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The Aviation of Transformations translated by Ilya Bernstein and Matvei Yankelevich

Daniil Kharms

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Daniil Kharms

The Aviations of Transformations

Wingless flying is cruel amusement
Try it, clumsy, you'll fall over backwards
She chose no other form of torture
They hit her over the head with a tightrope.
Oh, how she fell over the swamp!
Her skirts all raised! The boys all stared
Meanwhile, she called for the pilot in confusion.
but the pilot's soft mustache quickly ripped.

A youth, he peers
and laughs and steers.
stopping the flies' incessant buzz
he slowly lands upon the moss
She: I lie here in agony
He: Madam, you can lean on me
She: I'm dying, bring me a snack!
Together: We die of the axe!
Our little faces are getting colder
The beating is gone,
We're lying down. The windows are open
And we're breathing hard.
Here come the guards.
A maiden's daydreams are weightless.
Women eat their grandkids.
Fish swim in the river.
Fir trees rush around in the forest.
the witch is moaning across the seas
While the words above the town are these:
The Management of Things.
That's their bird's-eye uncle
... heart resonance ice

suddenly I'm quietly a goose all at once
the airplane departs.
There, puffed up, it disappeared.
Who is left upon the sand?
We don't know. But grandpa dug
his stately holes so sad.
tossing the roots
Down the carefree chutes,
He mixes powders
For the horses that are ill.
The reckless reins neigh
Pointing fingers at the fool
stop, friends, he's a wizard
Knows ... things
he spins the cloud of closets
he pours the oven-dregs
Three hundred dunce caps in the sky
Using bricks to build towers so high
Where a greyhound warms the sun,
Gnawing on the goddamn dark
Where a plane soars into Europe,
Carrying a beautiful trollop.
She: I'm flying to my suitors.
The pilot: the engine broke.
she shouts at the pilot: jerk!
the airplane sank right there and then
she shouts: father, father,
I lived here. I was born here
and that was all she wrote
she has turned into a candleholder.
Madeleine, you are too old and cold
to lie alone beneath a bush
a youth bows down over you
with a face as wet as Tibet.
The pilot has grown old along the way
he waves his hands—but doesn't fly
he moves his legs—but doesn't go
waves once or twice and falls
Then lies for years without decay

Poor Madeleine grieves
A braid she weaves
and chases idle dreams away.

ENOUGH

[January 1927]

Translated from the Russian by Ilya Bernstein and Matvei Yankelevich