



Gigantic Motion Pictures

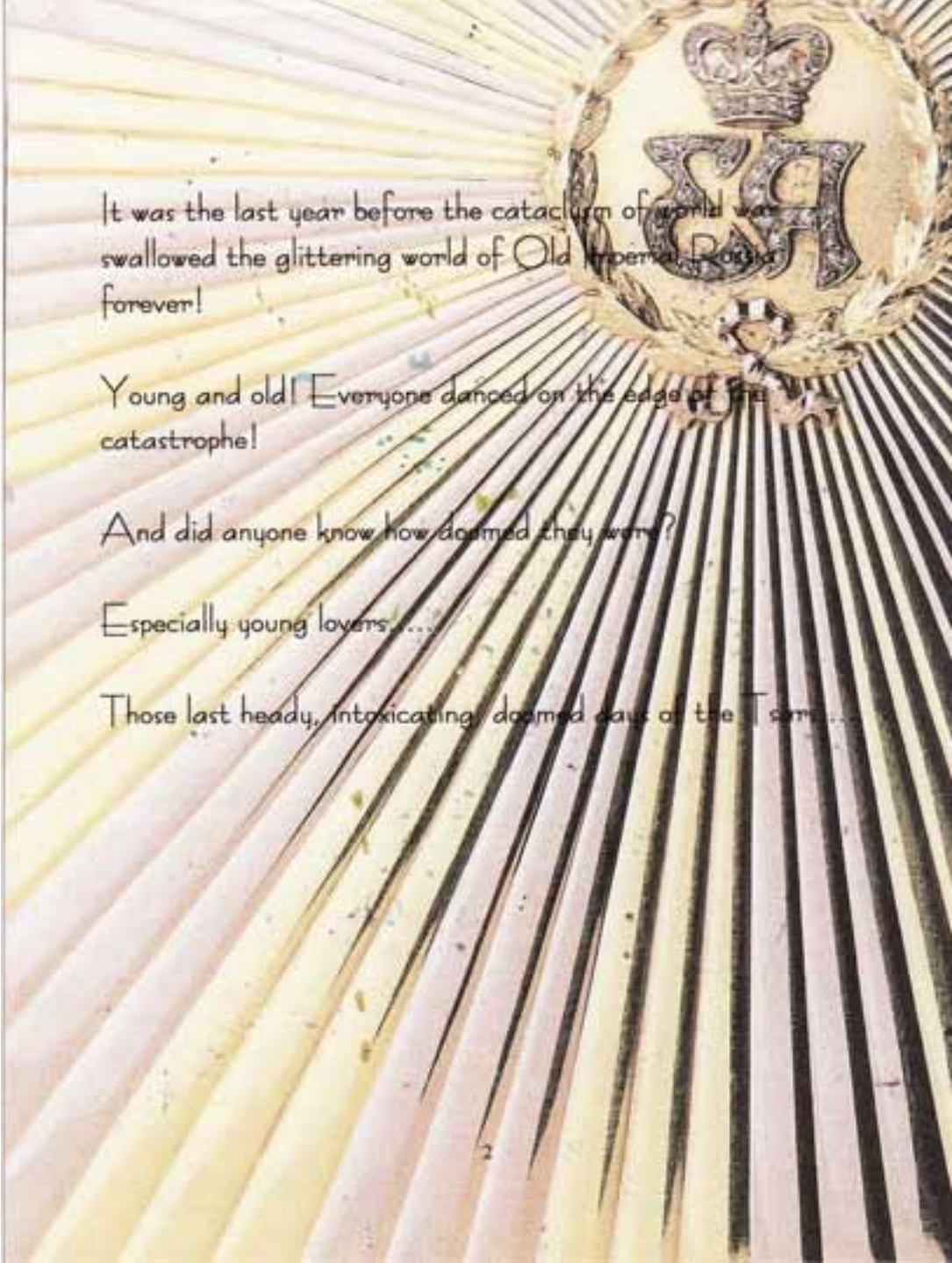
proudly presents

ANNA KARENINA

An Epic Film of Love

Starring Hammond Gilbert-Blackheart
Maralinga
& Laurence Pendragon

Directed by Victor King



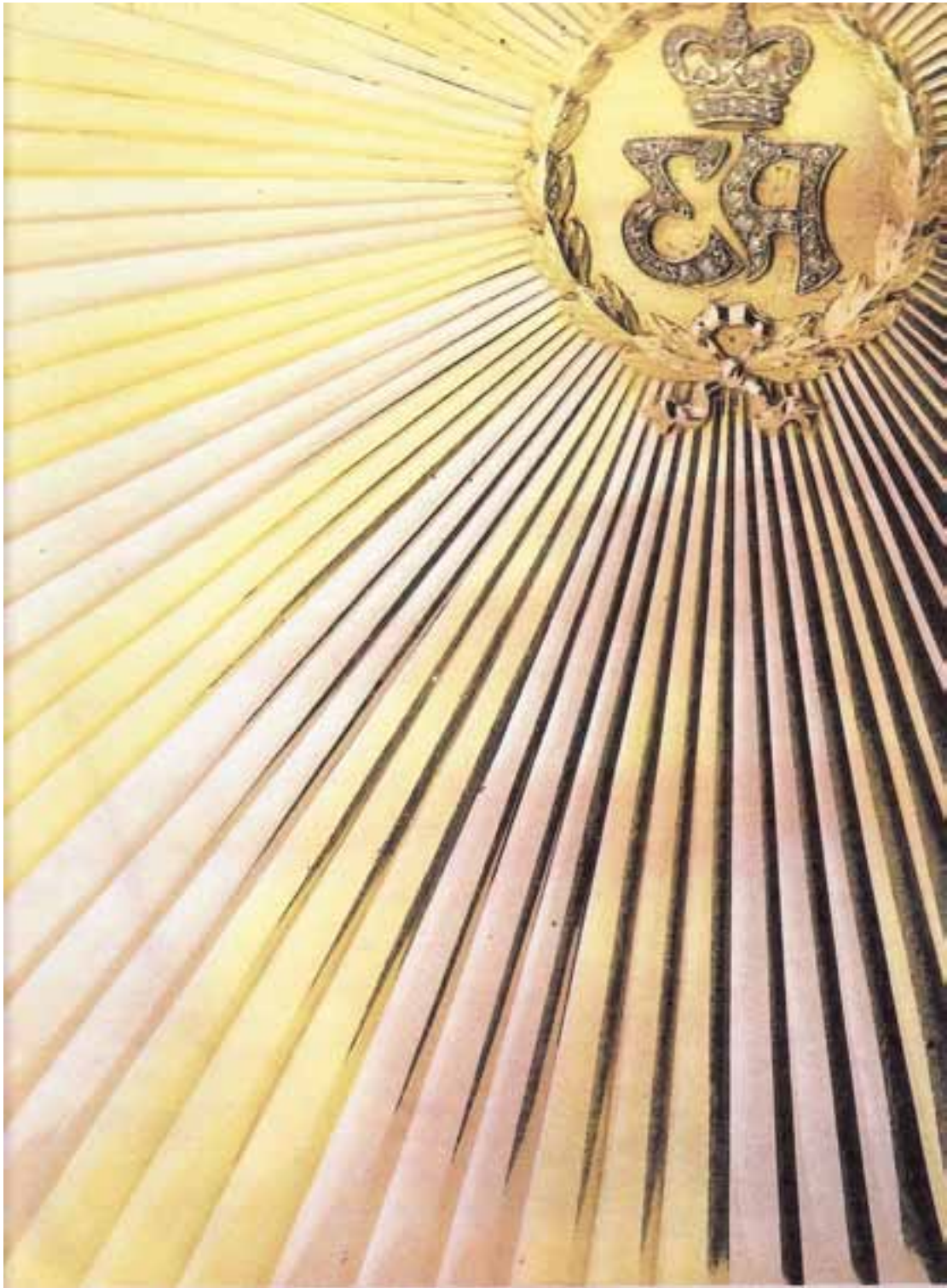
It was the last year before the cataclysm of world war
swallowed the glittering world of Old Imperial Russia
forever!

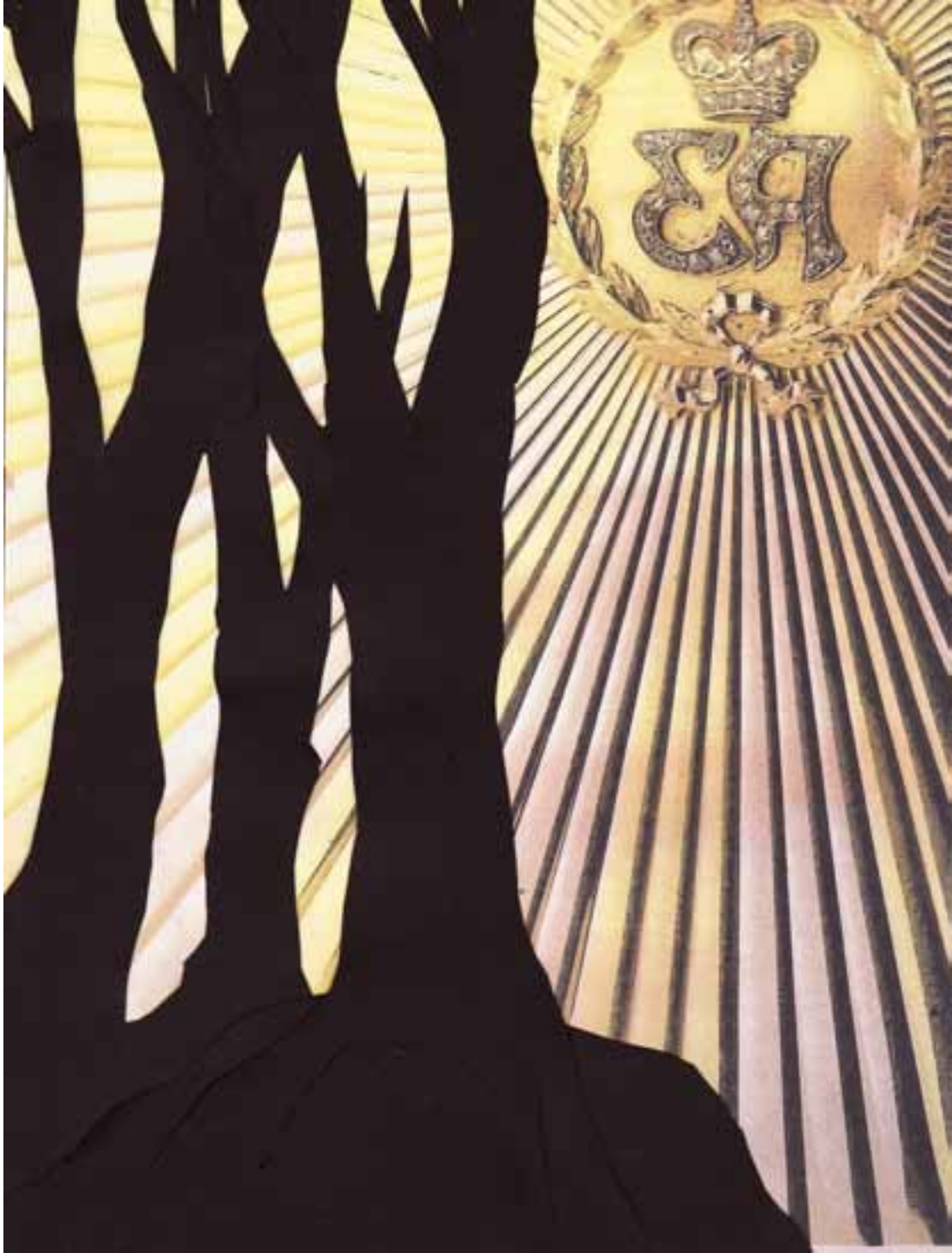
Young and old! Everyone danced on the edge of the
catastrophe!

And did anyone know how doomed they were?

Especially young lovers....

Those last heady, intoxicating, doomed days of the Tsars....

