little less of the blue sky.

People coming to the pond no longer smile. There are fewer smiles in the world.

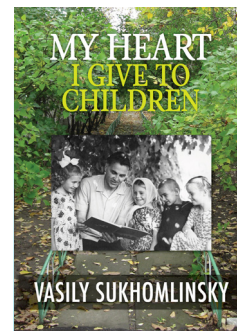
## Where the ants were hurrying to

A squirrel sat in a tree and ate a nut. It was so tasty the squirrel was screwing up its eyes with pleasure. A tiny piece of the nut fell to the ground. Then a second, and a third. Lots of crumbs fell from the nut.

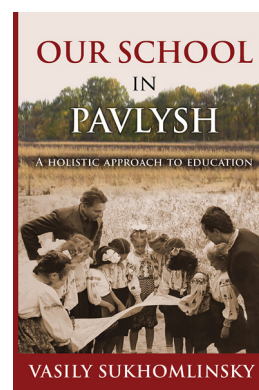
A mother ant was running between the blades of grass, hurrying to find food for her babies. She knew that there were ripe melons at the melon plantation.

Suddenly she saw the nut crumbs falling from the tree. She tried one and it was really tasty!

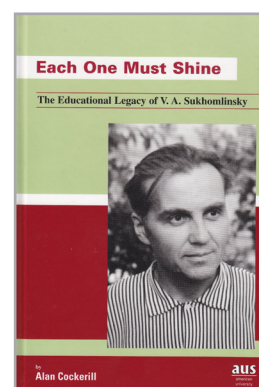
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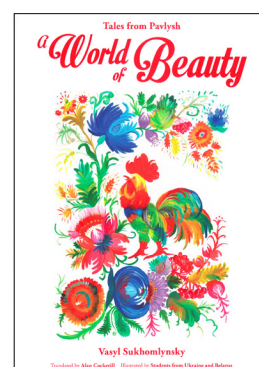
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She took a fragment of the nut to the ant nest and called all her neighbours. "Let's run and get more nuts!" The ants set off together.

The baby ants ate the piece of nut their mother had brought and shared it with their friends. There was enough for all the ant babies, and even some left over.

The ants from the nest reached the big tree, collected all the pieces of nut and carried them home. Now they would have enough to eat for a long time.

## Autumn garments

When the sun begins to get lower in the sky each day, a grandma with golden hair wakes up in the dark forest. This grandma is called Autumn. She quietly walks through the green meadows. Wherever she stops, white crystals of ice appear on the grass. In the morning people say there has been a frost.

Autumn comes to the orchard. She touches a tree with her golden hair, and its leaves become yellow, red and orange... In the morning people say it is a golden autumn. But during the day Autumn, with her golden hair, hides in the dark forest and waits for the night.

## How the brook watered the camomile flower

A camomile flower grew in a meadow. On its tall stem grew a yellow flower, like a little sun. The hot summer came. The earth became dry. The camomile flower hung its yellow head. "How will I live in this dry earth?" she cried.

Nearby was a babbling brook. It heard the camomile flower crying and took pity on her. It came gushing, playing and gurgling, watering the earth. The camomile flower raised its head and smiled. "Thank you, brook. Now I am not afraid of the hot sun."

## How the bee found the lily of the valley

A bee flew out of its hive and circled above the apiary. It could hear a bell ringing somewhere far off in the distance. The bee flew towards the sound of the bell. It flew into the forest. In a clearing it found some lilies of the valley. Each flower was a little silver bell, with a tiny yellow clapper in the middle. The clapper hit the silver and made a ringing sound. You could hear it in the apiary and in the steppe. That is how a lily of the valley summons bees.

The bee landed on the flower and took some nectar. "Thank you, lily of the valley," said the bee.

The flower did not reply. It could not speak. It just hung its head in embarrassment. The bee understood that this was how the flower was acknowledging its gratitude.

The bee took the nectar to its babies.

## He could smell his mother's hands

A mother ant was running, hurrying home to her ant nest, carrying a tiny little piece of sweet watermelon. She opened the door and went inside. Inside the ant nest were lots and lots of little beds, and in each bed was a baby ant.

The mother ant found her baby in his bed. She sat at the head of the bed and hugged and kissed her baby. The baby ant was happy in his own way and said in ant language, "I knew it was you, mum. Your hands smell so sweet..."

The mother fed her baby with the sweet watermelon. The baby ant ate his fill, smiled, and went to sleep. Very quietly, so as not to wake her baby, the mother ant got up. She took what was left of the watermelon and put it in a jar for the winter. The mother ant ran off into the forest to look for more food. And the baby ant lay in his bed and smiled. Even in his sleep he could smell his mother's hands.

