



Северный государственный медицинский университет
НАУЧНАЯ БИБЛИОТЕКА

BEHIND EACH LINE – LOVE AND PAIN: POEMS BY YESENIN, DEDICATED TO WOMEN

For the 130th anniversary of
the poet Sergei Yesenin

Архангельск
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Muses and Tragedies: Women in Yesenin's Life

Sergei Yesenin's life, like a bright comet, streaked across the horizon of Russian poetry, leaving behind a trail of brilliant verses and turbulent romances. For him, love was not only inspiration but also a source of unbearable emotional pain. Every woman in his life is a reflection of different facets of his soul, from quiet sadness to unbridled passion. From his quiet village youth to bohemian Moscow, women not only shaped his personal destiny but also influenced his creative legacy. Behind every line of his poetry there is an echo of love, hope and disappointment.

Anna Izryadnova: The beginning of the journey and the birth of a son

Anna Romanovna Izryadnova was Yesenin's first common-law wife, a proofreader at a printing house.

Their union was modest and quiet, far from turbulent passions. In 1914, their son Yuri was born and became Yesenin's hope and support at the beginning of his creative career.

However, their family life did not work out, and Yesenin soon left, leaving Anna and their son.

Yuri's tragic fate—he was repressed and died in Stalin's camps—became another pain in Yesenin's life.



In this poem, the author apologizes to Anna Izryadnova and tries to explain his sudden decision to end the relationship.

«Я положил к твоей постели
Полузавядшие цветы,
И с лепестками помертвели
Мои усталые мечты.

Я нашептал моим левкоям
Об угасающей любви,
И ты к оплаканным pokojам
Меня уж больше не зови.

Мы не живем, а мы тоскуем.
Для нас мгновенье красота,
Но не зажжешь ты поцелуем
Мои холодные уста.

И пусть в мечтах я все читаю:
«Ты не любил, тебе не жаль»,
Зато я лучше понимаю
Твою любовную печаль.»

 **Interesting fact:** Anna, as a proofreader, helped Yesenin edit his first poems. It was she who insisted that he submit his works to Moscow magazines, effectively paving the way for him to enter the literary world. After Yesenin's death, Anna cherished his memory for the rest of her life and collected all publications about the poet.



Zinaida Reich: A Stormy Union and a Creative Break

Zinaida Nikolaevna Reich was a vibrant and talented actress, a woman of strong character. Their meeting was stormy and passionate, and their marriage was complex and contentious.

They had a daughter, Tatyana, and a son, Konstantin.

However, creative ambitions and differing outlooks on life led to a breakup. After the divorce, Zinaida married Vsevolod Meyerhold, becoming his muse and inspiration.

This was a painful blow to Yesenin, who felt his pride bruised.

(An excerpt from the poem "Letter to a Woman," dedicated to Zinaida Reich)

"Yes, you remember, You certainly remember The way I listened Standing at the wall As you walked to and fro about the chamber Reproving me With bitter words and all.	You said That it was time we'd parted, And that my reckless life, For you, was an ordeal, And it was time a new life you had started While I was fated To go rolling downhill.	My love! You didn't care for me, no doubt. You weren't aware of the fact that I Was like a ruined horse, amidst the crowd, Spurred by a dashing rider, flashing by."
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Translated by Alec Vagapov

The poem "Letter to a Woman" read by Sergei Bezrukov and actors from the Moscow Art Theatre: https://vk.com/video-54010268_456239861

❏ **Interesting fact:** Yesenin and Reich met at the newspaper office, where Zinaida worked as a typist. According to contemporaries, Yesenin was captivated by her beauty and independence. After their divorce, Zinaida had a brilliant career in the theater, becoming a star of Meyerhold's troupe.

Nadezhda Volpin: An Illegitimate Son and Poetic Controversies

Nadezhda Davidovna Volpin was a poet and translator. Their brief affair resulted in the birth of an illegitimate son, Alexander Yesenin-Volpin, who later became a renowned mathematician and dissident.



Nadezhda Volpin was the only one of Yesenin's women who wrote poetry for him:

«Ночь, когда звучал над нами
Разлучающий гудок,
Подарила мне на память
В звёзды вышитый платок.

Я его в те дни на клочья
Разорвала, — что ж теперь
Перематываю ночью
В песни звёздную кудель?