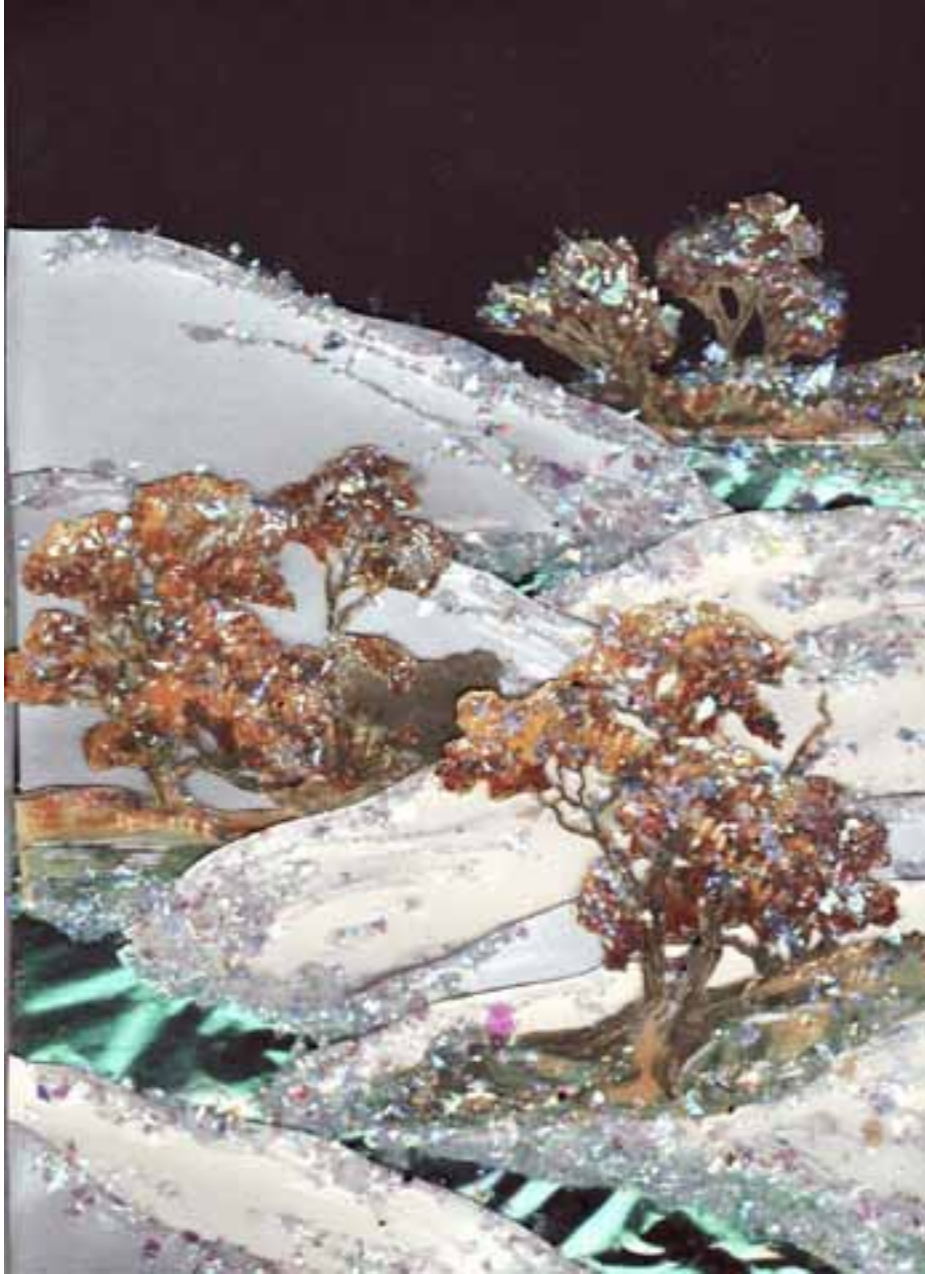












The Official Movie Tie - In Souvenir Illustrated Pictorial!



The Snow Queen.

A fairy tale for adults

by

Horsham Gilbert-Blackheart

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This is a story about a little boy's lifelong search of love.

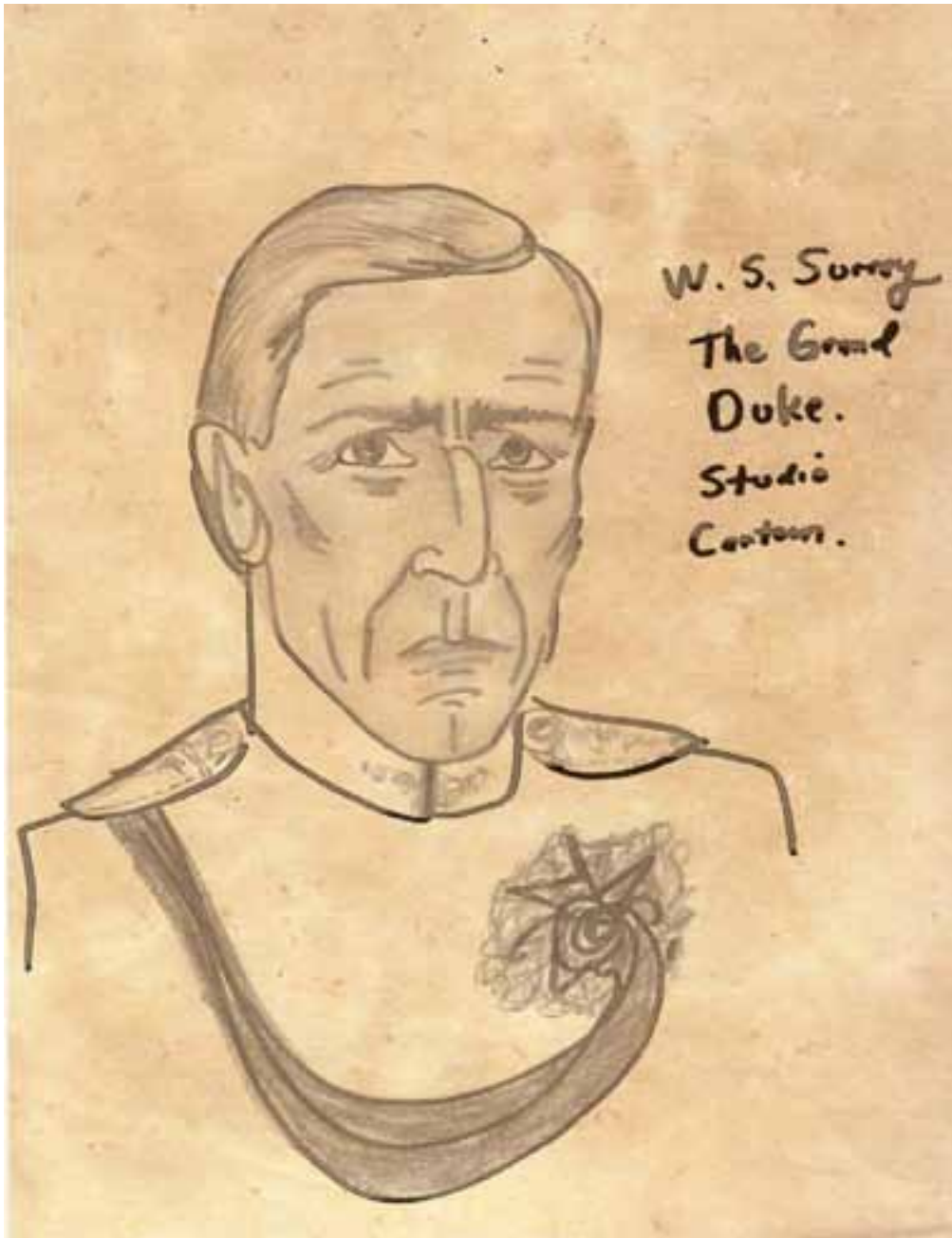


The boy's name was Alexei.



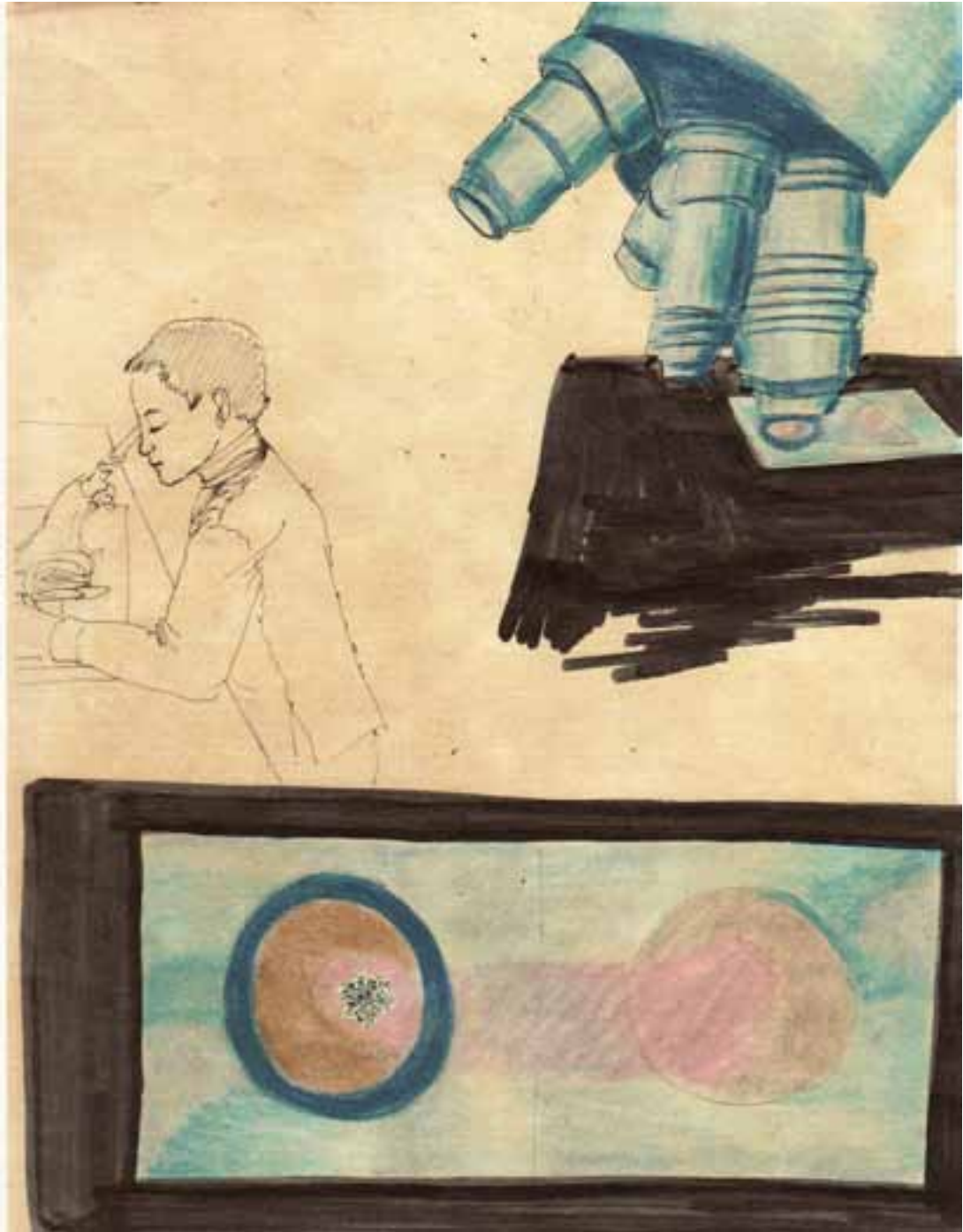
He was raised by first nannies and then tutors until he was six years old. Then he was sent to a fashionable military school and they were made redundant. The little boy never saw them again. But Alexei loved them from far.

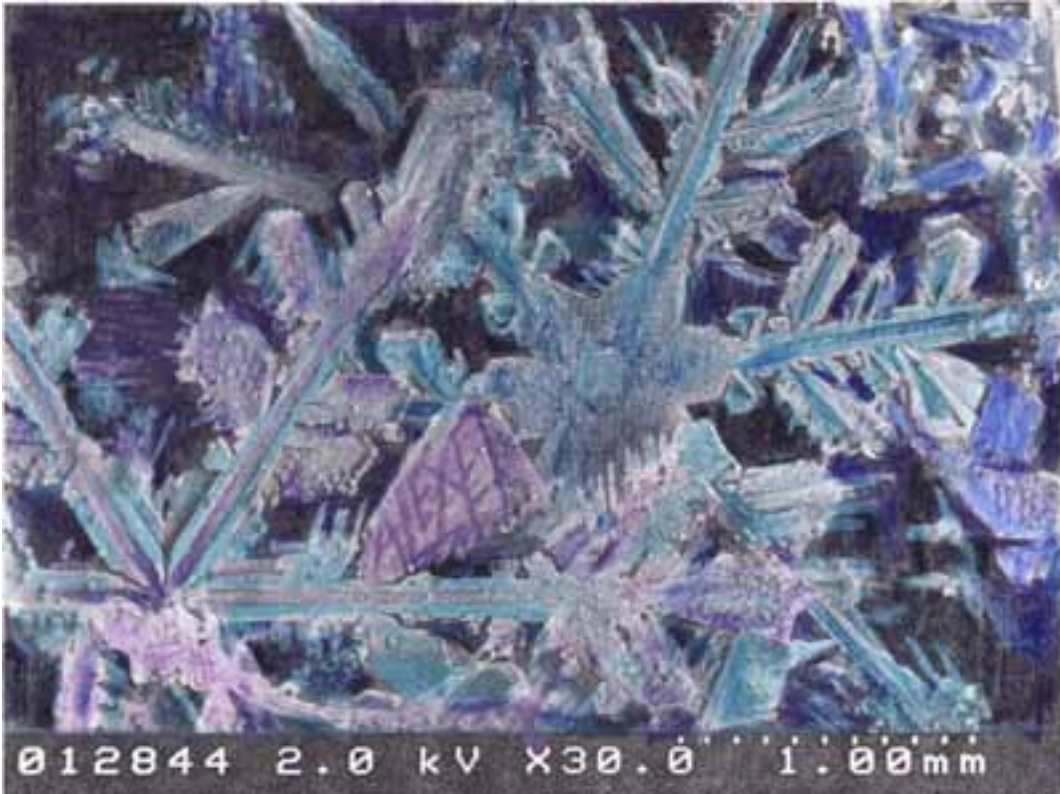




Once a year his godfather the Grand Duke always remembered to visit him to inspect 'his little soldier'. The Grand Duke appeared to be a towering, fierce man. Alexei would stand at attention and salute until the Grand Duke nodded pleased enough to return the salute. Alexei loved the Grand Duke from afar.

