

Bertha Isayeva



This is me, Bertha Isayeva, at the age of three. This photo was made in Odessa in 1925. This photo was taken by our neighbor in the yard of our house in the autumn. I was born at home in Odessa in 1922. My mother made an arrangement with a midwife, and by the way, she was a sister of Marshak [Samuel Marshak, a Soviet poet and translator], she was a good midwife. She lived in Moldavanka [poor Jewish neighborhood on the outskirts of Odessa]. We lived in Richelieu Street. When my mother started labor my father went to call the midwife. It was February and it was freezing and windy. They said in our family that my father carried the midwife all the way to our home. I spent a lot of time in the yard. It was a fenced yard with a gate. Our janitor closed the gate at midnight, I think. On hot summer days young people slept outside. There was a garden in the middle of the yard. There was a summer tent house, benches and a table in the corner. I used to

play there with other girls. We played with dolls when we were small. When we grew up we knitted and made doll clothes and embroidered shirts.