

# Sukhomlinsky News



*An open area at the school in Pavlysh  
where Misha (in the story below) might have ridden his bicycle.*

## Stories from *An Ethics Anthology*

### Misha's new bicycle

Misha's parents bought him a bicycle. He lives right next to the school. There is an orchard between his parents' house and the school yard, so there is no point in riding a bike to school. Misha walked his bike to school, as if leading a horse by the reins.

The other boys surrounded Misha. They felt the tyres, pedals, handles and light. They all liked the bike and were jealous of Misha.

'Well, why don't you ride it?' said Fedya, stepping back from the bike as if he was not thinking of riding it.

'Do you think I really want to ride it?' said Misha, as if he could not care less. 'You take it and try it out.'

A delighted Fedya took the handles, sat on the bike and rode around the school sports area. He kept riding until the bell went for lessons.

At the first break, Ivan rode the bike, at the second break—Stepan, at the third break—Sergei, and at the fourth break—Olya. The children stayed back to ride after school as well. The bike was passed from hand to hand. By four o'clock everyone had had a ride.

Misha walked his bike home at half past four, as if leading a horse by the reins.

'Where have you been riding all this time?' asked his mother. 'What were you thinking?'

'I didn't ride it,' said Misha.

'What do you mean, you didn't ride it?'

'The other boys rode it, and the girls...'

His mother gave a sigh of relief, and said, as if to herself, 'The only think I was afraid of was that you would ride it all by yourself.'



## Stories about friendship and love

*Dear reader,*

*I hope you are keeping well.*

*Teachers in Australia are returning to work after their summer holidays, and I wish them and all the other teachers who subscribe to this newsletter a satisfying and productive year in 2023.*

*Let us also remember the teachers in Ukraine, who have to cope with extraordinary hardship while at the same time trying to meet their students' needs.*

*This month I am once again presenting translations of stories from Sukhomlinsky's **Ethics Anthology**, all from the section entitled 'Journeys to the wellsprings of thought'. Most of them contain portrayals of friendship and love.*

*I hope you find them meaningful.*

*Best wishes,*

*Alan Cockerill*



## Stories from *An Ethics Anthology* (cont.)

### Grandma Maria's funeral

Auntie Maria worked as a caretaker at our school. When she turned fifty-five, she did not retire. 'It would be hard for me to live without the children,' she explained.

Twenty more years passed, and Auntie Maria became a grandmother. All the children affectionately called her Grandma Maria. Every day at dawn, she greeted the children as they arrived at school. When lessons ended for the day, she locked up the school.

When Grandma Maria turned seventy-five, she fell ill. She was confined to bed for a while, and then she died. Everyone in the village felt heartache at Grandma Maria's passing. Everyone remembered how their childhood had been spent under her tender and watchful eye.

Her funeral was attended by young and old. Children carried the school bell in front of her coffin, the bell with which for fifty years she had summoned them to school, to the cradle of learning, knowledge and thought.

When the first handfuls of earth fell on the coffin, the youngest student, little Nina in grade one, lifted the bell and rang it. For the first time in fifty years, the bell rang sadly.

### A baby brother is born

Alyonka's mother gave birth to a baby boy. Alyonka was happy. 'Now I have a baby brother,' she thought.

Alyonka woke up in the middle of the night and saw her mother leaning over her brother's cot and singing a lullaby to him. Suddenly Alyonka felt jealous. She thought, 'Now mum won't love me as much as she did before. Now she has to love Petrik as well.'

'Mum,' said Alyonka the next morning, 'I love you so much...'

'Why are you saying that?' asked her mother, with concern.

'Because I want you to love me just as much as Petrik...'

Her mother sighed with relief and said, 'Go outside, Alyonka, and ask the sun how it shares its warmth between all the people.'

Alyonka went outside and asked, and the sun answered, 'Every person gets all my warmth. Every little bit of it.'

### New trousers

Vitya, who was in grade three, was getting ready to go to school. It was the first day of a new school year, and Vitya's mother had bought him some new trousers. The boy put them on for the first time and it was nice to have something new.

Vitya was waiting for Andrei to come to his house. They always walked to school together. The day before they had sat for a long time on Sunny Bluff by the river and promised to be best friends forever. They would graduate from school together, do their military service together, and if they had to fight, they would defend each other with their lives.

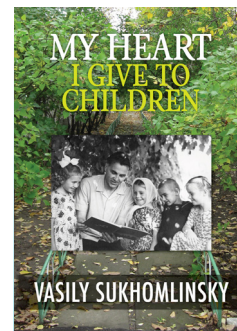
Andrei arrived, and he was wearing old trousers. 'Mum,' said Vitya, 'Can you give me the old trousers that I wore during the summer?'

'But you've got new ones,' said his mother in surprise. 'You've already put them on...'