The Grand Duke always remembered every Christmas to give little Alexei presents like toy guns to train with, or ponies to train on, or little uniforms to train in. But the best gift of all was a magical microscope. The little boy spent hours studying perfect snowflakes under the magic microscope.



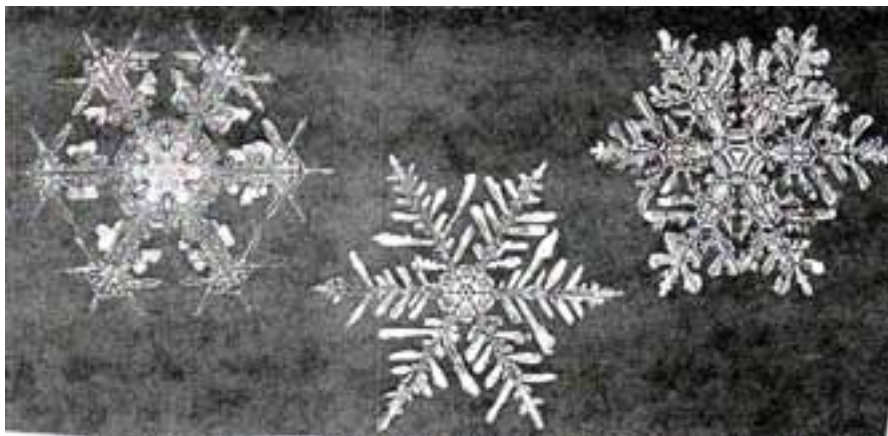


Alexei loved snowflakes. Each was unique and beautifully perfect. There was no flaw. There was no disappointment. And there was no emotion. So the beauty stayed pristine because it stayed remote and distant. You could not touch a snowflake or it melted. The little boy had to admire them from a cold room too or they melted too. Alexei loved snowflakes from afar.



The Grand Duke told little Alexei when he grew up he would have a splendid place in the Grand Duke's own regiment and be a handsome, dashing, and brave soldier.

Alexei worked very hard to be the perfect little soldier because he hated disappointing people. He wanted to be loved.



Alexei's father died a very long time ago
so he never missed him at all, much less
love him from afar.



Alexei's mother was very beautiful.

Alexei loved his mother very much. He loved her from afar because she was always far away. His old nanny said his mother lived in Fairawayland which was what everyone called the Court of the Czar. Everyone told Alexei when he grew up he could go to Fairawayland too and see his beautiful mother. Alexei was sure his mother loved him too — from afar.





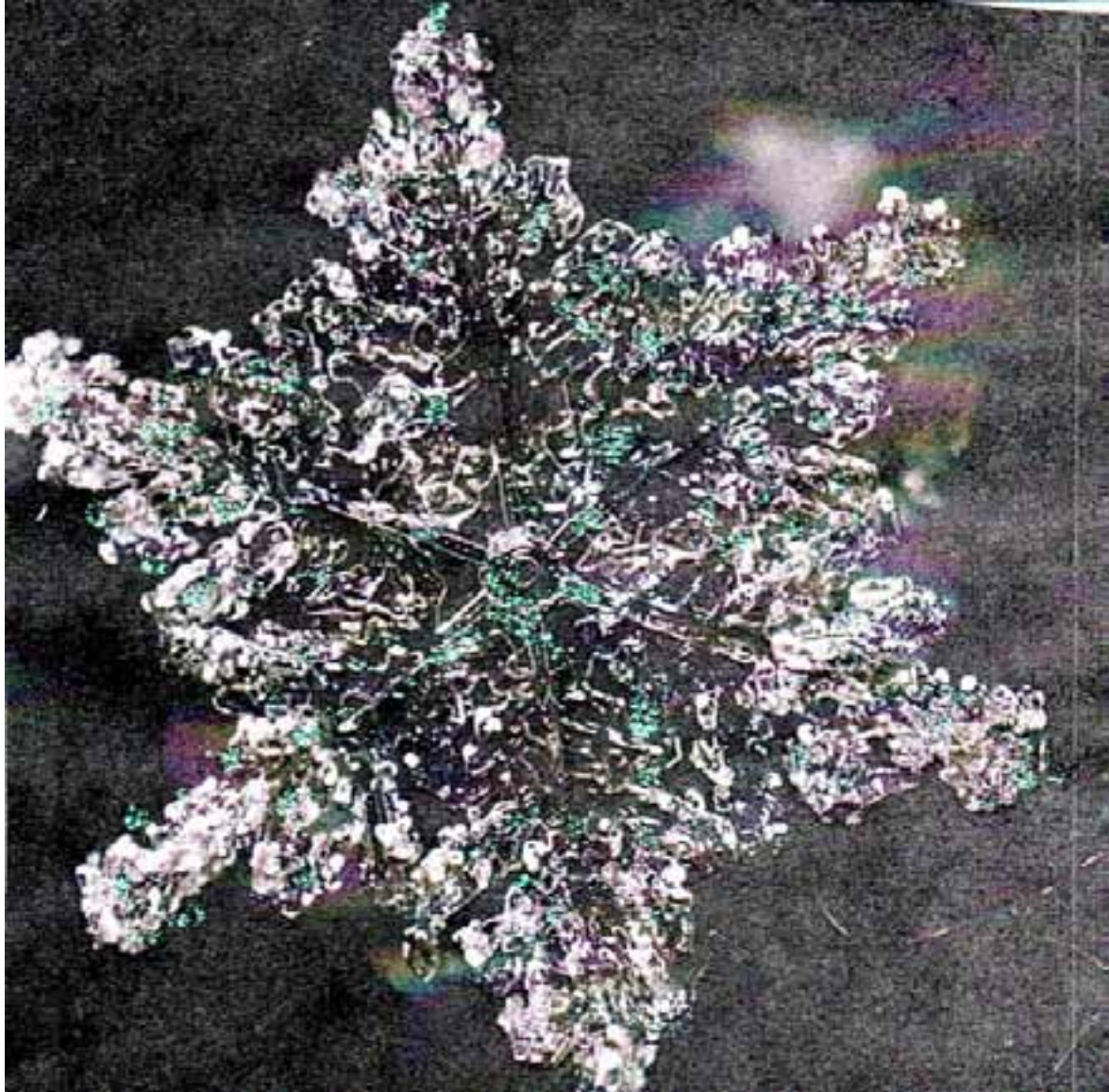
Alexei thought his distant, beautiful mother was the Snow Queen because she was always far away, remote, beyond reach and out of reach, and as perfect as a snowflake because she never held him or he mess up her perfect dress and hair and makeup. So Alexei loved his mother from afar.



Alexei tried to write to his mother but all his letters were returned unopened. So Alexei decided his mother was being held hostage in Fairawayland. Alexei yearned to rescue his mother but he was too small to save her from her mysterious peril. But Alexei was still sure his mother loved him and he continued to love his mother — from afar.

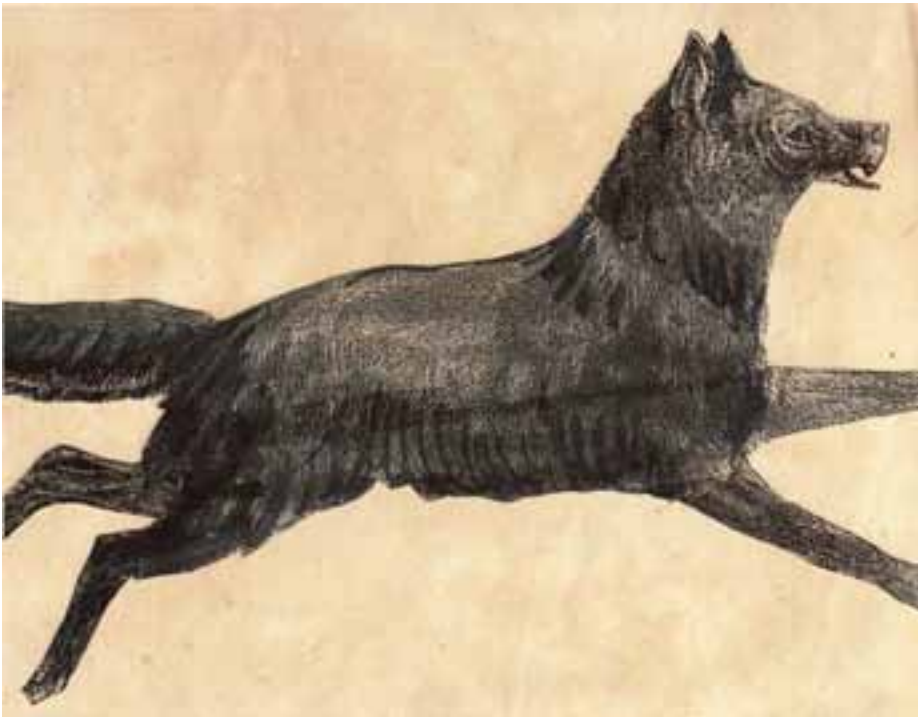


Alexei read fairy stories about how the Snow Queen sent secret messages to lonely little boys in mysterious snowflakes so Alexei spent hours studying snowflakes under his microscope to read the secret messages the Snow Queen sent him. But the snowflakes never formed secret messages so Alexei was very lonely.



Alexei read stories how some wolves were really werewolves who used to be brave and dashing heroes until they fell in love with the Snow Queen and were turned from adoring lovers into her personal body guard. So Alexei collected pictures of wolves too and watched wolves from the distance as they lurked in the dark forest that surrounded his military school or between terms his mother's country estate. Alexei was sure some of the wolves were

really werewolf lovers sent by the Snow Queen to contact him. Alexei tried to reach out to the wolves who watched him from afar. But the wolves only vanished deeper into the dark forest and Alexei was afraid of the dark forest. So Alexei loved the werewolf lovers of the Snow Queen — — from afar.









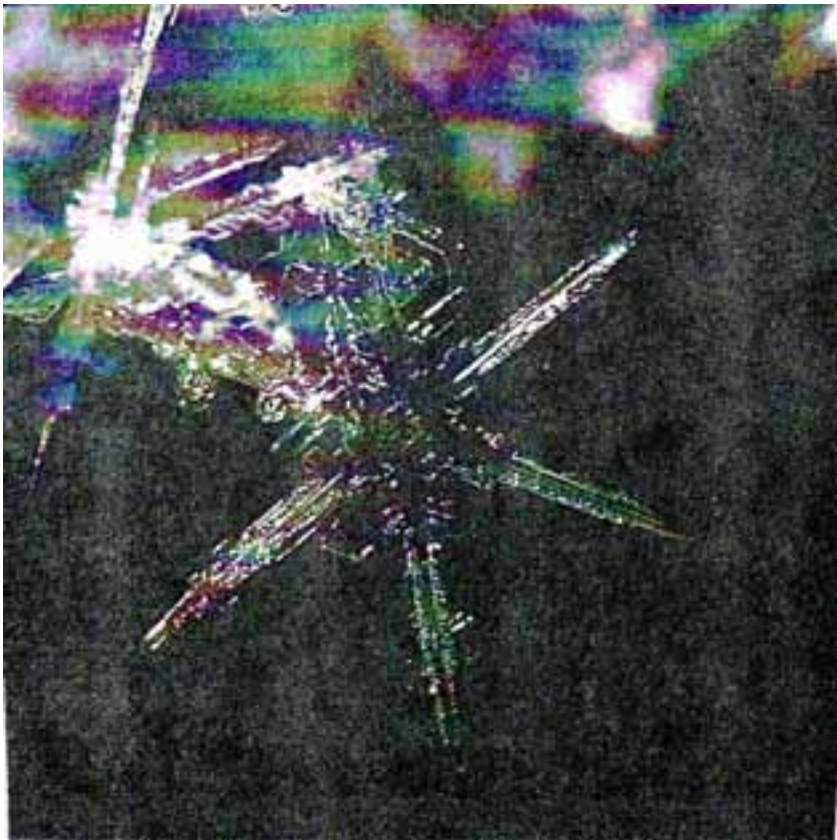






Alexei tried to send messages to the Show Queen to free his mother who was being held captive in Fairawayland so she could come and rescue Alexei. But no matter how hard Alexei tried he could

not make the snowflakes spell out any magical message. So sometimes at night Alexei would weep under his blanket on his cot because he was so alone and the world was so cold.



