

The Yogi

Andrei Bely

Йог

*

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*The author's name, Андрей Белый, is a pseudonym. Белый means *white*.

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1

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin was employed in one of Moscow's museums as the head of its library department for forty years now, at least.

In summer, and during winters, autumns and springs his old, bent frame would unfailingly appear in the museum lobby. During summer – in a white, breezy jacket, wearing galoshes, carrying an overlarge umbrella; winters – in a coon-skin fur reddened with age; in a frayed overcoat in the damp autumn; and during spring – in a trench coat.

Smacking his lips and smoothing out his tufted beard, he groans his way slowly up the stairs, eventually overcoming all the twenty four steps leading up to the reading hall, already packed full. He nods to the visitors racing past – he does not know them, but they have already known him a long time.

After walking into the library, he looks through memos and puts them aside - marking each off with a pencil.

Sometimes he looks a colleague over, and abruptly tears him away from his work with some worthy phrase, recalling a dictum of Lomonosov's:

Sciences sustain the young

He then rubs his palms together and leans his head back while a broad, pleased smile spreads over his face; in an instant a face severe and dry, recalling portraits of the poet and censor Maikov becomes transparent, illuminated, simply – a child's face:

“Iconography, young man, is science!” rings out amidst the dead quiet of the rooms adjacent to the reading hall, but when that young man, torn away from his work looks up, he sees: a face severe and dry, recalling portraits of the poet and censor Maikov.

They say that once, Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin, strolling through the museum's tree-lined court proclaimed:

“Paradise, gentlemen, is, in essence, a garden...”

“We're in a garden.”

“That is to say, we're in paradise...”

They say that the features of his faded visage transformed themselves suddenly; such indisputability shone through them; the museum director's assistant, walking alongside, for an instant seemed to see: Ivan Ivanovich transported enraptured to heaven's highest firmament suffers an inexpressible sweetness – as he related to Agrafina Kondrativna that evening.

“Wouldn't you know, Agrafina Kondrativna, God knows, who he is – or even – what he might be... isn't he a Mason, now; and, see, the late Ma-*yevski* gave him the job; and about Ma-*yevski* they'd say, back in the day, that he was a Mason... And he'd wear some special type of ring on his index finger.”

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin had no acquaintances; he never became close with anyone; visitors would try to come by for a visit, and – stop coming by; he was once met walking out of his home in Galosh Lane[†] with a large bronze tub, carefully covered over – and what, do you suppose, was in *that* tub? You'll never guess: *cockroaches*.

Yes!

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin filled the tub with sugar and caught himself cockroaches; Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin had gotten cockroaches; he couldn't exterminate them (he was soft-hearted), so he caught them in the tub, and then let them out of the tub, after taking it out into the street.

Not once one or another co-worker noticed the upon himself the old man's trying gaze, originating from behind an enormous pair of blue spectacles; and noticed a desire: to relate a deeply interesting yet enigmatic event; but such elderly eccentricities were ignored. It so happened many times: Ivan Ivanovich directs his attention to someone, singling them out for no reason; and suddenly – withdraws: again – for no reason.

It was also noticed that these moments of attention to whomever it may be coincided, usually, with one or another everyday misfortune of that whoever it may be – a misfortune that Ivan Ivanovich could not possibly have known about just then; quite the opposite: the circumstances of whoever it may be luckily flowed across Ivan Ivanovich's path; so, once, while N. N. Pustovalov and N. T. Kosich were having an argument, he mixed himself up right in the middle of their argument, and impolitely cutting off Pustovalov, took out his waistcoat watch, and looking at the second hand remarked:

“I'd give you, Nikolai Nikolaiovich, six minutes to explain your position... Well then, I'm listening: one minute...”

“Two”

“Three”

After such an intrusion into the argument, everything was turned upside down; and – the argument dissipated; with a face recalling the poet and censor Maikov, the respected Ivan Ivanovich laid out a weighty quote:

“Science lies in the sphere of fact: hypotheticals damage science... an argument, you see, is a game of hypotheticals, an inflation of hyperbole.

“Read *The Heuristics*, now *that* is a study on the art of matching wits.”

Amazingly, one of the parties to the argument received an inheritance in forty-six days and resigned.

Bureaucrats avoided Ivan Ivanovich; essentially, they were unfamiliar with the events of his long life; he was already past seventy; he had served in the museum some forty years; he had begun work at a mature age, appearing in our parts from Tavrid[‡]; he was given the position by the late Ma-*yevski*, a powerful influence from that long-gone epoch of czar Nicholas.

