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# OBERIU

An Anthology  
of Russian Absurdism

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TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN



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## The Daughter of Patruliov

I would like to tell you about an incident involving a fish, or rather not even a fish, but a man named Patruliov, or, to be even more precise, the daughter of Patruliov.

I will begin with her birth. Speaking of birth: right on our wooden floor there were born . . . No, we can talk about that later.

Let's get to the point:

The daughter of Patruliov was born on a Saturday. Let us designate the daughter by the Latin letter *M*.

Having designated the daughter by the Latin letter *M*, let us note that:

1. Around the boots go two hands and two feet.
2. In some ways the ears are the same as the eyes.
3. To run is an underfooted verb.
4. To feel is an underhanded verb.
5. Only the son can wear a mustache.
6. The back of your head can't see what hangs on the wall.
17. Note that seventeen comes right after six.

In order to color in the picture, let us remember these seventeen postulates.

Now let's place our hand on the fifth postulate and see what happens.

If we had placed a cart on the fifth postulate—or sugar, or a natural ribbon—then we would have been forced to admit: yes, and something besides that.

But let us in fact imagine, and for simplicity's sake immediately forget what we just imagined.

Now let's look at what happened.

You look over here while I look over here, and the result will be that both of us are looking over there.

Or, to be more precise, I am looking there while you are looking elsewhere.

Now let's determine what it is that we see. It suffices to determine separately what it is that I see, and what it is that you see.

I see one half of the house, and you see the other half of the city. For simplicity's sake, let's call it: a wedding.

Now let's proceed with the daughter of Patruliov. Her wedding took place, let's say, at such and such a date. If her wedding had taken place earlier, then we would have said that her wedding had taken place prematurely. If her wedding had taken place later, then we would have said, "It's a wave," because the wedding had taken place later.

All seventeen postulates, otherwise known as feathers, are present and accounted for. Let's proceed to the following.

The following is thicker than the preceding.

The catfish is thicker than the oil-stove.

The propeller screw is thicker than the onion.

The book is thicker than the notebook,  
whereas notebooks are thicker than one notebook.

This is a table, it is thicker than the book.

This is a vault, it is thicker than the floor.

This table is thicker than the preceding one,  
and the preceding one is taller than the onion.

The onion is smaller than the comb  
in the same way as the hat is smaller than the child's bed  
in which a box of books  
can be placed,  
but the box  
is deeper than the hat.  
The hat is softer  
than the propeller screw,  
but the bee is sharper than the sphere.  
What grows on this  
and on the other side of the fence  
is equally beautiful.  
Still, the book is more flexible than soup.  
The ear is more flexible than the book.  
The soup is more watery and has more fat than the wood  
chip  
and is heavier than the key.

Assertion:

Rabbits have arms in place of mustaches.  
Papa has a pheasant at the back of his head.  
The store has four thumbtacks.  
The rosalia has a dandelion.  
The dog has a macanash.  
The newspaper has eight signs.  
I have a tail.  
You have a crib.  
The giants have a hat.

Combination:

House with beak.  
Infant with Tatar.  
Sea captain in kerosene.

Plate without hair.  
Crow among passable numbers.  
Fur coat with noise named Fofa.  
Kalya at a dead end.  
A Romanian from the washstand.  
The angel Yershov.

Flight:

The rooster ran out of the water.  
Jean ran out of the beard.  
The nail ran out of the paraffin.  
The whip jumped out of the carafe.  
The sword ran out of the cockroach.  
The experience rode out from under the glass.  
The astronomer ran out of cotton.  
The oblong key lay.

Combination:

House with beak.  
Infant with Tatar.  
Sea captain in kerosene.  
Plate without hair.  
Crow among passable numbers.  
Fur coat with noise named Fofa.  
Kalya at a dead end.  
A Romanian from the washstand.  
The angel Yershov.

Meditation:

This is not a forge but a bucket.  
This is not rice but a ruler.  
This is not a glove but the warehouse supervisor.  
This is not an eye but the knee.

It was not I who came but you.  
This is not water but tea.  
This is not a nail but a screw.  
And the screw is not a nail.  
Fur is not the same as light.  
A man with one arm is not the same as a room with one  
window.  
Slippers are not toenails.  
Slippers are not kidneys.  
Neither are they nostrils.

Conclusions:

The daughter of Patruliov the father is the daughter of  
Patruliov,  
Therefore also the daughter of Patruliov is the daughter of  
father Patruliov.  
In that case also the daughter of the father Patruliov

Is therefore also the daughter of Patruliov father.  
Here is the daughter, her father is Patruliov  
Patruliov's daughter, the father is Patruliov  
Therefore Patruliov is the father of Patruliov's  
daughter  
And no one would say he is Petukhov  
That just wouldn't be natural.

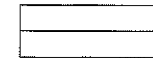
1930

*Translated by Eugene Ostashevsky*

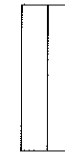
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## Before Coming to See You

Before coming to see you I will knock on your window. You will see  
me in the window. Then I will stand in the doorway and you will  
see me in the doorway. Then I will come into your house and you  
will recognize me. Then I will enter you and no one, apart from  
you, will see me or know who I am.



You will see me in the window.



You will see me in the doorway.

1931

*Translated by Eugene Ostashevsky*