

Krylova Zoja Alekseevna. The Russian Woman

Blockade ... You shrink when you hear this word, as if you have a fever. Two words: blockade and hunger, and between them - life and death. Death looked into every apartment, but there were such apartments, from which she was turned out, then she went there, where people were hardly alive and waited there quietly. Death was near, so we had to fight not only with the enemy, but also with death. It was cruel. We could win it only with our spirit, our duty, our care about children. Where did reserve strength come from? We used the last reserves of our bloodless bodies. We got up and went to work, my mother worked at the plant, bringing her contribution to the Victory over fascism. Everything for the front! But she also had me. This doubled her forces and energy. She had her duty to the Native Land and parent stimulus. It was necessary for her to survive.

I didn't understand much, I was ten. I did not realize what the announcement of the war meant, I understood that it was bad, but I did not understand how bad it was. Worries started to get into my soul from grown-ups. As a child I could compare it with the approach of a thunderstorm on a summer day, when it suddenly gets dark and lightning strikes. The feeling of war came to me later, when I started to hear the remote roar of cannon shooting, air-raid warning sirens, a rumble of planes and ruptures of bombs. There was no bomb shelter close to us. I was at home alone when mum was at work. She asked me not to leave the apartment. I had no fear at first, but little by little it started to get into my soul when the snow appeared and it got cold, when my mother tried to get some food for cards, but there was not enough food.

My mum, a divine woman, looked into my eyes with sad love, sighed and quietly said: «Everything will be good, the war will come to an end».

Mum was wise. Having learnt the World War and the Civil War, she started to prepare crackers since the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War. She knew what black days would come. It saved us and not only us. A 12 year old niece came to us, we gave her some crackers

When there was no electricity, the water pipe froze, mum brought a can of water which was enough only for tea and hot soup from crackers. These were the hardest months of the siege – from December, 1941 till March, 1942. It is impossible to describe how it is to live without water and water drain. Those who don't understand that should ask the people, who are over 90 years old, whom the civilization had not reached, who had to take water from water stations, and who still have to heat their houses with potbelly stoves.

It was very cold, the cold got into apartments and did its cruel business together with hunger, as if they were in arrangement with the death. But we struggled. The potbelly stove heated somehow and gave us hot water.

Sometimes our neighbors and we heated a stove at the kitchen and warmed ourselves there. In this terrible time even our fear became dull. I was sitting at home and looking from the window through frozen glass and waited for my mother. Mum was my life. Clock chimed one hour after another, I lived in myself, in my thoughts, my dreams, my hopes and waited. When mum came, it became good, comfortable and quiet. There was a big power in this little, thin woman. I live thanks to the heroic deed of my mother. My mother gave me life. She also saved my life during the siege, not taking care of herself.

Thanks to such mums we, children of besieged Leningrad, survived in that terrible war. Russian women during this terrible time, when it was very hard had as much courage as men and even more. In the case when it touched children women were even more efficient and strong than men. . They approached the Victory and saved the future. The mission of a woman is motherhood, it is given by God.

People of that generation are dead already. Memories about them live in us, children. And only now when time has passed we realize heroic deeds of our mothers' generation.