[†] калошный переулоч is the street's name, it is pronounced approximately *kaloshniy pereylok* and калоши are galoshes.

[‡] the old name for Crimea.

It was known only that Ivan Ivanovich himself was an epoch; and also: he resides in Galosh Lane, above the courtyard of a many-storied gray building, from which he unfailingly appears, going to work: autumns - in a coat, in summer – in a breezy canvas jacket, with an overlarge umbrella, winters – in a faded coon-skin fur.

In that old coon-skin fur he was seen running through a winter blizzard along Zhamenka Street, through a thick of snowflakes brocading the foot of the fence at the enormous Alexander institute.

2

Korobkin appears at 25 minutes to 5 on Galosh Lane, and at 5 exactly he sits in a worn, comfortable leather chair, wearing comfortable fur-lined slippers; after changing his frock-coat – for an exact (flimsier) same one – he sits at a table strewn with books and manuscripts; books of a particular kind – enormous parchment-bound folios: *Principia Rerum Naturainm, Sive Novorum Tentanium Phenomena Mundi Elementaris*. Or – rows of the *Zion Herald's* volumes.

Charming tomes were thrown about everywhere, like: *The Letters of S.G.*, which nohow indicated authorship, but Ivan Ivanovich's hand appended *amalei* to the *G*, so *Gamalei* came out.

On the wall, above the writing-desk, Ivan Ivanovich regularly hung out lists bearing the cursive motto of the day; everyday had its own motto for Ivan Ivanovich; mornings, before setting off to work, Ivan Ivanovich selects the motto of the day; and lives by it that whole day; all else was waved aside with: “Sufficient unto the day are its own troubles.”

The day's trouble was often provided by: Foma Kempeiski's dicta: “Read those books that would break your heart sooner than amuse it” ...Or Latin mottoes. And so on, and so on.

Upon waking, before choosing a motto, Ivan Ivanovich spends some 10 minutes exercising *concentration of thought*; for this he takes a very plain, very simple thought, for example – *of a pin*; fixing that *pin* before his mental gaze, he considers everything concerning a pin, wholly avoiding any desultory associations and ideas; in Ivan Ivanovich's language this exercise was called *The first rule: that of mental control*; and everything tied with the selected motto in Ivan Ivanovich's language was called *The second rule: that of initiation to action*; Ivan Ivanovich had still a third, fourth, fifth rule, but that is not worth dwelling on. They say: Ivan Ivanovich had a journal, received by inheritance, and it accompanied him throughout his life as he observed all his *rules* over the span of thirty and then some years, and observed them so subtly that his colleagues never suspected the root cause of his actions, actions that his irreproachable service in the museum but masked, concealing the wisest of rituals, practiced in the realm of pure morality: Ivan Ivanovich was, in essence, a *yogi*, not an employee.

Even today such eccentrics live among us. Upright citizens, simply – you see them daily, find yourself exchanging *hellos* with them, and unable to discern the nature of their actions you see – mere *peculiarities*.

Ivan Ivanovich's peculiarity of three and then some years' time: he did not pronounce the first person pronoun “I”, maneuvering so delicately that none could suspect him, even were they, during those three and some years, to have asked Ivan Ivanovich:

“Say, did you read today's paper?” - then Ivan Ivanovich would answer: “why, certainly,” instead of answering: “*I* certainly read it.” This rule of avoiding the personal pronoun “I” he called: *the rule of fortifying self-consciousness*. After three and some years Ivan Ivanovich built up enormous power over the personal pronoun “I.” And then, when the museum director's assistant once doubted the soundness of setting out the exhibits according to Ivan Ivanovich's plans, Ivan Ivanovich remarked to him:

“*I* know my work.”

And he said it just so, so that the director's assistant saw the very walls stepping aside, and he

and his plans flew right past, straight into Hades.

In the evening he proclaimed:

“Wouldn't you know, Agrafina Kondrativna, everything happens in this world... They say, there are Masons; and about Ma-*yevski* they'd say, that he was a Mason; he'd wear some special type of ring there. Maybe, right among our acquaintances – aha! - they stroll about, so calmly; but just that we don't know who they are.”

The rules of his exercises brought Ivan Ivanovich into particular states of consciousness, which he divided into three areas: 1) *the concentration of thought*, 2) *meditation*, and 3) *contemplation*, adopting the terms from an order of monks in St. Victor's monastery in the middle ages.