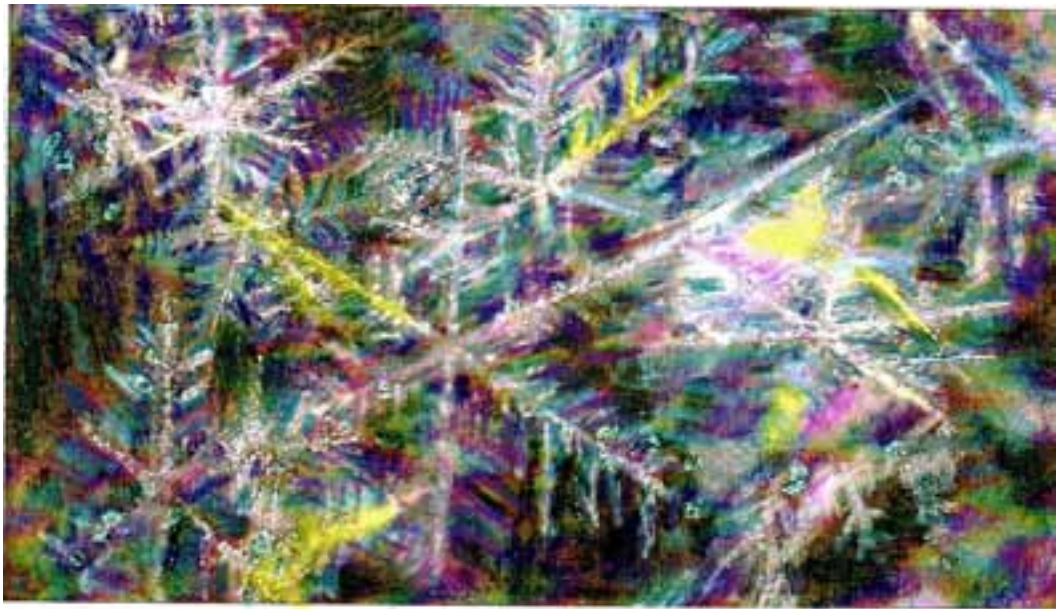
Between school terms Alexei lived at his mother's country estate in a shuttered house with the cook and her husband the driver. They told Alexei fairy stories.

Alexei loved fairy stories. Alexei wanted to grow up to be a handsome prince just like in the fairy stories and rescue a damsel in distress who would love him and whom he could at last love. Alexei wanted to be loved.



The Cook & the Driver.

But when Alexei's mother found out she ordered Alexei to stay at his military school all year long even when other boys could go home over Christmas or the term holidays and she fired the cook and the driver for being 'too familiar' and for failing to know their place. Alexei continued to love the cook and the driver — from afar.



Alexei loved his mother too — from afar — even if she made Alexei live all year long at the strict military school where there was no friendship or love. There were only drills and duty and punishment. Alexei believed his mother had a reason for keeping Alexei far away and Alexei was determined to grow up into a handsome, brave, and dashing officer so everyone would love him and his mother would at last open her arms to him. And

if his mother was really being held hostage in Fairawayland Alexei was resolved to rescue his mother at last — and be loved.





VIKTOR VASNETSOV

Ivan Tsarevich Riding the Grey Wolf, 1889

Oil on canvas - 250 x 181.5 cm - State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

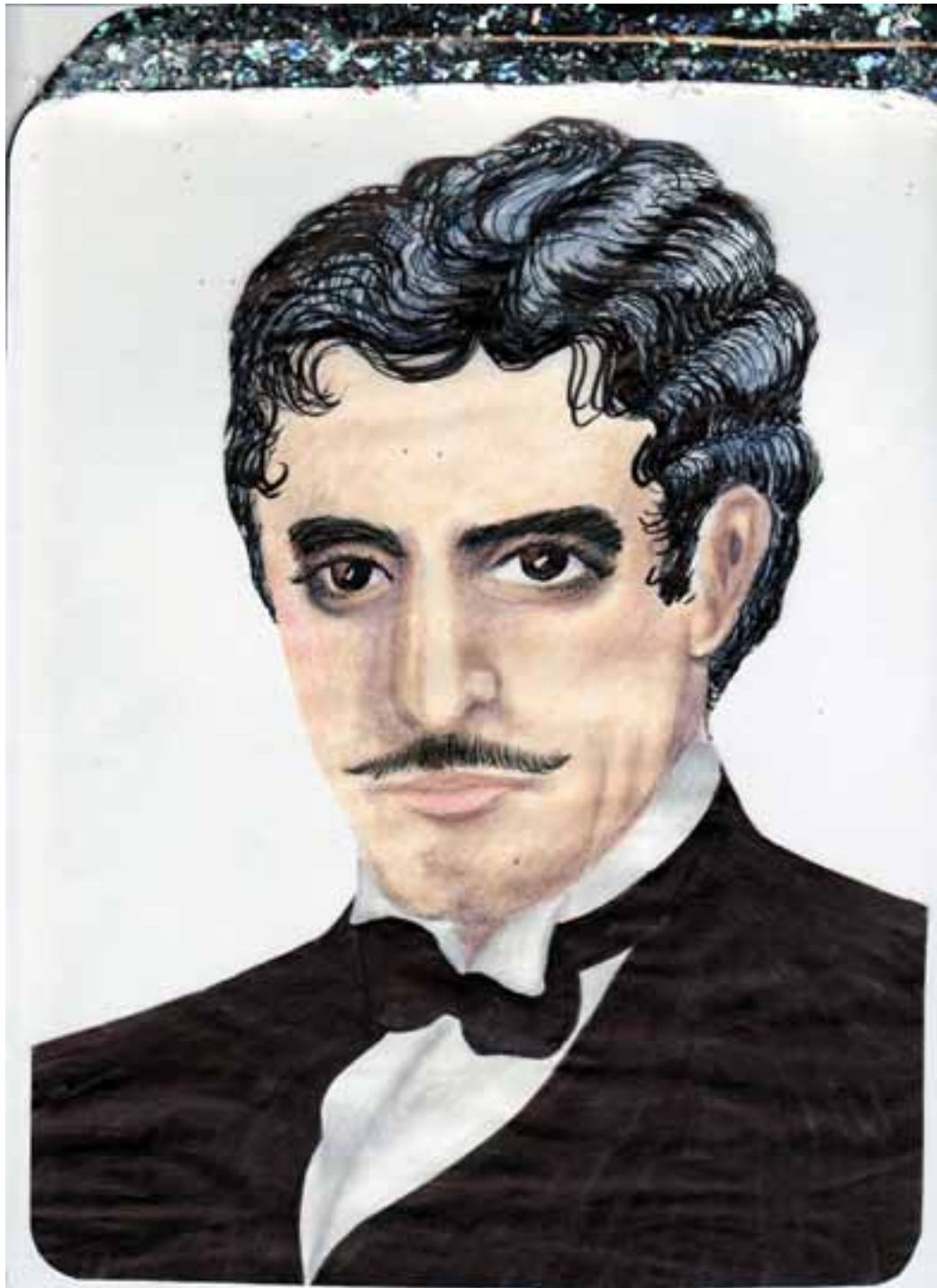
Finally Alexei grew up and he became everything everyone told him he had to be to be loved:

He was handsome — or at least he was not ugly.

He was tall — or at least he was not short.

He was thin — or at least he was not fat.

He was popular — or at least he was not unpopular.



He was a good soldier — or at least he was a dutiful soldier.

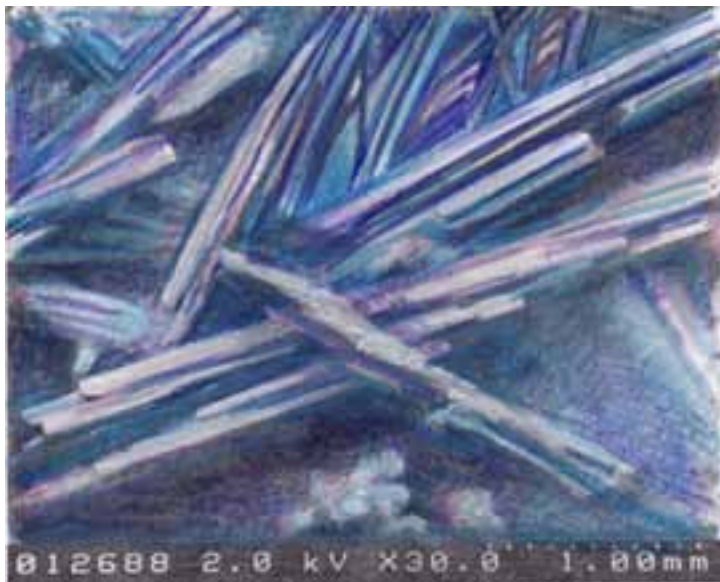
He looked very nice in his uniform — or at least he looked very dashing.

He was a good rider — so at least his horses loved him.





He had the right name and connections and pedigree and his mother served the Czarina — so he waited to be invited to Fairwayland to meet his mother at last. But his mother did not sent secret messages in snowflakes or even by telegram.





But his godfather the Grand Duke did remember him! So Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky was ordered to report for duty in the Grand Duke's own Regiment in Imperial Petersburg!



When Alexei reported for duty the Grand Duke threw a regimental dinner to welcome his godson to the regiment.

"You see Alexei" the Grand Duke told him. "Everyone loves you!". But Alexei knew no one and no one knew him. And the Grand Duke was busy, and his mother was busy, and everyone was busy. So Alexei stayed very busy too! So Alexei loved from afar a world that was remote and distant and cold.



Troikas



Polish



Polish



Polish



Polish



Polish



Once winter Alexei rode his troika toward Petersburg from his country estate and during the night a wolf attacked him. Only his knife saved him.



So Alexei killed the "Wolf"....



But why did the wolf attack him?

Did the Snow Queen want Alexei?

He tied the wolf to his troika and raced the cutting gale that was the breath of the Snow Queen. And he raced the ice storm that was the lacy ice handkerchief of the Snow Queen. And he raced the fierce winter blizzard that was the billowing veil of the Snow Queen.

For the Snow Queen was after him!













In the fierce gripe of the blizzard he
fancied he saw the Snow Queen racing
her gold and white troika against his
black troika! But his troika and horses
were too fast and he won the race against
freezing death to boast to everyone at

the country inn that he raced against
the Snow Queen and won!



Safe at the rustic inn!



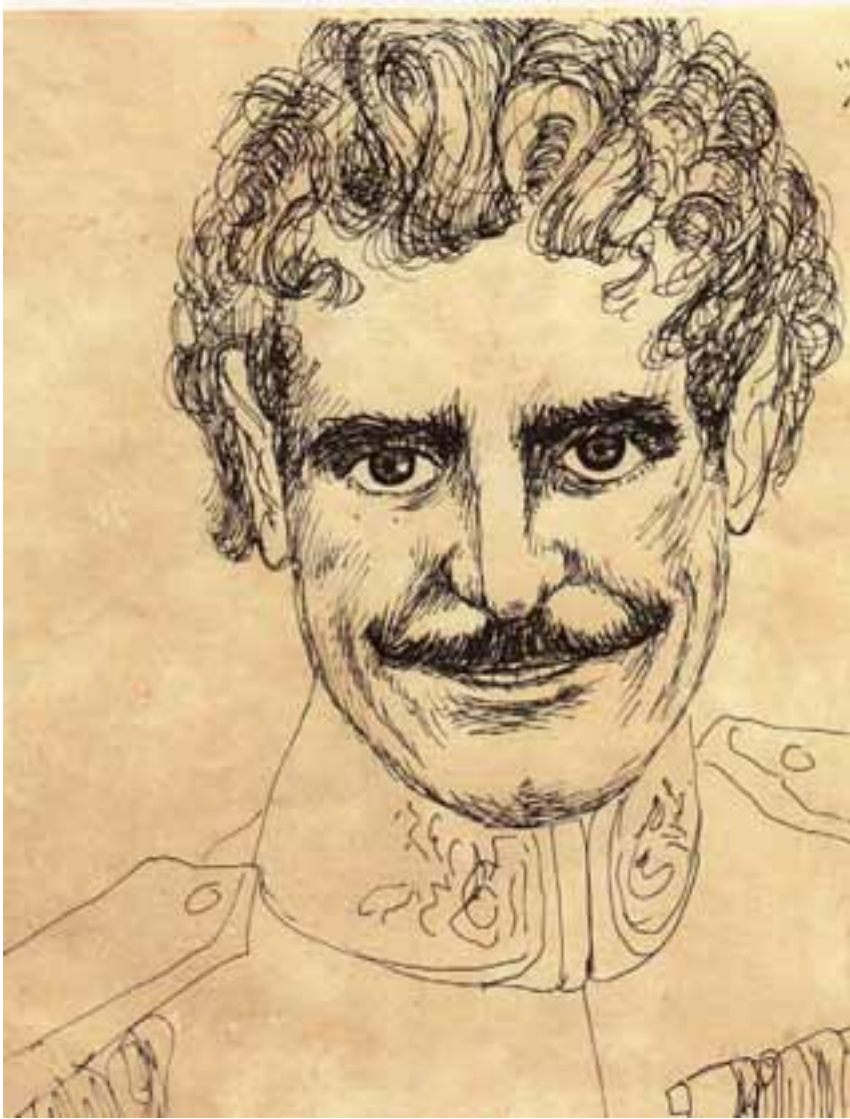
The owner of the rustic inn nailed the carcass of the wild wolf to the front door to ward off the howling werewolves of the Snow Queen.