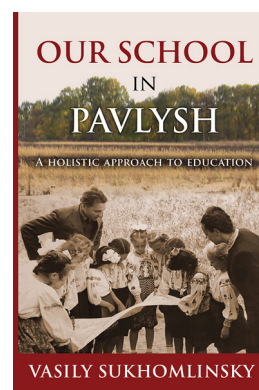
'They're too tight,' said Vitya quietly. 'I can't walk in them...'

His mother looked at her son in amazement. Then she saw Andrei's old trousers and understood everything. 'You're right,' she said. 'They are a bit tight. Put on the old ones.'

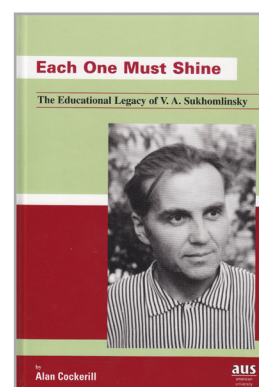
Vitya put on his old trousers and the friends walked to school as happy as could be. On the way they agreed to meet that evening at Sunny Bluff by the river.



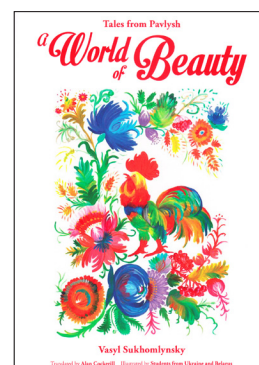
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## The fox and the mouse

A mother fox had five babies. She loved her little fox cubs very much. Every day she went hunting and brought them something tasty to eat: a bird, a baby hare, a mouse, or sometimes a frog or a beetle.

One day the mother fox noticed a mouse's burrow not far from her den. The mother mouse and her babies only just had time to hide in their burrow before the fox reached it. She sat by the entrance to the burrow and said, 'You will have to come out of your burrow some time, or your babies will, and then I will catch you.'

The fox waited by the burrow for a long time. The mouse and her babies were getting very hungry, but the fox just sat there waiting for them to come out. The mouse tried to think of a way to scare off the fox. She called out from her burrow, 'Run away, fox. A wolf is coming from the forest to get you.' But the fox just laughed.

Then the mouse called out, 'Run away, fox. A hunter is coming with his gun.' But the fox did not stir.

Then the mouse called out, 'Fox, the wolf has just crawled into your den to get your babies!' And the fox ran to save her babies.

## Gathering mushrooms

Fedya, who was in grade three, was so keen to go mushrooming that he got ready the night before. His mother got out a basket for him, and a raincoat in case it rained.

It was a foggy morning. Fedya walked into the forest, where there were supposed to be lots of white mushrooms growing. He walked for about a kilometre without seeing a single mushroom.

'Surely I cannot go all day without finding a single mushroom,' he thought. He walked for an hour, two hours, three hours, but there were no mushrooms to be found. Fedya eyes filled with tears. He decided not to go home until it was dark, so that no-one would see how unsuccessful he was.

Suddenly he met his classmate Alyonka. She had a basket full of white mushrooms.

'You couldn't find a single mushroom?' she asked in surprise.

Fedya hung his head. He felt ashamed.

Alyonka took Fedya's basket, put it on the ground, and tipped half her mushrooms into it. Then they happily walked home together.

## Blue cranes

When grade three student Zoya left home this morning, she was very happy. The night before, her mother and father had sat on the end of her bed for a long time, telling her stories, and when she felt sleepy, they kissed her and said, 'Have sweet, sunny dreams!' Zoya had sweet dreams about the shining sun, a green meadow as vast as the ocean, yellow dandelions, bumblebees and a lark singing in the sky...

But Zoya's classmate, Mitya, left home pale, sad and

thoughtful. The night before his mother and father had screamed at each other. His mother had cried. For a long time Mitya could not get to sleep, and he dreamt of his mother's tearful eyes.

Zoya and Mitya walked to school together. The little girl was happily chattering away about something. Mitya wanted to listen to what she was saying, to drive away his sad thoughts, but he could not. In his mind he kept seeing his mother's big eyes, full of tears. The boy felt like crying.

Suddenly Zoya exclaimed, 'Look, Mitya, there are cranes in the sky! A whole flock of them... It's spring, it's spring. Look how beautiful they are, the cranes are light blue! Blue cranes, look, Mitya, look!'

'They're not blue, they're grey...' said Mitya quietly.

'They're not grey, they're blue! How can you think a blue bird is grey?' said Zoya in amazement.

The children arrived at school. Zoya went over to her teacher and said, 'When we were walking to school, there was a flock of blue cranes flying in the sky. But Mitya said they were grey. Are they really grey? I saw with my own eyes that they were blue.'

The teacher looked carefully at Mitya. 'For you they were blue, Zoya, but for Mitya they were grey... But don't worry, Mitya, your blue cranes will come.'