Contemplation brought him to a state of *clarity of thought* bordering on clairvoyance; *meditation* pulled his entire soul into the circle of thought before him. And *concentration*?

Well, better we describe it.

3

Pressing his hands to his knees while stretched out in the leather chair Ivan Ivanovich grabs hold of a string of thought understandable to him alone that pierces his entire being; this string of thought evokes a sharpened state of awareness accompanied by the sensations, the recent protests of a dry, seventy-year-old body.

Fires spread around his hands, furious vibrations, furious vibrations felt by his thoughts; his thoughts poured into his hands, so that his hands thought; and – his head blossoms, the way a bud would into a luxurious, many-petaled rose, and his mind's shutters open out into sensation, like hands around his head, plucking up the thoughts of those around Ivan Ivanovich: and so it might seem that Ivan Ivanovich can swallow thoughts whole.

Ivan Ivanovich spreads out over himself *hands made of hands; hands of hands* that start to circle, to carry him away.

And the familiar contours of the books, shelves, wardrobe, table, room become somehow transparent, and become shot through with the approach of new, roiling life, of the *ever-seething world*; within and without his own self everything boils over, spins, trails smoke in weightless strands; all manner of spark-clusters, brocades, diaphanous and glowing films wheel and spread without limit; Ivan Ivanovich sees himself as a roiling knot of thought-strings.

Many-winged and transforming, he is pulled off himself so that he dive into the ever-seething sea of beings, presented as: spark-clusters, brocades, diaphanous and glowing films, which all collapse through into the spark-clusters, brocades, the diaphanous and glowing films that were Ivan Ivanovich himself.

And so he could, pouring out of himself, pour into the roiling life of nearby beings; pouring out of one being into another he could clearly flow through the soul of this or that tenant in the building on Galosh Lane; and he could even flow through the soul of – well, for example: Milyukov, Vinaver, Karl Liebkent, and maybe even: Bismark, Wikensfeld, Napoleon and Hannibal; and among these roiling, wheeling and warmly glowing forms there glimmer, of course, personages from long-gone epochs.

He could observe much in that world; but he could not bring out his illuminations, contain them in any clear words, and if he try to contain them in a clear word, that word would shatter and open into a fan of words, and pass through a metamorphosis of lexical meanings and through the thousand thoughts and sounds secreted away within him, and emerge a clumsy muddle.

He had lived in this clumsy muddle for many years.

So, what then? A habit of keeping silent, or a habit of communicating with the help of epigrams

– such were but the ordinary traces of an extraordinary life.

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin, boiling over out of one form and into another is flung out beyond forms, and the wheeling creation of his rhythms (the wheelings of his soul) dissolve into the boundless in outwardly flowing orbits (like ripples on a pond's surface) and melt in the formless; here the stuff of his states of consciousness resembles *universal emptiness*, and he – emptiness, mute, speechless, motionless – addresses his own exploded center of emptiness with an intimate "you", and this *you* stands acenter his soul; this *you* bears the stamp of the Unknown, and yet seems to be Known since time immemorial; and this *you*, the one who we have forgotten declares:

"The days pass by!

"Behold! I come!"

And upon returning to himself, finding himself seated (and wearing comfortable slippers), he feels a warm gladness spill out in the middle of his chest.

This is *concentration!*

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin knew this deeply: the times – they have piled up, crowded up; *possibilities* take shape; new days come; a new era arises; with a majestic crash majestic culture bends and groans; under the skies of the old, the new ascends.

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin loved the youth with all his heart; he knew – there will be *children* among children; clumsy rumors were spread that Ivan Ivanovich was something like a, but not quite a, confirmed mystic, but, so to say... a Gnostic – an Apocalyptic; not really a Socialist, nor really a Heliist.

4

Among his museum co-workers he behaved like an old-fashioned gentleman, avoiding politics; he was even apprehensive of political life; more than anyone he avoided the *cadets*[†], members of the National Freedom Party who, after the rare conversation with Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin, decidedly labeled him a backward reactionary. So, once, in the museum building, a philosopher-cadet was espousing his view of the ideal government, one whose humane principles were so wide-reaching that even imprisoned convicts would be offered new and improved methods of entertaining themselves and one another.

Here Ivan Ivanovich interrupted his interlocutor:

"There will, after all, be prisons?"

To which the other responded:

"And how else?"

