

AN ARTISTIC JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

Rendered and edited by Natalia Galchenko, April 2018

“The purest and blessed joys of life are our memories from childhood. The whole childhood is an extremely beautiful poetic fairy tale. Lantern’s glares dancing above the cradle... Isn’t it the deepest poem?”

Boris Lavrenev

Boris Andreyevich Lavrenev was born on July 17, 1891, in Kherson. His parents were teachers, Andrei Philippovich Sergeyev and Maria Ksaverievna Sergeyeva. They gave their son not just elementary home education, but also fostered respect for labour. They raised him in the best traditions of the intelligentsia.

The writer described his school years in men’s Classic School #1 as controversial. The education system was not always favourable for our young well-read and well-rounded Boris. However, at school he met and made friends with Volodia, a son of the English vice-consul Edvin Karuan: it was to be a friendship of a lifetime.

School rules restricted the variety of books. But, thanks to Mikhail Bekker, the future writer had an access to the library and Kherson’s theatrical life.

Boris's interests were diverse. He was fond of drawing. The picture, which he drew at the age 6, “The Hunter and the Fisherman”, is now represented in the Historical Museum.

The first writer’s poems and critical articles were published in Kherson’s local newspapers, such as “The Native Land” and “The Spring Dawns”.

As a high-school student, Boris left his parents’ house and started working on a ship. Later, he described his adventures in the story entitled “Maritsa”.

In 1912, as a student of Moscow University, Boris published a poetic legend about red poppies in a Moscow almanac “The Harvest”.

During the First World War he served in the Royal Army. Boris published the first story in prose “Gala-Peter”. The impressions of the war lay at the core of this work. However, this story in prose was prohibited by the military censorship.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Boris joined the Red Army. This was not because he supported the Revolution with all his heart – he hated bloodshed – but he was sure that in a time of trial a writer should take the people’s part, not the government’s part. Such was his choice. He fought in Turkestan. In this period of life he saw many events which were used as plots for his future novels.

Boris wrote a long novel at first, and then he divided it into 3 small stories. After a while, he published them under the titles “The Wind”, “The 41st”, “The Story about a Simple Thing”. They drew the attention of the public. That is when a productive period in the author’s life started: he became really popular.

Boris devoted his works to different problems. For example, stories “The 7th Companion”, “The Woodcut” are focused on intellectual and cultural problems. Since the publication of his drama “Rift” he became famous as a heroic-revolutionary master of drama.

The author frequently mentioned patterns from his childhood. He recalled them with a special tenderness. Often we can observe bright, calm Ukrainian landscapes, the cozy southern hometown in his different works (“Blue and White”).

Boris Lavrenev died on January 7, 1959 in Moscow.

He remained in the memory of his contemporaries as an energetic, lively writer, responsive to other people’s requests. There is a huge quantity of his friends’ and readers’ letters in his archive.

Solzhenitsyn’s words can express those vivid emotions B. Lavrenev evoked:

“I love you, for your palette has got many more than only sunny and dirty-grey shades.

I love you for your stories about the great days and years, which are impartial, thrilling and true.

I love you for your creative individuality, judgment and the independence of mind.”

It is as if the author had left his soul behind with us. He left a charge of positive energy, humor, valiant characters and many thought-provoking stories on the white pages.

Based on: <http://www.xepcoh.info/famous/boris-lavrenyev>

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