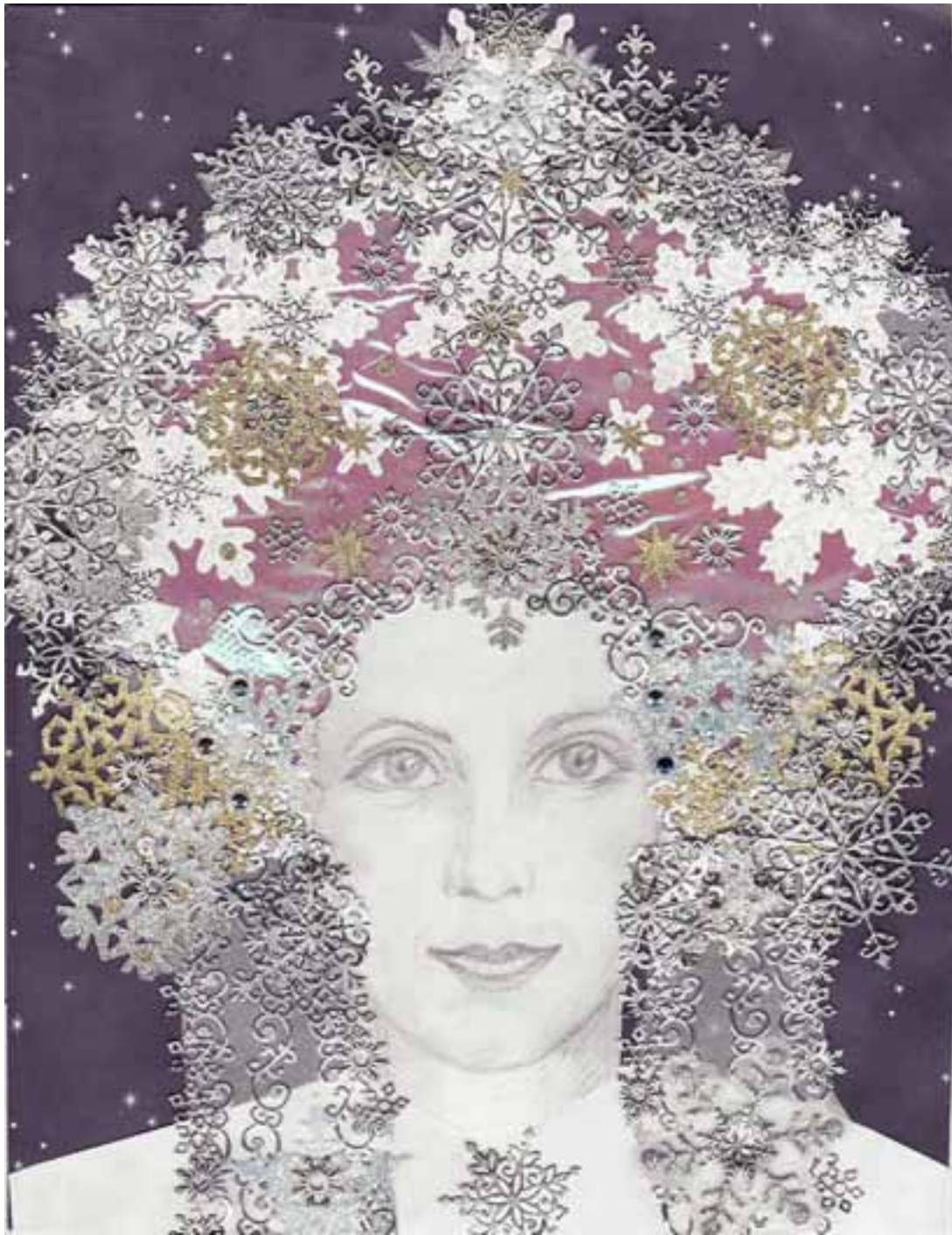
“All the werewolves of the Snow Queen have blue eyes you know!” the

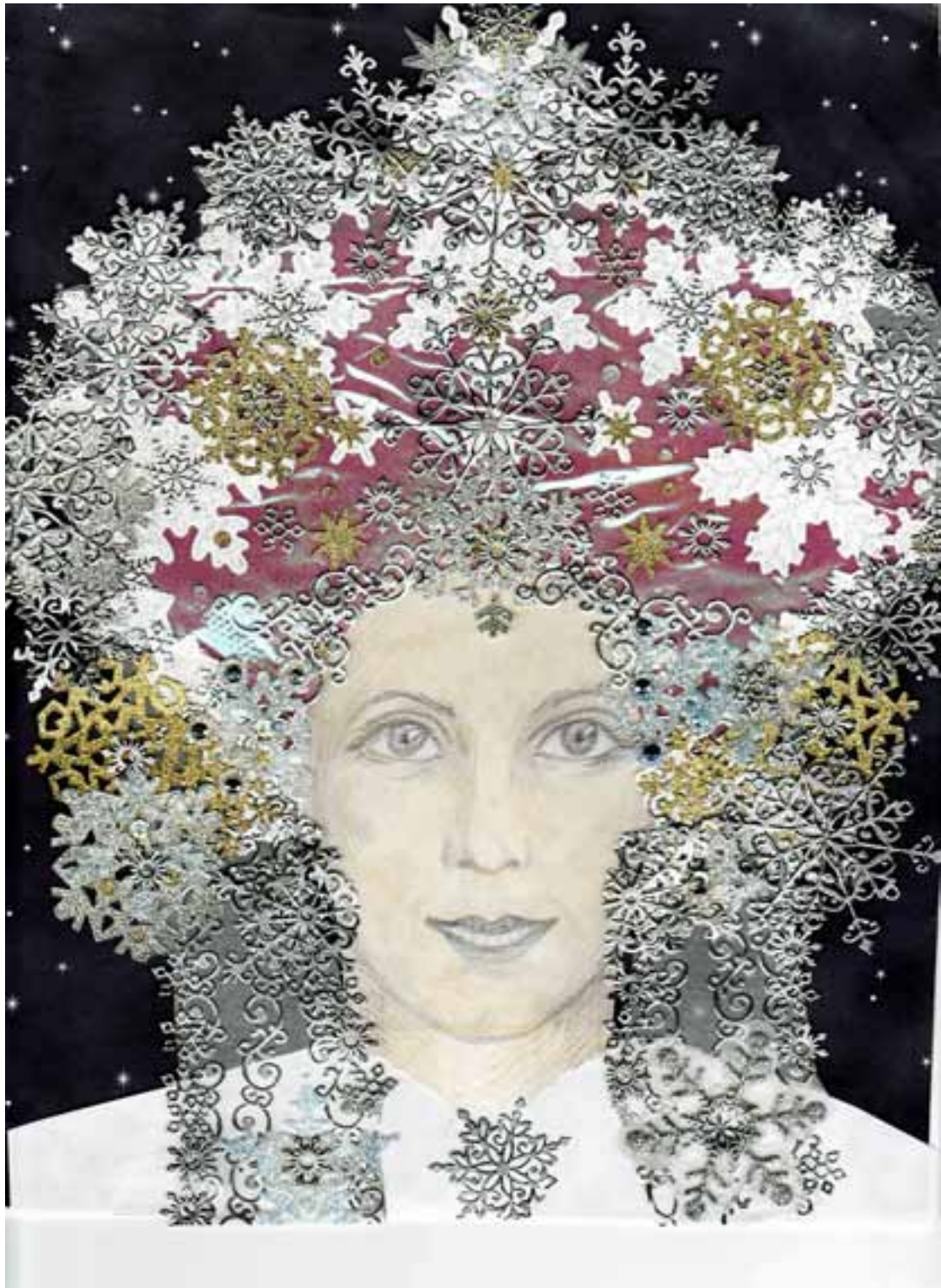


owner of the inn told Alexei. "Then I am safe because I have black eyes!" Alexei replied.



The wife of the owner of the inn pinched Alexei's strong arm and said "You are too dashing my handsome officer! Beware the Snow Queen seeing you and falling in love with you! She will want to add you to her bodyguard of werewolf lovers! She collects souls but she already has the souls of too many lonely little boys and desperate lovers enough without yours!













Come in and find love with a gypsy dancer
or a peasant girl! Let love in a warm bed
lull you to sleep! Love — if only for a
night!”





Alexei loved the inn. Everyone knew him and he knew everyone. The fire was bright and warm. The food was hot and good. The music was passionate and bold. The dancing was robust and enticing. Every pretty gypsy or peasant girl waved their lacy handkerchiefs at him to toss at his booted feet! And everyone loved him — but one!



A mysterious woman was also caught by the winter blizzard and she alone ignored Alexei. She was as beautiful as the Snow Queen. She reminded him of his mother too for she was beautiful but remote and cold. She ignored him so Alexei ignored her.



Instead Alexei danced with abandon with every pretty girl and collected handkerchief tokens of conquest and tossed them all into the air! And the first handkerchief that fell to the floor picked the prize: love in a warm bed even if it was but love for a night!



VIKTOR VASNETSOV

The Frog Princess, 1901-1918

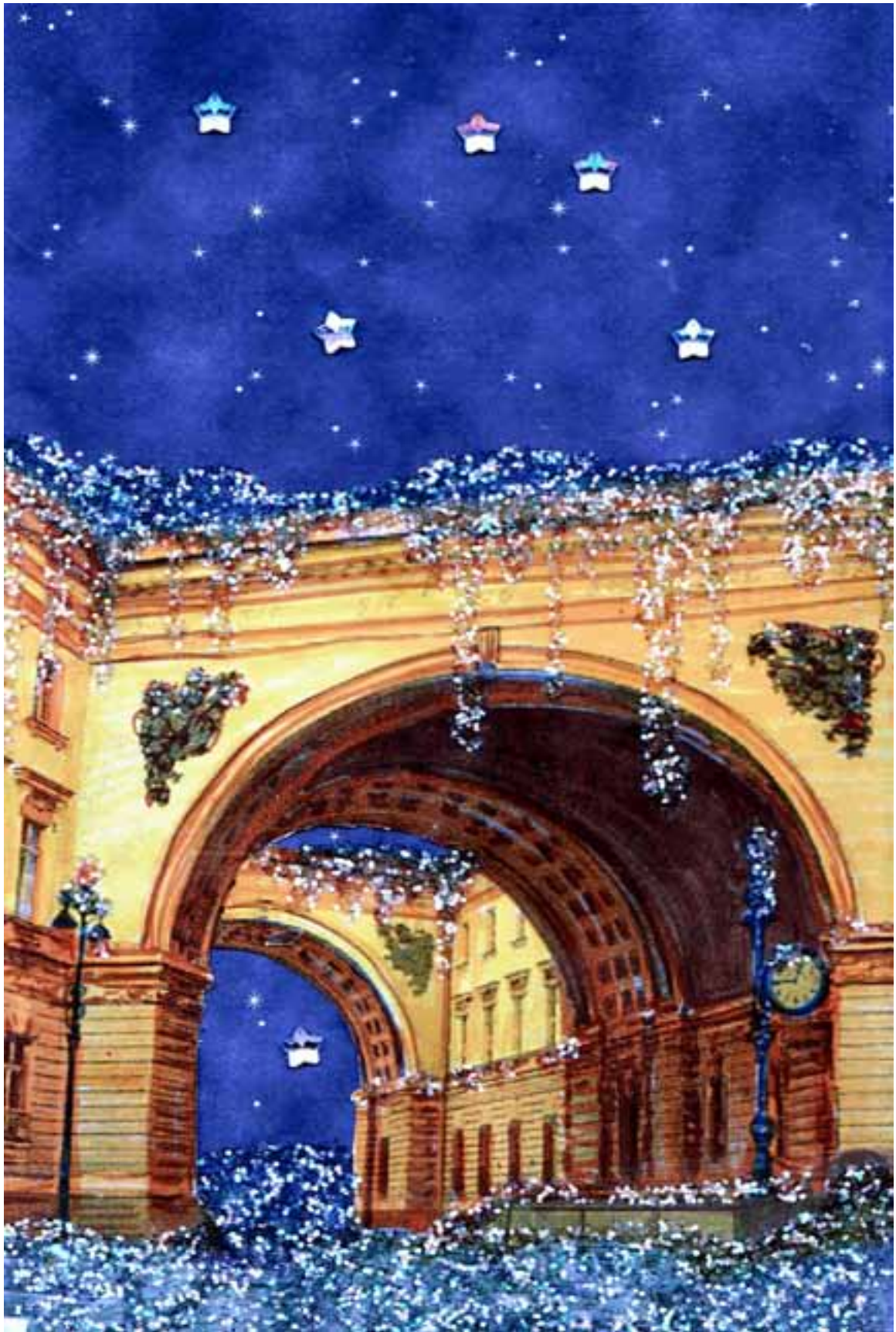
В. ВАСНЕТОВ. - ПЕР. С РУССКОГО - В. В. ВАСНЕТОВ. - ПЕР. С РУССКОГО

In Petersburg Alexei attended the Court Fancy Dress Ball at the Winter Palace. The Winter Palace was dressed like a winter wonderland. Alexei had never been invited to the Winter Palace before! It reminded him of the Winter Palace of the Snow Queen. It was as perfect as a snow flake! And just as remote and cold! And every household guard glared fiercely like the werewolf body guards of the Snow Queen!