"I presumed that humanity would become enlightened by a lucid understanding of the principles of fairness and humane treatment."

"No – there'll be prisons... but those sitting locked-up in them will listen to symphonies. Right from behind the wall they'll be played Bach's fugues and Beethoven's sonatas."

But, Ivan Ivanovich, blowing his nose, and with a sour, dry face recalling the poet and censor Maikov, cut off the philosophizing:

"I prefer my prisons with bugs, and – without the sound of Beethoven."

And so he became listed with the reactionaries.

Besides that, Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin denied the need for war in the year of the war; patriotic fervor did not buoy his spirits, and he supposed, contrary to the obvious, that it wasn't worth making so much noise over a small, half-savage race; this gave everyone cause to think that he was secretly germanophilic. He kept silent about the current regime and made no remarks concerning Rasputin; the

† members of the Constitutional Democrat party

February Revolution didn't please him.

But, as Russia boiled and melted, as fragments broke off of her – Poland, Finland, Latvia, Belorussia, the Caucasus, and the Ukraine, and as the museum screamed itself hoarse, as the residents of Galosh Lane lost their appetites and sleep from anxiety, as the the yellowish-brown pillars of dust swept through Moscow, eating out everyone's eyes, as a tornado of papers whirled along the avenues, boulevards and squares encrusted with invalids who appeared from God knows where, and as the trams twisted more and more out of shape, and fringes stuck out from between the bodies squeezing and shoving one another within - Ivan Ivanovich, to everyone's surprise, began to experience an unexplainable yet pleasant emotion, his eyes grew gentler, more radiant, and his elderly mouth bent more often into a smile.

What was it that was forming in Ivan Ivanovich's mind? It was difficult to say; Russia's annihilation pleased him, certainly.

Evenings, he would gaze out at the sunset from his window, and one summer (in June of 1917), he even once during a day off appeared at Agrafina Kondrativna's summer estate, the very same Agrafina Kondrativna who, or, rather: whose... but that is not the point, the point is that – strolling through the field with the museum director's assistant, Ivan Ivanovich surveyed the surroundings and then crisply remarked:

“Aha!

“Yes, yes, yes

“How clear and bright the air!”

From then on his colleagues noticed: among the epigrams uttered by Ivan Ivanovich, new epigrams appeared.

After walking into the library, he looks through memos; and he then suddenly flashes an uncanny smile and rub his palms together; looking at him, you would think that his spirit drank in a strange, aromatic drink, one that no one had yet drunk to the bottom – or so it seemed. After a long march of years, Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin made use of one of his days off to go spend time out in the open air.

Sometimes, sorting through his memos, he would grab his chest like one suffering from a heart disorder; but this was no disorder; it was his mind intently diving into his fluttering heart; he rolled down, like a pearl, into the cup of his heart, sending ripples along the surface of his blood; you would simply say:

“My heart jumped!”

And so, with a heart that just took an untimely jump (right in the museum!), Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin addressed his colleagues not with the usual sentence, not with something like:

“Iconography, gentlemen, is a science!”

No, rather he addressed them with the strange-sounding phrase:

“Yes, yes, yes – how clear and bright the air.”

Undoubtedly he spoke not of the museum air, thick with dust; nor did he mean the air over the fields; the subject of his awkward declaration was the air found in that realm of thought-feelings where he traveled evenings; that realm – of thought-feelings – was light *and* air; the composition of that air disturbed Ivan Ivanovich; he distinctly saw how before the revolution Russia was fogged up, dulled; how clouds of choking smoke escaped into the dancing light; only since the revolution did he notice a clarity of atmosphere (all the plumes of choking smoke sank, settling on the outside layer of our life, effecting an inner collapse – in the same manner that dust, packed down by rain, collects on the surfaces of objects in clumps, but the air, cleansed, shines more radiantly).

His words “How clear and bright the air” referred to that particular state of the atmosphere.

When the date reached the 20's of July 1917, Ivan Ivanovich once appeared in the museum lobby with an overlarge umbrella, in a canvas jacket, but wearing galoshes, and while handing the umbrella to the doorman remarked:

“Yes, yes...

“The days pass by, Feramont Semyonovich, they pass by...

“They pass by us...

“The times are piling up...

* * *

Those were the hard days of July[†]; Russia shook.