## Fiery Mane

Yura's father carved him a horse out of wood. It was high-spirited and hot-tempered. It struck the earth with its hoofs and its fiery mane waved in the air.

Yura called his horse "Fiery mane". He would not part with it. He put it on the table and sat watching it. It seemed to Yura that at any moment the horse would start galloping.

When it was time to sleep, Yura put his horse on the floor by his bed. He was dozing off when suddenly he saw Fiery Mane lift his head, shake himself, and start galloping round the room.

Yura jumped out of bed and wanted to chase after Fiery Mane, but it was already standing by his bed again. Yura bent down to the horse and stroked its head. Fiery Mane calmed down. Only its legs still shook a little, and its fiery mane was still warm.

## It was only beautiful when it was alive

A magnificent butterfly—an Old World swallowtail—settled on a red canna flower. It settled and fluttered its wings.

A boy crept up to the butterfly and caught it. The butterfly struggled, but it could not escape. The boy attached it to a sheet of paper with a big pin. The butterfly's wings drooped.

"Why have you stopped fluttering your wings, butterfly?" asked the boy.

The butterfly was silent. The boy put the piece of paper with the dead butterfly on the windowsill. When he looked at it a few days later, its wings had dried out and fallen to pieces, and ants were crawling over its body.

"No, it was only beautiful when it was alive," said the boy despondently, "When its wings were fluttering on the canna flower. Not when it was stuck to a piece of paper."



## Stories

### The hot flower

There was an early spring that year. Orchards flowered in the middle of April. Then May came.

One clear spring morning a little girl named Olya went to the orchard and saw a big red rose in flower. She ran to her mother and joyfully told her, "Mum, a red rose has flowered!"

Her mother came to the orchard, looked at the red flower, and smiled. Then she looked at the sky, and her face became anxious.

A black cloud was bearing down from the north. The wind picked up, the cloud covered the sun, and it became cold.

Olya and her mother sat inside and anxiously looked out the window. Snow began to fall, like white butterflies. Everything became white. The wind died down. Snowflakes fell softly to the ground for a while, and then stopped.

Olya and her mother went to the orchard. The green leaves were wearing little hats of snow. The ground was covered with a snow-white carpet. Only the rose was red, like a glowing coal. Drops of dew sparkled on it.

"It's hot. It's not afraid," said Olya, and she smiled joyfully.

### That's the sun!

It was a clear summer day. A teacher took some little children into the forest.

The forest was big and silent. The trees stood straight and tall, like giant candles. The dense foliage hid the sun, and it was half dark in the forest.

The children walked and walked. It seemed as if there would be no end to the forest. Something made a sound overhead.

"What is that sound?" asked the children.

"That is the tops of the trees talking to each other," said the teacher. "They are happy because they can see the sun."

Suddenly the children stopped. On the broad trunk of a hundred year oak, they saw something bright and shining.

"What is that?" asked the children in surprise.

"That's the sun!" answered their teacher. "Look from here. Can you see how bright it is?"

One by one, the children stood by the trunk of the hundred year oak and admired the sun.

### The violet and the bee

At the green edge of the forest grew a violet. She watched the world with her violet eye and smiled at the sun each morning.

In a forest clearing, not far from the edge of the forest, a bee lived in a hive.

The bee and the violet became friends. The bee flew to the violet many times each day to collect pollen and nectar. The violet waited impatiently for her friend.

But one day the bee noticed that the violet was sad, and her petals had faded.

"Why are you sad, Violet, and why are your petals so pale? Why haven't you got any pollen or nectar?"

"I am dying," whispered the violet.

"What does that mean: I am dying?" asked the bee in surprise.

"It means I will no longer be able to see the sky or the sun."

"Where will the sky and the sun be?" asked the bee, even more surprised.

"They will still be here, but I won't be..."

Although the bee could not understand why the violet would not be there anymore, he became very sad.

### The smell of apples

It is a quiet autumn day. The apple orchard hums with the sound of bumblebees. They have swarmed to an apple that has fallen from a tree and is lying on the ground. Sweet sap is oozing from the apple, and it is covered with bumblebees. The sun sets, but the scent of the apples, warmed by the sun, still lingers. Somewhere a cricket starts singing. Suddenly an apple falls to the ground with a thump... The cricket falls silent and a frightened bird flits by. Somewhere beyond the forest a star appears in the night sky. The cricket starts singing again.

Now the moon is drifting across the sky, but the apples still smell of the hot sun.

