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Sukhomlynsky News



Poster for round table webinar "Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's 'School under the open sky': From history to the present"

Round Table Webinar held in Kyiv

On 6 October, a round table webinar was hosted by the V. Sukhomlynsky State Scientific and Educational Library of Ukraine together with the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Vasyl Sukhomlynsky Association. The theme for the webinar was "'Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's 'School under the open sky': From history to the present".

The particpants included Professor Olha Sukhomynska, Dr Lesia Sukhomlynska, Professor Larysa Berezivska, Professor Larysa Korzh-Usenko, Dr Oleksandr Mikhno, Professor Oksana Petrenko, Dr Inna Petrenko, Marianna Roskos, Tetian Totska, Liubov Liashchuk, Ruslana Zhakhman, and Alan Cockerill.

The topics covered included "New approaches to the shaping of childhood", "Nature as Teacher", "Shaping the educational environment", "The school under the open sky in the digital age", "Nature pedagogy", "Forming philosophical views of nature in older preschool children", and "Open-air activities at the Lehotsky Transcarpathian Regional Museum of Local History"

Mariana Roskos, Acting Director of the Sukhomlynsky Memorial Museum at Sukhomlynsky's school in Pavlysh, presented archival photos of the students described in Sukhomlynsky's *My Heart I Give to Children* as they progressed through their schooling and provided information about these students' adult lives after school.



Webinar held in Kyiv on 6 October

Dear reader,

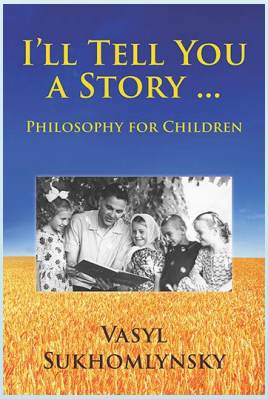
I hope you are well.

This month's newsletter presents a short account of a webinar held in Kyiv on 6 October, and eleven more little stories from ***I'll Tell You a Story … Philosophy for Children.***

In a letter to the Belarusian children's writer Vasil Vitka, Sukhomlynsky wrote that the overwhelming majority of his stories are taken from life. The stories are thus a reflection of the life of his school community.

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill



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From *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*

A swallow builds a nest

A swallow returned from spending the winter in warmer lands and began to build a nest. She flew to a pond, took some wet soil in her tiny beak, and started moulding her nest under the eaves. A toad sat near the bank of the pond. She asked the swallow, 'Tell me, swallow, where are you taking that soil?'

'I am building a nest,' answered the swallow.

'What is a nest?' asked the toad.

The swallow spent a long time explaining to the toad what a nest was, and about chicks, but the toad could not make any sense of it. When the swallow told the toad that she soared high in the sky, right up to the clouds, the toad laughed and did not believe a word of it. It seemed incredible to the toad that anyone could love anything other than a swamp.

Why the chickadee is crying

A husband and wife lived in a house on the edge of the village. They had two children: a boy named Myshko and a girl named Olia. Myshko was ten, and Olia was nine.

A tall, bushy poplar grew near their house. 'Let's make a swing under the poplar,' said Myshko.

'Yes! I can't wait to swing on it,' said Olia with joy.

Myshko climbed the poplar and tied a rope to its branches. Myshko and Olia hung on to the rope and started to swing back and forth. As they swung, a chickadee fluttered next to them, singing its heart out. 'The chickadee is happy to see us swinging,' said Myshko.

Olia looked at the trunk of the poplar and saw a hollow. In the hollow was a nest, and in the nest were some little chicks. 'The chickadee is not happy; it is crying,' said Olia.

'Why is it crying?' Myshko asked in surprise.

'Think about it,' answered Olia.

Myshko jumped off the swing and looked at the chickadee's nest. 'Why is it crying?' he wondered.

Murko's surprise

An old lady had a very old cat named Murko. One day, Murko was lazing in the sun, soaking up its warmth. He closed his eyes and fell asleep with his head on his paws. Only his tail moved from time to time, chasing away the flies.

