

The Bunin Sisters



These are my aunts on my mother's side.

All eight daughters of my maternal grandparents are in this picture. The difference in age between the first daughter, Lyubov and the youngest, Pasha, is 21 years.

The picture was taken in a photo studio in Slutsk in 1924 when all sisters gathered at home: the elder daughters had already left home by that time to study in institutes in big cities.

The first child of my maternal grandparents was a boy, but he died in infancy. After that Grandmother gave birth to eight girls: Liber-Esther, Lyubov in her passport; Beilya, Berta in everyday life – my mother; Maria; Hanna, Anna in everyday life; Reizl, Rosa in everyday life; Matlya, Matilda in everyday life; Eshka, Esphir in everyday life; and Pasha, who was born 21 years after the first daughter was born.

As they grew up, the Bunin sisters became assistants to their parents on the land and at home. They strove for education and read a lot at that time already; they learnt poems by heart and helped each other.

The girls were accustomed to labor since their childhood; they got up early in the morning and went to work in the field. They almost had no toys, toys were considered luxury. Dresses and coats were bought cheap and durable, so that they would be worn by the younger daughters.

Only Grandfather had a separate bed, all his daughters slept in twos and Grandmother slept with the youngest daughter.

Various artistic troupes came to Slutsk from different towns, but the family very seldom went to the circus and theater, they were always busy with the household.