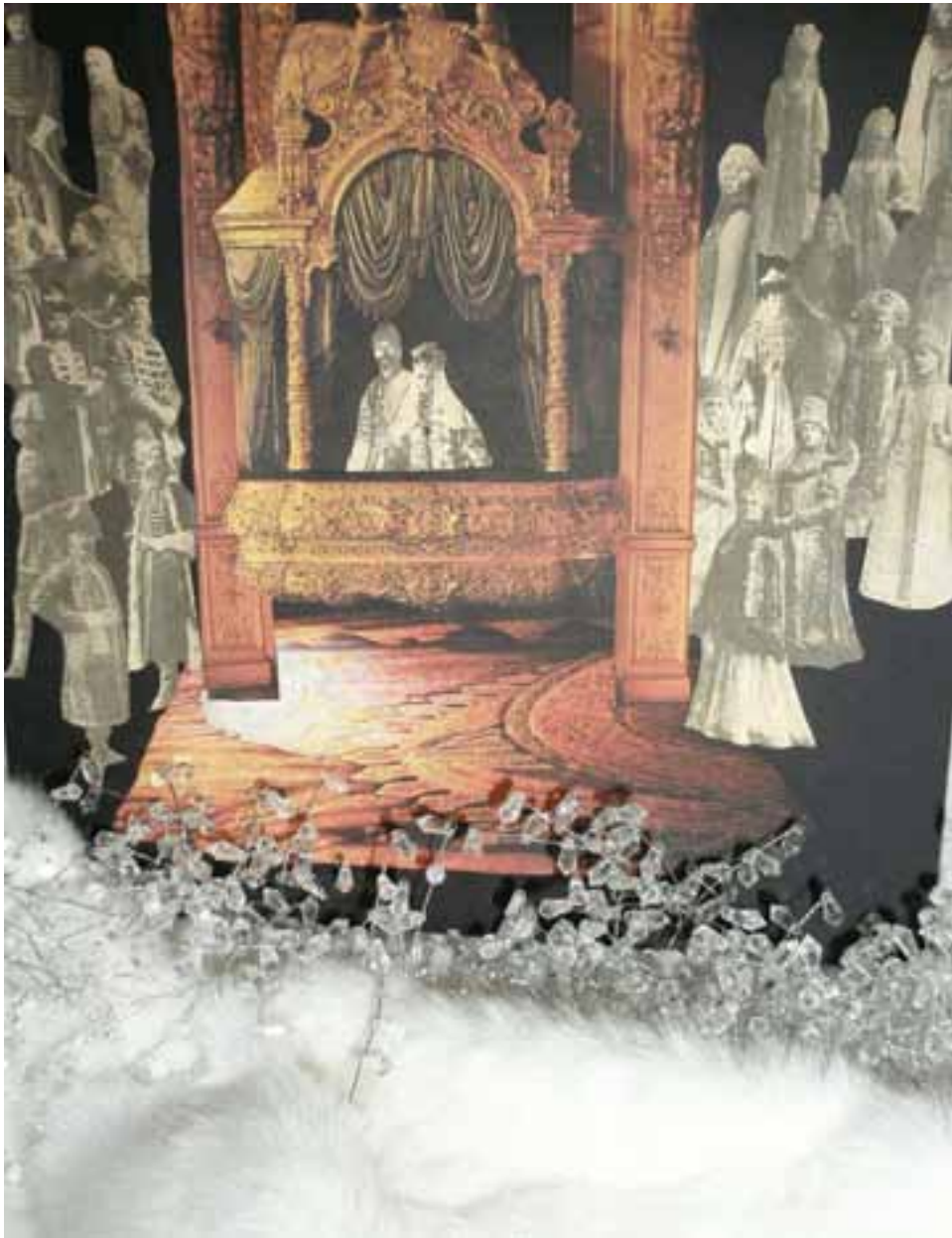








Everyone wore traditional dress. It was as if every single fairy tale had come to



life! For a single moment Alexei was perfectly happy at last!

Alexei half expected to even see his childhood fantasy come to life: The Snow Queen herself! But he did not see the

Snow Queen

or even his mother. And no one noticed him either.



Everyone was too busy trying to see the Czar and Czarina and their Little Prince who lived life under a magical curse no dashing hero or even doctor could see to cure. The Czar and Czarina were very beautiful but remote and cold. Alexei loved them from afar.



Alexei did not see the Little Prince but he saw the Hobgoblin as everyone called Rasputin. The mad monk was ugly and grotesque as a hobgoblin. Alexei wondered if he carried splinters of icy glass from the Evil Mirror of Icy Reason and Chilling Common Sense in his pocket the way hobgoblins were suppose to.



The Evil Mirror was the frozen ice of a deep, dark lake that encircled the icy throne of the Snow Queen. The Snow Queen called the frozen mirror-like ice the Mirror of Reason and Common Sense. But the mirror-like frozen ice cracked and grinded into a vortex of icy splinters as the dark depths below the glittering surface ice of the deadly cold lake churned and heaved during winter storms. And when the depths churned and

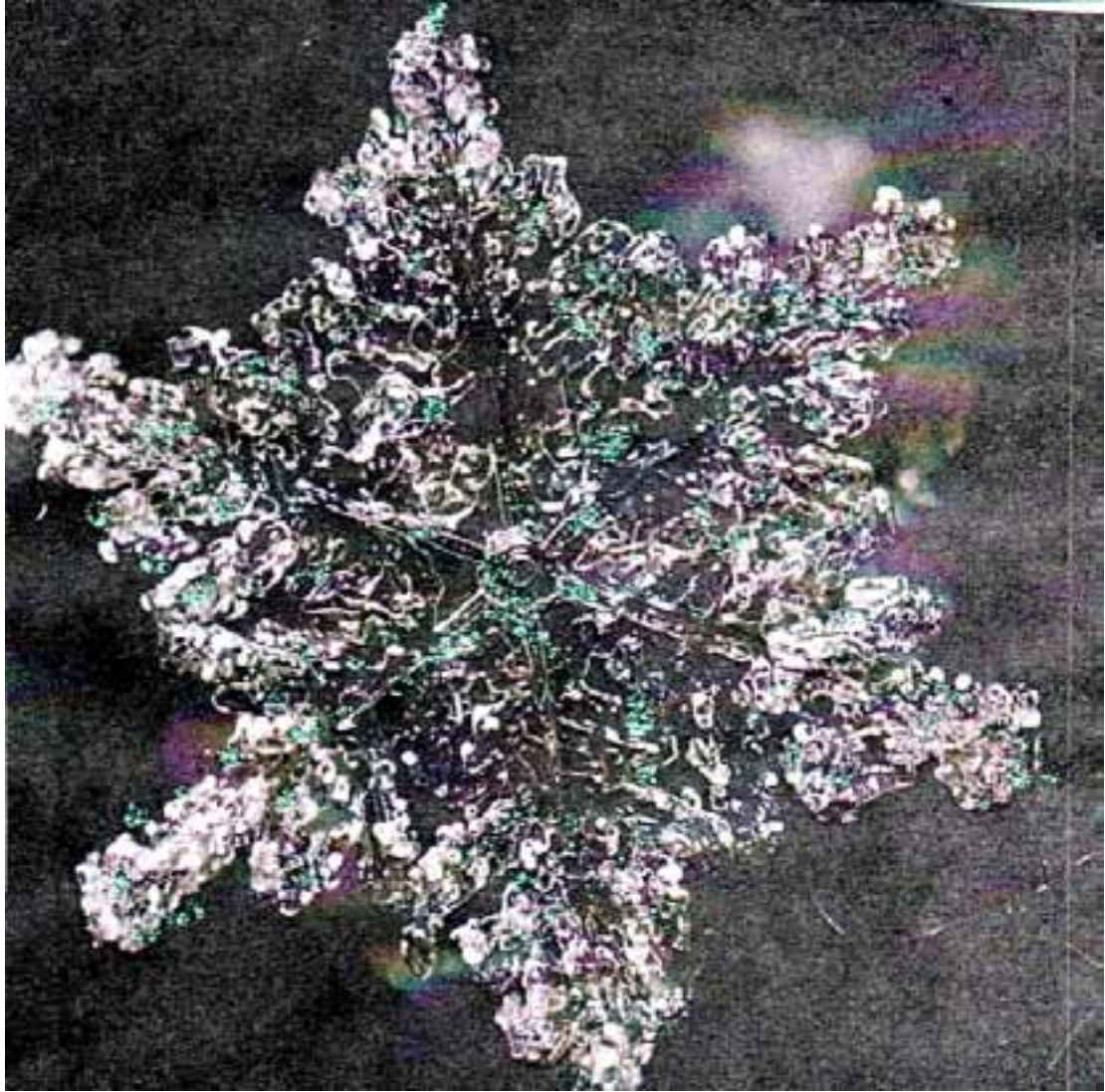




heaved the glittering, mirror-like surface
ice shattered into big and little splinters
that filled the midnight sky and flew
through the air like big and little daggers.



And if a splinter of that Evil Mirror,
even a microscopic splinter as tiny as a
snow flake, impaled either the eye or the
heart of a living soul then that eye or
that heart froze into icy disdain,
or freezing scorn,
or frigid logic,
or cruelly cutting common sense,
and worst of all: cold passionless reason.



Rasputin bounced up to Alexei. And Rasputin was a monk. And Rasputin was mad. He was so mad he was dressed as the Mad March Hare which was quite the wrong thing to be! At least at this fancy ball. And Rasputin laughed when Alexei scowled.

"Why don't you like me? | am not good
or bad or even indifferent! | am only mad.
Sometimes | heal! Sometimes | seduce!
Sometimes | take money showered on me!
Sometimes | shower money away to
anyone and everyone that was showered on
me! Sometimes | confuse or bedazzle or
exasperate! Sometimes | infuriate!
Sometimes | only make people laugh! But
how can there be any malice in that? For
does not Evil imply Premeditation? And

clearly | am too mad to plot or plan
anything from one moment to the next!
Chance rules and not me! | am nought
but a will-o-the-wisp! A mad march hare!”



“But your madness casts a pall over the Royal Family whom I love from afar”
Alexei replied. “And if war comes how can they survive your careless daffiness?”





"I don't make anyone open any door to me. If war comes we should all just run away and hide! If we all just run away and hide then how can war come?"

"That is nonsense!" Alexei replied incredulous at the daftness of it all.

"Why?" Rasputin replied momentarily sane. "Didn't Napoleon come? And didn't the Snow Queen's billowing veil of

snow and her handkerchief of lacy ice
defeat the greatest genius War ever
birthed? Let the Snow Queen defend
us! And let us run away and hide! Then
there will be no war and then war can't
birth it's evil doppelganger!"



“And what is war’s evil doppelganger?”

Alexei asked.

Rasputin tapped his nose with one finger.

“We are not allowed to say! But it rhymes with ‘evolution’!”







"You are mad!" Alexei replied and the mad monk waltzed off dancing a mad dance with no one.

"My life is nothing but random chance!" the mad hobgoblin sang. "Only my death impacts history! If a fellow peasant kills me then your world lasts another hundred years! If one of your own kill me then your world is shallowed up in snow and ice. And the ice will crack! The beautiful,

glittering, diamond-like ice will crack!

And the icy lake under the glittering ice

will swallow you whole! And the future

heirs and spares of the present heirs and

sparer will say the Mirror of Reason and

Common Sense of the Snow Queen

swallowed you up whole! And why not?

Isn't this an absurdly doomed world? No

wonder everyone invites me in? I am the

absurdist of the lot!"