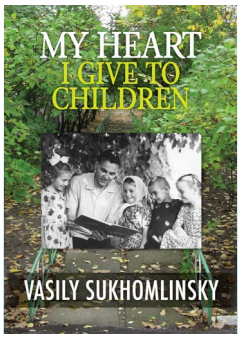
A little chick wandered into the courtyard. He had become separated from his mother and was cheeping pitifully. When he saw the cat, he stopped cheeping. He quietly approached the cat, snuggled up beside him, and closed his eyes, enjoying the warmth of the cat's body.

Murko felt something pressing against him. He opened his eyes and was amazed to see the chick. 'What a brave little fellow!' he thought. Murko stared at the chick and did not know what to do with him. Should he frighten the chick and chase him away, or should he let him enjoy the warmth?

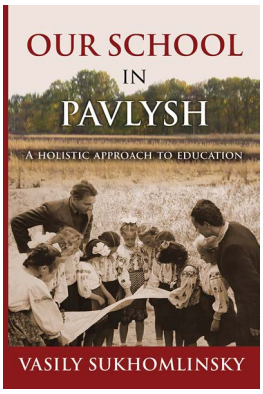
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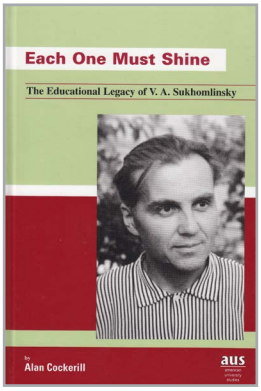
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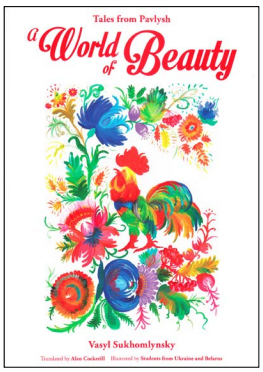
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He became a worker

A mother had three children: ten-year-old Natalka, seven-year-old Olia, and little Oleh. He was only two years old. He often asked his mother and sisters questions, like, 'What is that?' or 'How come a pigeon can fly, but a chicken can't fly?'

On Saturday, the mother said to her daughters, 'Let's clean up the yard. There's a lot of rubbish there.' The mother, Natalka and Olia each took a small broom and began to sweep the yard. They gathered all the rubbish in a pile, carried it to the vegetable patch, and burnt it.

While the rubbish was burning, little Oleh noticed a piece of straw in the yard and picked it up and took it to the fire. He handed it to his mother and said, 'I picked up some straw.' His mother took the piece of straw and threw it into the fire.

'Today is a special day for our Oleh,' the mother told her daughters.

'What sort of special day?' asked Natalka and Olia in surprise.

'Today is the day he became a worker.'

I am going to work

When she went to work, Olia's mother always took a small lunch box. She would also take a needle and thread. Little Olia asked her, 'Mum, why do you take a needle and thread with you?'

'Because I'm going to work,' her mother replied. 'If something gets torn, I'll be able to mend it.'

The time arrived for Olia to start going to school. On the first of September she woke early in the morning and packed her textbooks and exercise books into her schoolbag all by herself.

Her mother advised her, 'Study well. Studying is hard work.'

Olia picked up her schoolbag and prepared to leave. Then she remembered something and said, 'Mum, can you please give me a needle and thread?'

'Why?' asked her mother in surprise.

'Because I'm going to work,' said Olia.

Who is the most intelligent?

An ox, a goat, and a sheep were debating who was the most intelligent of the three. Each one said, 'I am the most intelligent.' Nobody wanted to appear more foolish than the others. In the end, they decided to go and see the donkey and let him settle the matter. 'Dear donkey,' they said, 'Please tell us who is the most intelligent among us?'

The donkey gave them a riddle to solve. 'Let each of you explain why grass grows,' he said. 'Whoever gives the wisest answer is the most intelligent.'

The ox said, 'Grass grows because it rains.'

The goat said, 'Grass grows because the sun gives it warmth.'

The sheep was silent. He remained silent for a day, for two days, for a week. He did not speak for a year, then two years, then three. And the donkey decided that the sheep was the most intelligent. He reasoned that the sheep's silence implied that he knew something. As for the ox and the goat, although they had given an answer, they may have been mistaken.

