

Emilia Kotliar's Book 'A Gorgeous Town'



My book 'A gorgeous town'. At her old age my mother tried to write about Vasilkov town near Kiev where she was born and raised and about her family, but this didn't happen. She fell ill. She asked me to finish her notes.

Following her will I wrote a novel poem 'A gorgeous town' and dedicated it to the memory of my mother Anna Vaisman. This book was published by 'Mozhaysk-Terra' Ltd. In 2001, 1000 copies.

I worked as preschool education teacher at the Pedagogical School in 1950s. I began writing poems. At first I didn't think much of it, but then I caught myself sitting at an exam at school putting down my lines instead of listening to a student.

This shouldn't be! I met young poets and we became friends and they told me that I had to quit school immediately. 'Or, you will always remain a teacher and will never become a poet'.

I left school, though we didn't have anything at home. I found a job in a publishing house with low payment. I was to write responses to beginners of poets. In 1958 my first book was published and I received a small fee for it.

So I lived. I enjoyed writing poems tremendously, though it wasn't easy, hard to find a word I needed, on the whole, it was hard work. Soon young poets began to get invitations to recite poems at schools and in libraries. I communicated with young poets in the poet section in the house of literature workers or in a café there.

I wasn't a member of the Union of writers, but they allowed me to the house of literature workers. We recited our poems to one another there. I didn't finish Literature College. There was a literature association 'Magistral' ['highway' in Russian] where I attended classes and took my entrance into literature.

Igor Levin, a wonderful pedagog, conducted classes. We recited our poems and criticized each other. It was a good school. Levin invited best poets of the time to our sittings and they shared their views with us, recited their poems and listened to ours. I learned a lot at those classes.

In 1961 I entered the Union of Writers. Then I began to have my books published. I had 6 books for adults and 15 children's books. I also translated 10 children's books.

We were closely acquainted for a lifetime. It was hard to have books published, not only for me, but for all.