"You are mad!" Alexei replied as the mad monk danced around him.





"I am dancing with the Snow Queen so
you won't dance with the Snow Queen!"
the mad monk shouted as he danced,
waiving his hands to and fro. Don't
dance with the Snow Queen Alexei!
Don't dance with the Show Queen on
the smoothly icy ballroom floor in her
magical Winter Palace!

Because that mirror-like floor is ice!
Fatally cracked ice and it will swallow you
whole!" the mad monk jumped down and
rapped the marble floor of the Winter
Palace with his knuckles as if rapping the
icy ballroom floor of the Winter Palace
of the Snow Queen. "You think it is
solid but it is nought but thin cracked ice
and beneath is not solid safety but a
churning maelstrom of chaos and anarchy!
Waiting like a great black mouth of a

great black wolf to swallow you up whole!
Then the Mad March Hare jumped up
and vanished.



Alexei looked around to see the Snow Queen of his childhood but the only mysterious woman that Alexei recognized was the mysterious woman from the inn. The Grand Duke said her name was Anna Arkadyevna Karenina. She was as beautiful as the Snow Queen of Alexei's dreams. She was cold, remote, and perfectly beautiful. She reminded Alexei of his mother who was also cold, remote, and perfectly beautiful. Alexei

wondered if he could — or should —
love her from afar.





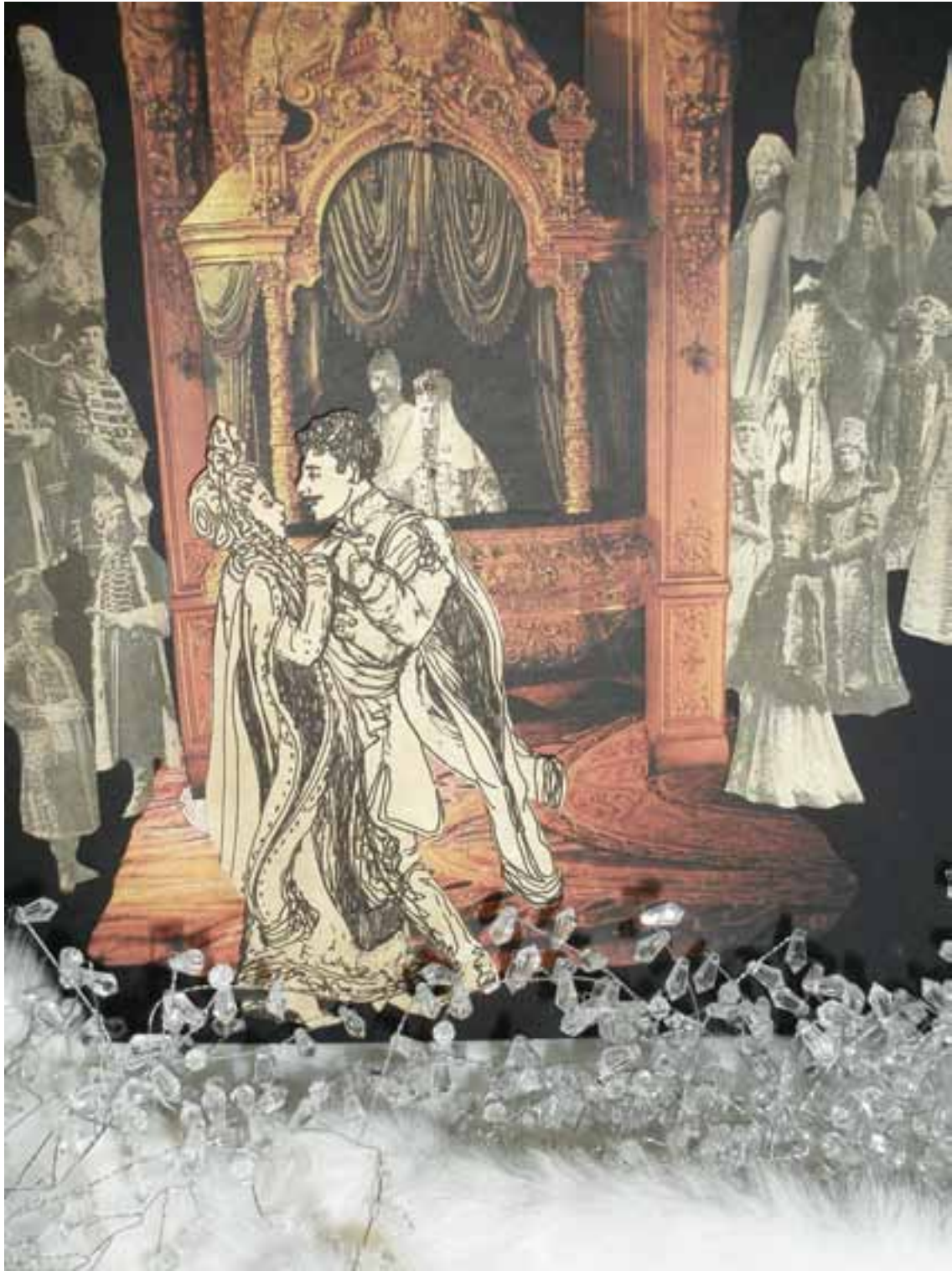
Anna was married to Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin who was negotiating between Germany and Great Britain to try to prevent war. But everyone was bored with humiliating peace bought by a humiliating peace treaty with Japan and wanted purifying, heroic, purging war so no one took Karenin's quixotic quest seriously.

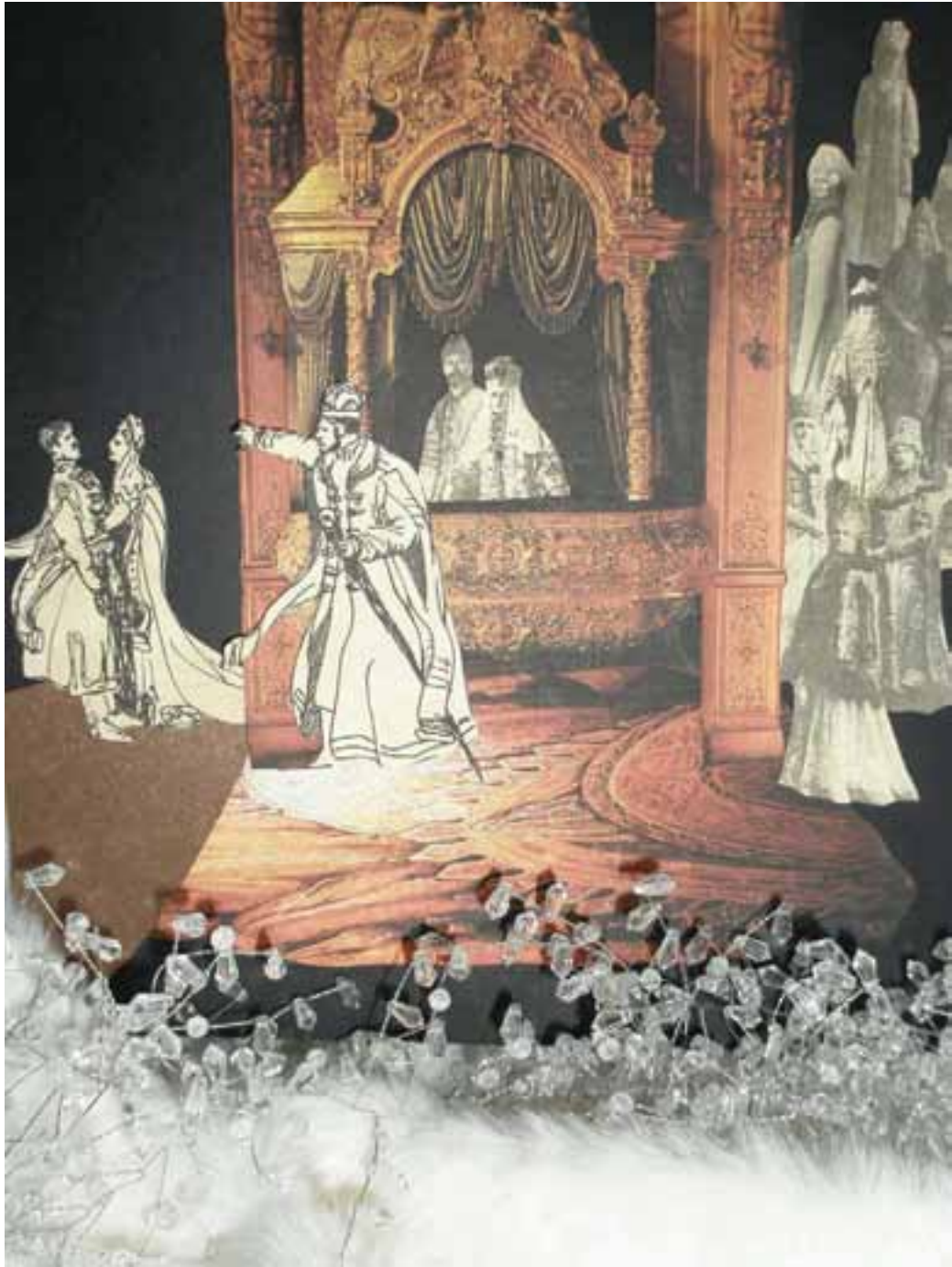


The Grand Duke introduced Alexei to Anna Karenina and they waltzed together on the brilliantly polished, smooth as ice ballroom floor of the Winter Palace under the brilliant glow of a thousand candles as if under a midnight sky of a thousand stars. Alexei fell madly in love with Anna. But Anna did not know if she could — or should — fall madly in love with Alexei.









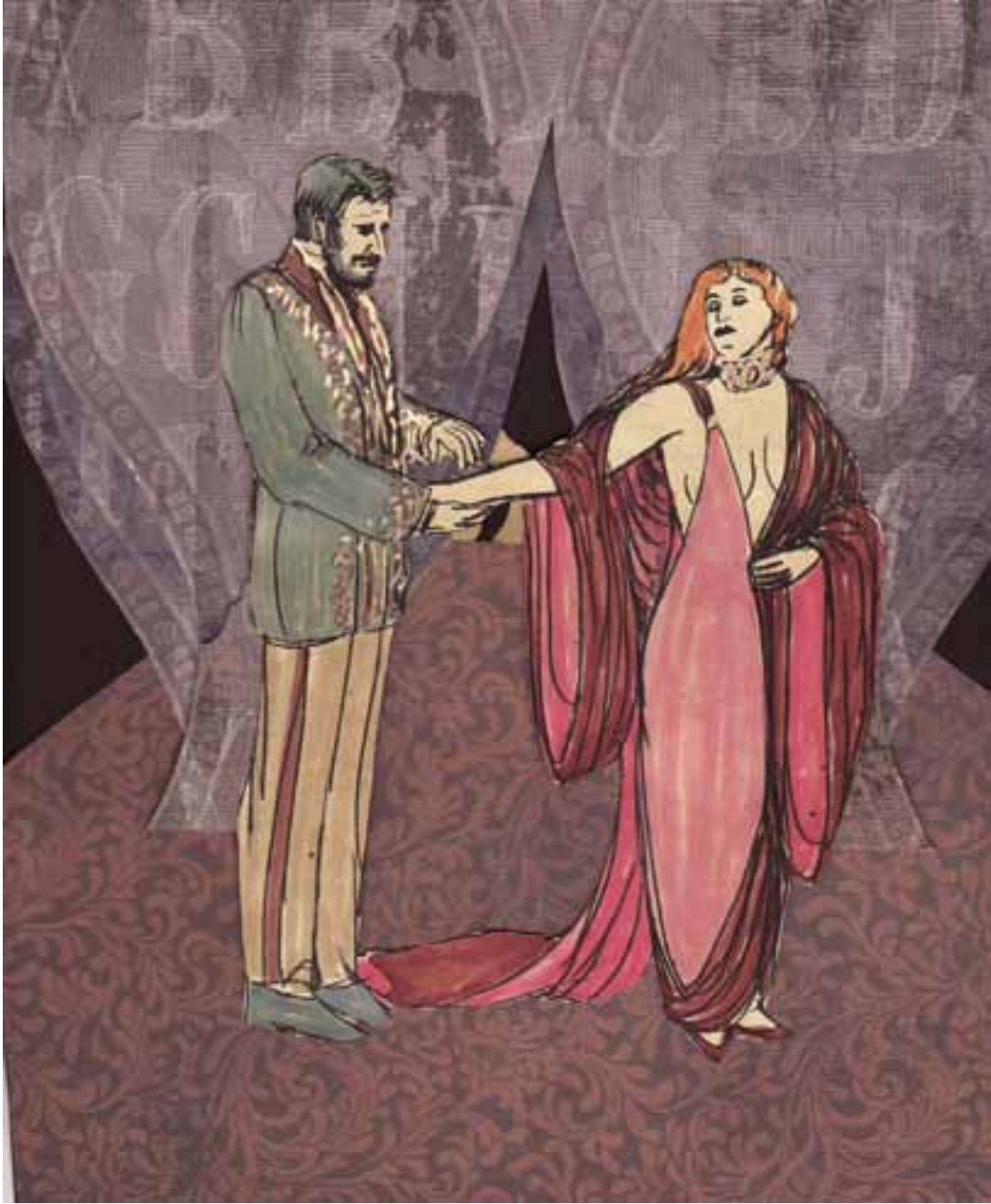
Karenin watched Alexei and Anna waltz on the dance floor with shame and pain because Anna never waltzed with him the way she was waltzing with the dashing Alexei. Was she falling out of love with him? Was she falling in love with another?