Может, дождь стучал по кровле —
Постучит и замолчит?
Песня, раз на полуслове
Оборвавшись, отзвучит.»

❏ **Interesting fact:** Yesenin denied paternity and barely communicated with his son. Volpin, an independent and strong woman, raised Alexander alone. Despite his father's absence, Alexander Yesenin-Volpin inherited his poetic gift and rebellious spirit. He became one of the leaders of the dissident movement in the USSR.

Galina Benislavskaya: A Faithful Friend and a Tragic Ending

Galina Arturovna Benislavskaya was Yesenin's secretary, friend, and devoted admirer. She was devoted to him wholeheartedly, supporting him through difficult times.

After Yesenin's death, unable to bear the loss, she committed suicide at his grave, leaving a suicide note declaring her love for the poet.

Her tragic fate is a symbol of boundless devotion and unrequited love.



In 1925, Yesenin dedicated the poem "I haven't forgotten you, dearie..." to Galina:

"I haven't forgotten you, dearie,
The shine of your hair and all.
It wasn't so easy and cheery
To leave you, as I recall.

I haven't forgotten the autumn,
The rustle of birches, the night;
And though the days were
shorter
The moonlight was long and
bright.

You whispered these words in
my ear:
«The years and the dreams will
be gone,
You'll go with another, my dear,
And leave me all on my own»

That lime standing there, in
flower,
Reminds my emotion anew
The way I would tenderly shower
Those beautiful flowers on you.

My heart will be warm, sad
and sorry,
In love, remembering well
You, friend, as a fanciful story
Of love with another girl."

Translated by Alec Vagapov

❏ **Interesting fact:** Benislavskaya took on all the care of Yesenin: organizing his performances, managing his correspondence, and handling his daily affairs. She was unrequitedly in love with the poet and, according to many, knew him better than anyone else. In her suicide note, Benislavskaya wrote: "I committed suicide here, even though I know that after this, even more nasty things will be said about Yesenin. But I don't care. This grave holds everything that's most precious to me."

Isadora Duncan: World Fame and Tragic Love

Isadora Duncan was a legendary American dancer, a symbol of freedom and innovation in the arts.

Her union with Yesenin, their 18-year age difference, and lack of common language shocked the public.

They traveled together throughout Europe and America, basking in the glow of fame. However, their incompatible personalities, the language barrier, and differing cultural values led to the collapse of their marriage.

Isadora left a deep mark on Yesenin's life, becoming a symbol of both freedom and disillusionment.



The poet dedicated the poem "Sing, old man, to the bloody guitar, and..." to Isadora Duncan. Excerpt:

"Sing, old man, to the bloody
guitar, and
Let your fingers show natural
bent.
I would choke in this drunken
enchantment
You're my last and my only
friend.

Don't you look at her wrist
and the blooming
Silky shawl hanging down her
head.
I was looking for joy in this
woman
But I found perdition instead.

I did not know that love was
infection,
I did not know that love was a
plague.
She just came and feigning
affection
Drove the rowdy mad, no
mistake."

Translated by Alec Vagapov

📄 **Interesting fact:** Their wedding became a sensation, and their honeymoon became a publicity stunt for Duncan. Isadora learned a few Russian words to communicate with Yesenin, but they mostly communicated through gestures. After their separation, Duncan claimed that Yesenin was a genius, but "too Russian" for her.



Augusta Miklashevskaya: The Unapproachable Muse of "Hooligan's Love"

Augusta Leonidovna Miklashevskaya was an actress at the Moscow Chamber Theater, refined and aristocratic.

Yesenin was captivated by her beauty and restraint. He dedicated a cycle of tender poems to her, collectively titled "The Hooligan's Love." This platonic love remained an unfulfilled dream. Miklashevskaya, it seems, saw Yesenin more as a talented poet rather than a man.

One of them, "Azure space is aflame up above..." (1923), was the poet's poetic declaration of love to Augusta Miklashevskaya.

It was to Augusta Miklashevskaya that Yesenin dedicated seven poems from his famous cycle "The Hooligan's Love"

"Azure space is aflame up above,
I've forgotten my home
destination...
For the first time I'm singing of
love,
For the first time I give up
contention.

I was all like a desolate grove
Loving women and heavily
drinking.
I don't drink any more and don't
love
Like I did, living fast and
unthinking

All I want is to look at the vast
Of your gold-brown eyes, and, —
oh, bother! —
How I wish that, disliking your
past,
You would not like to go to
another!