## Hello, rooster!

On the edge of the village stands the kindergarten, a big, brightly lit building with wide windows. It is a second home for the children of the collective farm workers. Around the building is an orchard, with lots of apple, pear and plum trees. Under the windows are flowers.

One morning, three-year-old Tima was brought to the kindergarten by his mother. Right next to the kindergarten Tima could hear the sound of cheeping under a tree. He walked up to an apple tree and saw a little chick sitting in the grass. It was wet and shivering from the cold.

Tima picked up the chick, tucked inside his shirt, and took it into the kindergarten. The little chick dried out there, and settled down. When Tima undid his shirt to see how the chick was faring, he turned his little head and looked at Tima with little eyes as black as poppy seeds.

The kindergarten teacher, Auntie Maria, found a home for the chick in a little cage in the kitchen. The children brought the chick wheat and breadcrumbs.

That was how the little chick came to live in the kindergarten. The days and weeks passed, and the chick grew into a handsome little rooster. Each child, when they came to kindergarten, would go into the kitchen and say, 'Hello, Rooster!' The rooster would quickly jump down from his cage onto the floor and wait. After those words, he was always given something tasty to eat.

But when Tima came and said 'Hello, rooster!' the rooster would jump onto his shoulder and crow, 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!'

That was him saying, 'I love you, Tima!'



## Stories

### The cat and the mouse

Little Olya's mother was reading her a book that told of amazing things. Once upon a time a little mouse lived in a mouse-hole. One day she came out for a walk, and a cat with big whiskers chased the frightened mouse all the way back to its hole. The mouse sat inside, shivering with fear, while the cat sat by the hole and waited for the mouse to come out. That was how the story ended.

Olya asked her mother, 'But mum, what happened next? The cat didn't catch the mouse, did it?'

'It doesn't say,' answered her mother. 'The cat is waiting outside the hole and the mouse is hiding inside.'

That night everyone went to bed. Mum left the book about the cat and the mouse on the table. Olya could not sleep. 'The mouse is in the book,' she thought. 'What if she runs out of her hole and the cat with the big whiskers catches her?'

Olya quietly got out of bed, took the book about the mouse and hid it in the cupboard, so that the cat could not catch the mouse.

### If the rooster does not crow...

A grandmother had a grandson named Yashka and a rooster named Goldie. Yashka was five years old, and Goldie was two.

Early each morning, while Grandma and Yashka were still asleep, Goldie, who slept in the entrance hall, would suddenly crow loudly, 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!'

Grandma and Yashka would wake up. 'Morning has broken,' Grandma would say. 'Goldie is crowing, so it's time to get up and get to work.' Grandma would get up, and so would Yashka.

Grandma would let the rooster out, and Goldie would strut off looking for something nice to eat. Grandma would peel some potatoes, and Yashka would sweep the floor. One day, Yashka asked his grandmother, 'Grandma, does morning come because Goldie crows?'

'Of course, Yashka. It gets light because Goldie crows.'

'So, if the rooster did not crow, there would be no morning?'

'Probably not,' answered Grandma.

Yashka caught a cold and fell ill. He needed some medicine, but there was no money to buy it. Grandma put the rooster into a basket and set off for the market. 'We'll sell the rooster,' said Grandma, 'And buy you some medicine.'

Goldie sat in the basket, staring at Yashka. Yashka felt sorry for the rooster.

'Grandma,' begged Yashka through his tears, 'Don't sell Goldie. Then there will be nobody to crow, and it will be night all the time. The morning won't come... And I don't like it at night...'

Goldie raised his head out of the basket and crowed happily. Yashka laughed, and he began to get better.

### Why grandpa smiled

An old sycamore tree grew beside the yard. Mykola asked his father how old the tree was. His father answered, 'I don't know, it seemed this old when I was a little boy.'

So, Mykola asked his grandfather how old the sycamore tree was. His grandfather answered, 'I don't know, it was old when I was a little boy.'

Every spring, buds sprouted on the tree's branches, and it was covered in green leaves that whispered in the breeze. But one spring, the buds did not sprout. The little birds that used to nest in its branches circled the tree, chirping anxiously, and then flew away. The sycamore stood dry and silent.

Mykola's father said to his grandfather, 'I suppose we need to cut it down. It has died.'

'Let's wait until the next spring,' his grandfather replied.

The buds did not sprout the following spring either. Mykola's father and grandfather took a big saw and cut the tree down. The mighty sycamore fell to the ground.

Spring ended and summer began. One day, Mykola came to the stump of the tree and froze in awe: strong new green shoots with big leaves were growing from the old tree's roots. Mykola rushed to tell his grandfather about the green shoots. His grandfather came to look at the stump and smiled.

Mykola really wanted to understand why his grandfather had smiled.

