

Anna Gliena



The latest photograph of me, that I like looking at. This photo was made for my passport in Lvov in 1992.

Before 1983 I worked at the theater of the young spectator distributing tickets at schools. Then I grew older and retired. I failed to have a family of my own. I had acquaintances, of course, but I was always busy. My mother was often sick and so was my brother, and then my mother had to go to hospital and I had to visit her in hospital and do work at home and go to work at the theater.

In 1977 my mother died and I was alone. I have been alone for 25 years. There were friends and acquaintances when I was stronger. I tried to help and support people and didn't feel my loneliness so acutely. I was chairman of the housing committee of our house and the neighboring one for 17 years. I was responsible for all maintenance issues. I didn't do it for money. I did many good things, but who cares? I never traveled on vacations. My mother was often ill and I couldn't leave her, and then when she died I didn't want to go alone.

When perestroika began in 1990s I was terrified at how they could ruin such great country. I recalled how we were welcomed in Siberia during the war and now they were in a different country. We were a Ukrainian theater and nobody closed it. To crown it all, I had my saving for my old age, but they were lost and I am a sick miserable old woman. My acquaintances asked me why I didn't ask Hased for help, but I didn't want to, I was ashamed to ask them. I don't remember the details, but somehow they got me on their lists. I used to buy matzah to celebrate Pesach. Well, anyway, this was the only holiday that I celebrated. Maybe I didn't follow all rules, but I always had matzah. I receive food packages from Hased and they help me to do my laundry, but I am helpless now. My neighbor introduced me to Anna Fyodorova. She lives with me. She cooks for me and helps me and I promised her to leave this apartment to her son. We may argue every now and then, but then we make it up with her. I depend on her much. I cannot even go to the cemetery. My mother and brother have graves nearby and I've prepared a place for myself there, but now I don't know whether they will bury me there or throw into a different place. You understand, I would like to be with my dear ones so much.

I stay in bed, read a little or watch TV and sometimes short verses come to my thoughts and I put them down:

'Winter, winter, winter again,
Cold, it's cold, it's freezing cold,
It snows, there's snowstorm, blizzard.
That's winter'.

Or:

'How unexpectedly the old age has come
How fast the years passed
Like a dream, like a day, like the Moon
Lives A.G. in this world - old, ill and forgotten by all, abandoned'