* * *

Before the October Revolution, when Ivan Ivanovich appeared in the museum already wearing the frayed autumnal overcoat (not the trench-coat), he fixed his gaze on a young man who recently took a post in the museum, a member of one of the newly-formed parties; lifting up his glasses, Ivan Ivanovich stood before him from time to time; Ivan Ivanovich shook his gray head with a feeling of deepest sympathy; and just as if he were caught in the middle of a sigh that began long ago and that seemed to go on without end, Ivan Ivanovich thought aloud:

“And so, young man, the never-setting and limitless makes its way forward; and – oh, yes!” he interrupted himself.

And, wiping off his glasses and returning to his papers, his face changed; his face recalled in rare instants the prophet Jeremiah's face, as depicted by Michelangelo.

A few days later, that young man was killed on a sidewalk in a crossfire of machine-guns.

5

We have forgotten to mention one very important detail in Ivan Ivanovich's life: 15 minutes to 10 every night, he brings the day's affairs to a close, and views all of the day's events in reverse: from the last moment to the moment of waking; after this, his thoughts and attention gather a particular solidity and strength; 5 minutes to 11 he lays down to sleep.

He stretches out on his back, his head covered, and lies motionless. The mental screw inside his head unravels spiralwise, and its point wedges against the inside of a seventy-year old skull, and that skull cracks, and the contents of Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin's head stretch out immeasurably into sensation; at first, it seems to him that a tiara lay atop his head; the tiara then grows into his head and stretches out into an impossibly tall tower – just then, Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin's heels feel pulled by the currents of his elongating and melting legs. First, Ivan Ivanovich felt his heels at the level of, say, his knees (his legs extended beyond his heels), then in his stomach, and finally Ivan Ivanovich feels his body circumscribed into some enormous body, newly pulsing from heart to throat – in a word, he feels himself within himself a pygmy in a giant's body; so might a tired and drowsy traveler who wandered into a cavernous, empty and abandoned tower feel; Ivan Ivanovich distinctly sees that the tower's walls are stitched of the sky's daylight fabric; perceives that fabric to be none other than the skin blanketing us, or, better yet, the covering of some enormous body, from whose inside bones and skin crystallize outward; better yet - he feels himself a crystal in a glass in relation to the solution from which it precipitated.

In those minutes of transition to sleep, Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin knows that our body is a body circumscribed, folded inside of another, enormous body; and that larger body is a sky, and each of us travels under his own sky (if a chick could run inside its egg, it would roll the egg forward, stepping

[†] The July demonstration in St. Petersburg was broken up by the forces of the temporary government.

along the inside of the eggshell); such is the sky we walk under – an eggshell around our head. But Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin finds himself both inside and outside his own skin (inside the enormous body's skin, and outside of his regular skin).

Here with an effort of will he squeezes into himself and feels himself as a concentrated, bright, forever straining point; a shudder passes through him; the body laying between the sheets breaks into a flowing stream, and Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin is free to move within the enormous tower (from the heart to the throat, toward the shadowed portal ahead); he feels himself running inside the tower, along the staircase, step by step (organ by organ), and he runs out onto the terrace of a magnificent tower (outside his physical body and outside the elemental body).

He stands out there before a heavenly expanse glittering with stars, but these particular stars glide and fly just like birds; Ivan Ivanovich, freed from his body, reaches the terrace where he contemplates them, and they become many-feathered beings; and they pour forth fountainous flames like feathers, out of their centers; and one being – one star-bird (Ivan Ivanovich's star) descends to him and embraces him in a crackling fire of rays, or wings, and carries him away; it feels as if boiling water scald Ivan Ivanovich's very essence; the sensation of hands becomes the sensation of the star's wings, embracing him in conflagration; Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin flew through *all* into spark-clusters, brocades, diaphanous and glowing films – by way of spark-clusters, brocades, diaphanous and glowing films – into nothing, where at the core rises up our Old, Forgotten Teacher, greeting us since time immemorial – and he says:

“Behold, I come!”†

And so Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin came to clearly recognize within himself that ancient Celestial who secretly moved and filled him, exalted him with *that light* and *air*, with the stuff of his life.

Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin ordinarily drifted into unconsciousness during these sacred and hidden conversations with the Secret Teacher of life, and the most important parts of the conversation fogged over.

But, the dream conversations with the Teacher became lately edged with unusual clarity; with unusual clarity Ivan Ivanovich understood that his cloud drifts among earthly, murky ones, so that the hour, the fated moment, the foretold day may come when his cloud may rise up like a prophet above the gathered crowd; and hurl words into the crowd, not his own, but the Teacher's, spoken through him like through a horn:

“Behold, I come!