Gentle step, graceful waist that
you have!
Oh if only you wer' able to tumble
How a bully can really love,
And how he can be timid and
humble!"

Translated by Alec Vagapov

❏ **Interesting fact:** Despite her many admirers, Miklashevskaya never married. She claimed that the image of Yesenin created in his poetry was so perfect that no one could compare to him in her eyes. Augusta carefully preserved all of Yesenin's letters and photographs, and after her death, they were donated to a museum.

Shagane Talyan: "Shagane, you are mine, Shagane!": Eastern Muse

Shagane Nersesovna Talyan was an Armenian language teacher whom Yesenin met during a trip to the Caucasus. She became a symbol of Eastern beauty and inspired the poet to create the lyrical poem cycle "Persian Motifs."



One of Yesenin's most famous works was the poem "Shagane, dear my, Shagane!..", excerpt:

"Shagane, dear my, Shagane!
It's because I'm from North, isn't it,
I am ready to tell you a field,
Wavy rye, when the Moon shining there.
Shagane, dear my, Shagane.

It's because I'm from North, isn't it,
Where the Moon has enormous size,
And despite all the charm of Shiraz,
Ryazan spaces are better a bit.
It's because I'm from North, isn't it.

I am ready to tell you a field,
Curly hair I got from a rye,
If you like, reel on finger in round -
There is no pain I actually feel.
I am ready to tell you a field.

Wavy rye, when the Moon shining there,
See in waves of my hair. Oh darling,
Just make jokes, be so funny and smiling,
That I wouldn't remember again
Wavy rye, when the Moon shining there.

Shagane, dear my, Shagane!
Far away on the North is a girl,
She is similar to you with all,
And I wonder if she thinks of me...
Shagane, dear my, Shagane."

 **Interersting fact:** The image of Shagane is a composite one. The prototype was not only Talyan but also other girls Yesenin met in the Caucasus. Shagane became a symbol of idealized Eastern beauty and exoticism, a dream of distant and unexplored lands. After Yesenin's death, Talyan dedicated herself to preserving the poet's memory and establishing a museum in his native village of Konstantinovo.

Sofia Tolstaya: An Attempt at Rescue and Bitter Disappointment

Sofia Andreyevna Tolstaya, Leo Tolstoy's granddaughter and a guardian of cultural traditions, was a prominent figure in the family.

Yesenin hoped that marriage to her would help him find stability and peace. However, despite her noble birth and sincere intentions, Sofia was unable to save Yesenin from his inner demons. This marriage proved unsuccessful, only deepening his emotional crisis.



On July 14, in Konstantinovo, Yesenin wrote the poem "Apparently, this is how it's always been...", excerpt:

«Видно, так заведено навеки,
К тридцати годам перебесясь,
Всё сильней прожжённые
калеки,
С жизнью мы удерживаем связь.
Милая, мне скоро стукнет
тридцать.
И земля милей мне с каждым
днём.
От того и сердцу стало сниться,
Что горю я розовым огнём.

Коль гореть, так уж гореть,
сгорая.
И не даром в липовую
цветь
Вынул я кольцо
у попугая, —
Знак того, что вместе нам
гореть.
То кольцо надела мне
цыганка,
Сняв с руки, я дал его
тебе....»



Interesting fact: One day, while walking along the boulevard, Sofia and Sergei encountered a gypsy woman with a parrot. They gave her some change for fortune telling, and the parrot pulled out a large copper ring for Yesenin. The gypsy woman put the ring on Sergei Alexandrovich, who soon gave it to Sonya. She adjusted the ring to her size and wore it for the rest of her life, between her two other rings.

When Yesenin proposed to her, Sophia was on the cloud nine from happiness.

Echo of Love: Women in Yesenin's Poetry

Every woman in Sergei Yesenin's life is a vivid episode in his turbulent destiny, leaving an indelible mark on his work. Love, passion, disappointment, hope—all these feelings are reflected in his poems, imbuing them with depth and sincerity.

His personal life was full of drama and contradictions, but it is precisely thanks to these experiences that we have immortal works that still touch the hearts of millions of readers.

Yesenin's women are muses, tragedies, inspirations, forever inscribed in the history of Russian literature.



Songs based on the poems of Sergei Yesenin
https://vkvideo.ru/video-228815734_456239325

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