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TATIANA'S LETTER TO ONEGIN

by Alexander Pushkin

I write to you – no more confession
is needed, nothing's left to tell.
I know it's now in your discretion
with scorn to make my world a hell.

But, if you've kept some faint impression
of pity for my wretched state,
you'll never leave me to my fate.
At first I thought it out of season
to speak; believe me; of my shame
you'd not so much as know the name,
if I'd possessed the slightest reason
to hope that even once a week
I might have seen you, heard you speak
on visits to us, and in greeting
I might have said a word, and then
thought, day and night, and thought again
about one thing, till our next meeting.
But you're not sociable, they say;
you find the country godforsaken;
though we… don't shine in anyway,
our joy in you is warmly taken.

(more)

Why did you visit us, but why?
Lost in our backwoods habitation
I'd not have known you, therefore I
would have been spared this laceration.
In time, who knows, the agitation
Of inexperience would have passed.
I would have found a friend, another,
and in the role of virtuous mother,
and faithful wife I'd have been cast.

Another! … No, another never
in all the world could take my heart!
Decreed in highest court forever …
heaven's will – for you I'm set apart;
and my whole life has been directed
and pledged to you, and firmly planned;
I know. Godsent one. I'm protected
until the grave by your strong hand;
you'd made appearance in my dreaming;
unseen, already you were dear,
my soul had heard your voice ring clear,
stirred at your gaze, so strange so gleaming,
long, long ago … no, that could be
no dream. You'd since arrived, I reckoned
to know you, swooned, and in a second
all in a blaze, I said: it's he!

You know, it's true, how I attended,
drank in your words when all was still
helping the poor, or while I mended
with balm of prayer torn and rended
spirit that anguish had made ill.

(more)

At this midnight of my condition,
was it not you, dear apparition
who in the dark came flashing through
and, on my bed-head gently leaning
with love and comfort in your meaning,
spoke words of hope? But who are you:
the guardian angel of tradition
or some vile agent of perdition
sent to seduce? Resolve my doubt.
Oh, this could all be false and vain,
A sham that trustful souls work out;
Fate could be something else again…

So let it be! For you to keep
I trust my fate to your direction,
henceforth in front of you I weep.
I weep and pray for your protection…
Imagine it: quite on my own
I've no one here who comprehends me,
and now a swooning mind attends me,
dumb I must perish and alone.
My heart awaits you: you can turn it
to life and hope with just a glance –
or else disturb my mournful trance
with censure – I've done all to earn it!

I close. I dread to rend this page…
for shame and fear my wits are sliding…
and your honor is my gauge,
and in it boldly I'm confiding…