“Hurry!

“It's time...

“We'll build a grand temple...

“The times are piling up...

“Whirlwinds gather...

“Our homes – destroyed...

“The hard soil melts,

“And the floodwaters will surround you all.

“Behold, I come!”

* * *

During one July day in 1918, when meetings gathered on the outskirts of the city, and when Mirbach's murder was being planned, everyone noticed that Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin, entering the museum, did not even touch the day's work, his face and posture recalling the prophet Jeremiah, as

† Revelations 22:12

depicted by Michelangelo.

On finishing work at 20 to 5, Ivan Ivanovich found himself in a tram bound for the city's outskirts; the time, he felt, was ripe.

6

A meeting was taking place under the open sky.

There was talk of freedom; of the chance to create life anew; there was talk of love and equality; of the brotherhood of man.

And then, after keeping silent all those years and awaiting in his solitary cell that shining day when the secrets of life would be distilled, and when maybe Spirit enter the heart - he stood up above the crowd.

From beneath gray and heavy brows his gaze penetrated the crowd with an inexpressible love; above the laughter, yells and gibes his inspired head turned, recalling the prophet Jeremiah's, as depicted by Michelangelo; words sounded: a swansong in crystalline time; for an instant it seemed that something drew irrevocably closer, and life itself was melted upon those words, running like rivulets down into souls, the life that flew - a gold fabric of images (a shimmer of the Spirit) - back to primeval source.

For a moment, everyone felt a relieving sigh rise from the depths of his being; an unending sigh; and he, he who had ripened for so many long years towered above the crowd.

If just then anyone's eyes could have opened up to gaze suddenly through the veil of illusions that shrouds us all, he would have seen the timeless Celestial, the Teacher taking wing like a bird from the distant spirit-world and hurling himself down into the lifeless abyss, rending a tear in the spirit-world, hurling himself into the divide of Nothing; and whoever could just then have *seen*, would have *seen* the soul of Ivan Ivanovich's words bursting into that divide of Nothing up from the fogged-over, earthly realm (bursting out from the crown of his head); and – *the unity of man and spirit*, all while an earthly seventy year old body stood above the crowd and uttered words, not its own, but the Teacher's, who spoke through him, like through a horn:

“Hurry!

“It's time...

“We'll build a grand temple...

“The times are piling up...

“The whirlwinds gather...

“Our homes destroyed...

“The hard soil melts,

“And the floodwaters will surround you all.

“Behold, He comes!”

7

From the rostrum Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin clearly saw bloody passions rearing their heads like grunting leopards in the throng below; he saw: sallow faces, flushed brows, hateful eyes, lips twisting into snarls.

And he clearly understood that it isn't time for a transformation, not yet; the future rose up from the depths of a discharged atmosphere, and then stepped aside and took no guests along.

He understood his error: an untimely revelation of the Spirit's writ.

* * *

There was an old, worn-out man with blank, dim eyes fixed straight ahead, his eyes ringed with the feathery cinders of lightning burning itself away; so does a still smoldering coal grow gray with cold ash on its surface; eyes like scattered ash swept about the droning crowd, and the enfeebled body, crawling off the rostrum, fell, as if into deep night, seen off by gibes.

* * *

An enfeebled body trudged home, mashing its mouth; it walked along the sleeping city's alleys and streets with a rumpled brimmed hat pulled down on its forehead, and from under the gray, rumpled hat, eye-whites helplessly stared into a puddle and turned in their orbits; they were set in a thing cast of flesh - a face recalling the censor and poet A. Maikov's – in his grave.

* * *

But then: the true Ivan Ivanovich Korobkin climbs up to the enormous tower's terrace and stands, leaning against the railing, contemplating the world of those stars, changing places in that sky; *his star speeds toward him*, to . . . to take him away to the Teacher awaiting him.

* * *

In the beginning of July 1918, a funeral procession moved toward the Novodevichy Monastery[†]. Ivan Ivanovich was being buried. His co-workers carried the coffin, and the museum director's assistant thoughtfully remarked to the charming lady he accompanied:

“Wouldn't you know, Agrafina Kondrativna, everything happens in this world. . . They say, there are Masons; and about *Ma-yeovski* they'd say, that he was a Mason. . . and I know for sure that our dear departed here was a mason.”

[†] Andrei Bely rests there as well.