How the sparrow became white

This happened one summer. A man carried a sack full of flour out of the mill and placed it against a wall. There were lots of sparrows near the mill, pecking at some grain that was scattered around.

One sparrow spotted the sack and flew over to it. The sack was untied. 'Now is my chance,' thought the sparrow, 'I'll treat myself to some wheat.'

But the sack was full of flour, not wheat. The sparrow dived in and was covered in flour. It found its way into his eyes and turned his feathers white. The sparrow flew out of the sack completely white, like a giant butterfly. He settled under the eaves of a shed, blinking his eyes. Then he spotted his nest, flew home, and started chirping excitedly. His little sparrow chicks peeked out from their nest and were shocked by what they saw. What on earth was this white bird? They were frightened and burst into tears.

Their mother-sparrow came flying. She could hardly recognise her husband, but she comforted her chicks, saying 'This is our daddy, my dears … Just watch him fly off and fetch you a worm.'

The white sparrow flew off and brought his chicks a worm. Only then did his children believe that it was their father.



From *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*

The spider and the lace

A girl sat by the window, weaving some fine white lace. From a dark corner of the room, a spider watched her work. He could not take his eyes off her nimble fingers. He was mesmerized by the strong threads and the beautiful pattern. 'What a wonderful web,' he thought. 'Even the most cunning fly would be attracted to such a beautiful web.'

One day, the girl went for a walk, leaving the lace unattended on the table. The spider scurried over from his corner to the table and felt the lace. He was puzzled: the web woven by the girl was not sticky. A web like this could not catch even the tiniest fly. 'That's strange,' he thought. 'Why would the girl weave a web like this?'

The girl returned from her walk. She sat by the window, and again set about weaving her magic on the lace. The spider retreated to his dark corner and racked his brain. 'Why weave a web, if you cannot catch flies with it?' he wondered.

The carp and the toad

A little carp lived in a pond. He was swift and agile, with a pink tail. He befriended a toad. One day, the toad told him, 'I am going over to the bank of the pond. I'll spend some time soaking up the sunshine, and I'll bring you some flies for dinner.'

The toad crawled out onto the bank of the pond and warmed himself in the sun. The carp was jealous. 'Just look at that toad soaking up the sun, and catching flies,' he thought, 'While I have to swim in this disgusting water. It's wet and cold!'

The carp swam over to the edge of the pond, leaped out of the water, and found himself on the hot sand. He tried to breathe, but he was suffocating. He wanted to flick his tail, but his tail had already dried out on the hot sand. The toad noticed that his friend was in trouble and said, 'Don't leap out of the water, or you'll end up in a frying pan.'

The toad hopped over to the carp, took hold of him, and threw him back into the water. The carp was overjoyed, 'Oh, toad, dear toad!' he cried, 'You have saved me from certain death!'

The carp never again said that water was disgusting.

A sparrow learns about fire

An old mother sparrow finally allowed her little son to spread his wings and fly out of the nest. The little sparrow was overjoyed and kept asking his mother, 'What is this? And what is that?'

His mother explained to him about the earth, about grass, trees, hens, geese, and a pond. Then the little sparrow spotted a giant ball of fire in the sky. 'What is that?' he asked.

'That is the sun,' his mother replied.

'What is the sun?' the sparrow went on.

'Why do you need to know all these things?' replied his wise mother, growing irritated. 'The sun is fire.'

'I would like to learn about fire,' the sparrow chirped and flew higher and higher, closer and closer to the sun. He kept soaring upwards until he burnt the delicate feathers on his tiny wings. Then he took fright and flew back home. His mother was waiting for him, half dead with fright. 'Well, now I know what fire is,' chirped the little sparrow.

The pigeon in the cloud

From beyond the Dnipro a huge dark cloud appeared. It covered the sun, and everything around became quiet and anxious. Trees stood still and motionless. The cloud exhaled a wave of cold air. Frightened pigeons hid in their bird house. Then something white flashed against the background of the black cloud. It was a pigeon soaring high in the sky towards the approaching thunderstorm. An arrow of fire pierced the cloud and thunder rumbled. The pigeon dived into the cloud as if plunging into water. Everything around turned dark and grim. Dear pigeon, where are you?



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