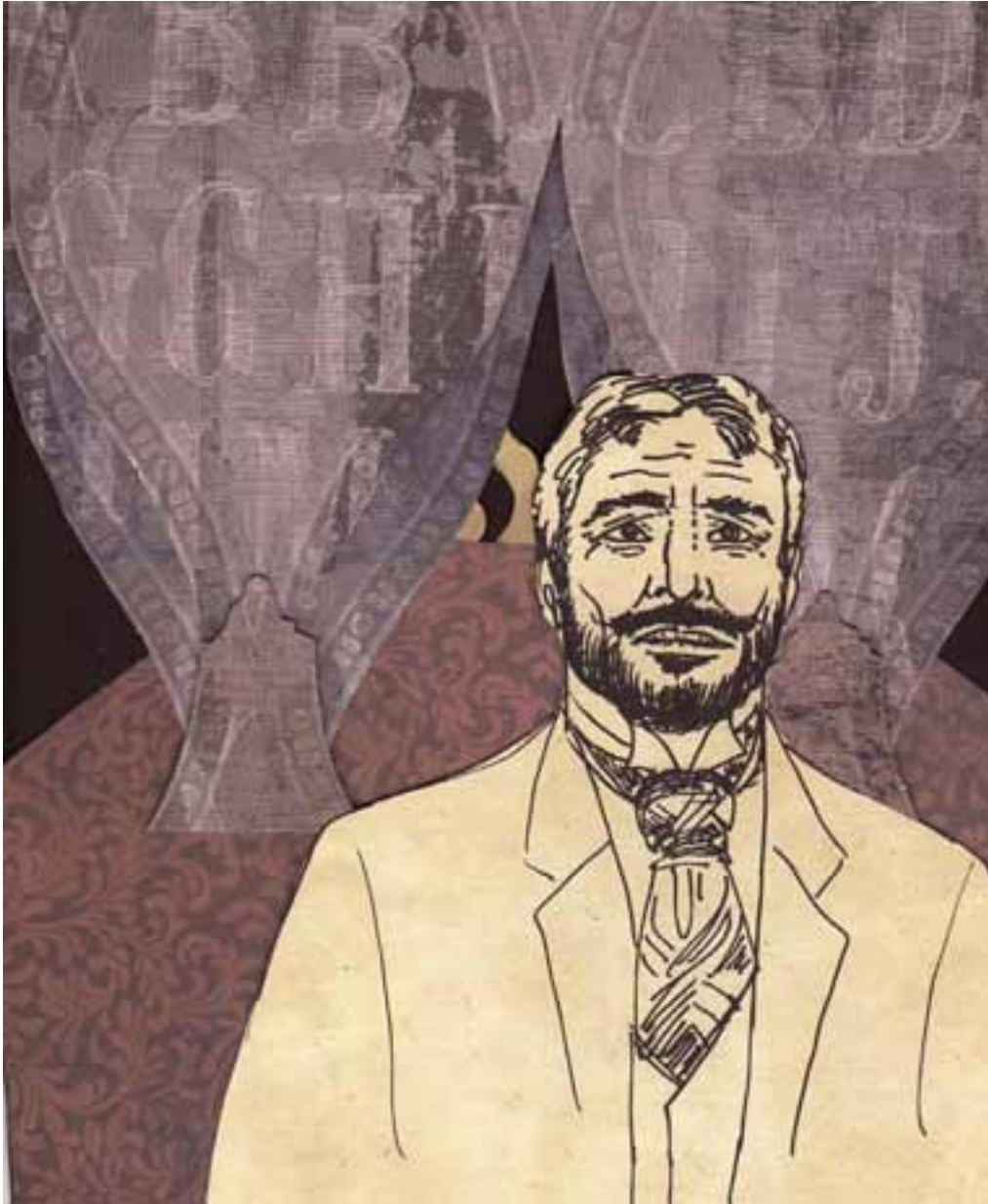


Karenin and Anna rode home in their carriage. In their rich palace on the frozen canal Karenin reached out to Anna with love but Anna cut off the warmth of marital love. "No" she said.

"Let it be so then!" Karenin replied.

"And it be on your head!" And their fate was sealed.





The next day Karenin regretted his words. He looked hard and long in the

mirror of reason and common sense and
said "Am I too old for my young wife?"

We married for different needs. I needed
a son and heir. She needed wealth and
security my title and position promised.

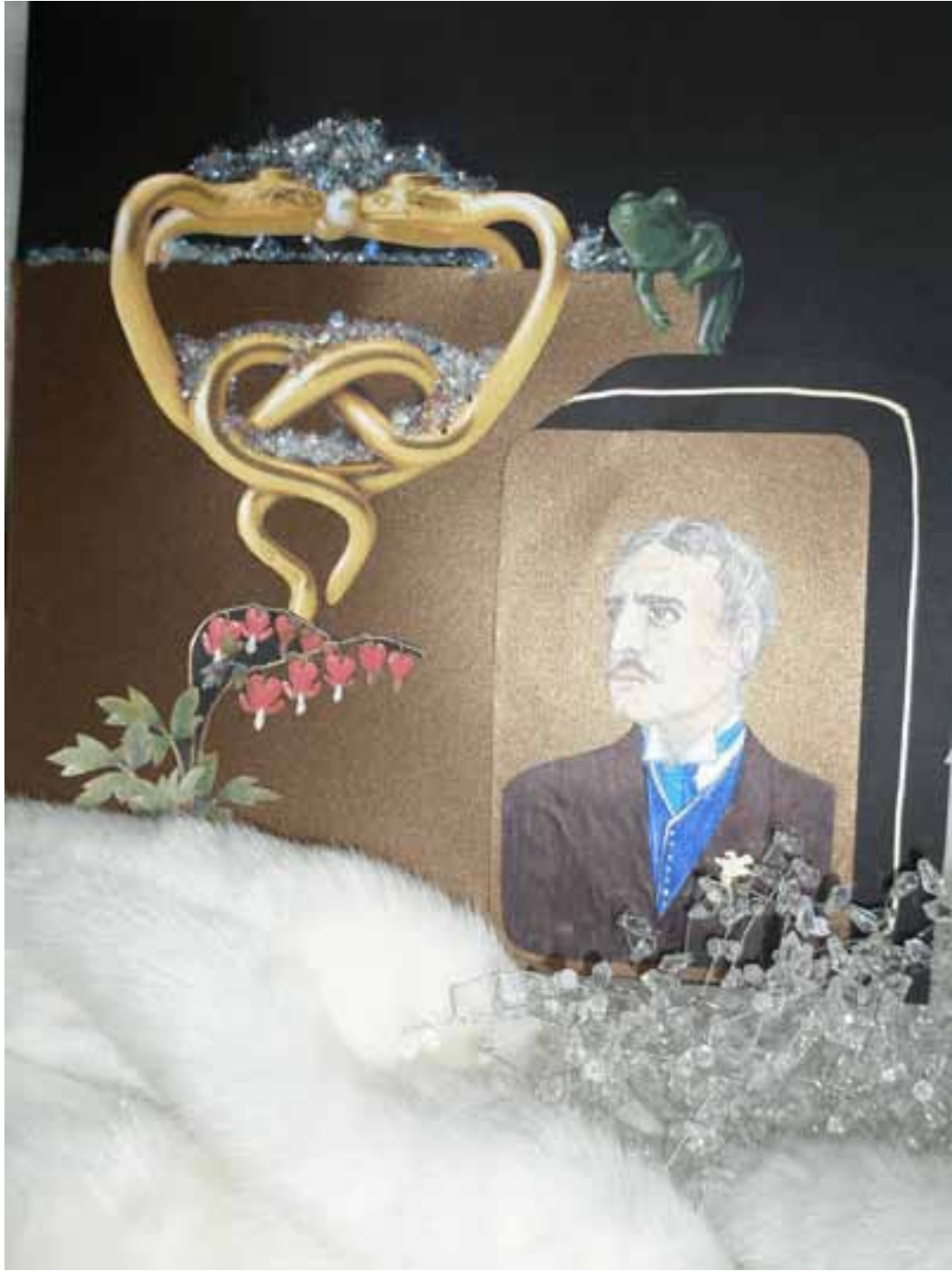
But I have fallen in love with my wife.

Can I woo her now? Perhaps if I shaved
off my beard I might look younger....



“What do you think Karenin?” he asked himself. “Do I still have a chance?”



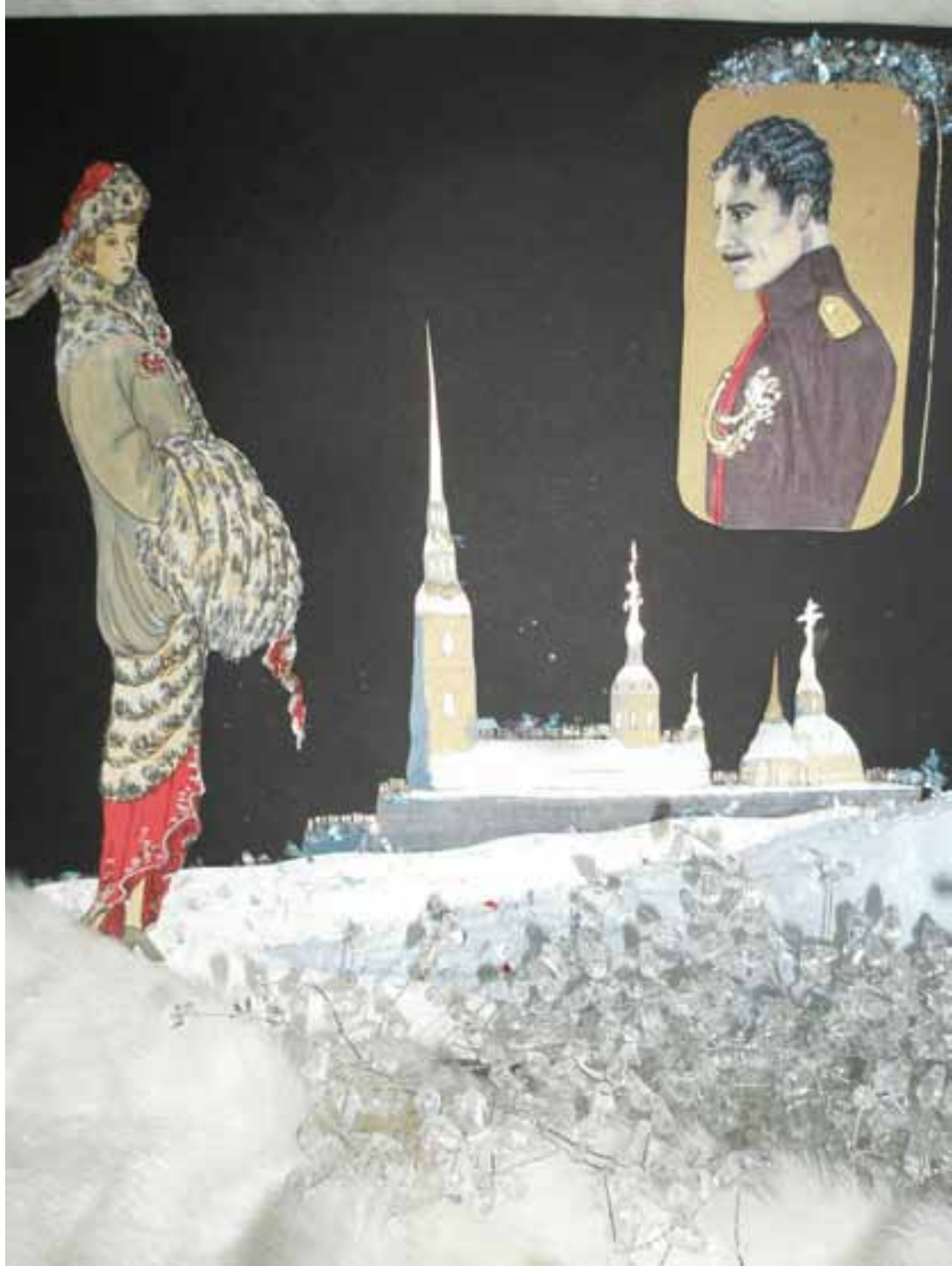




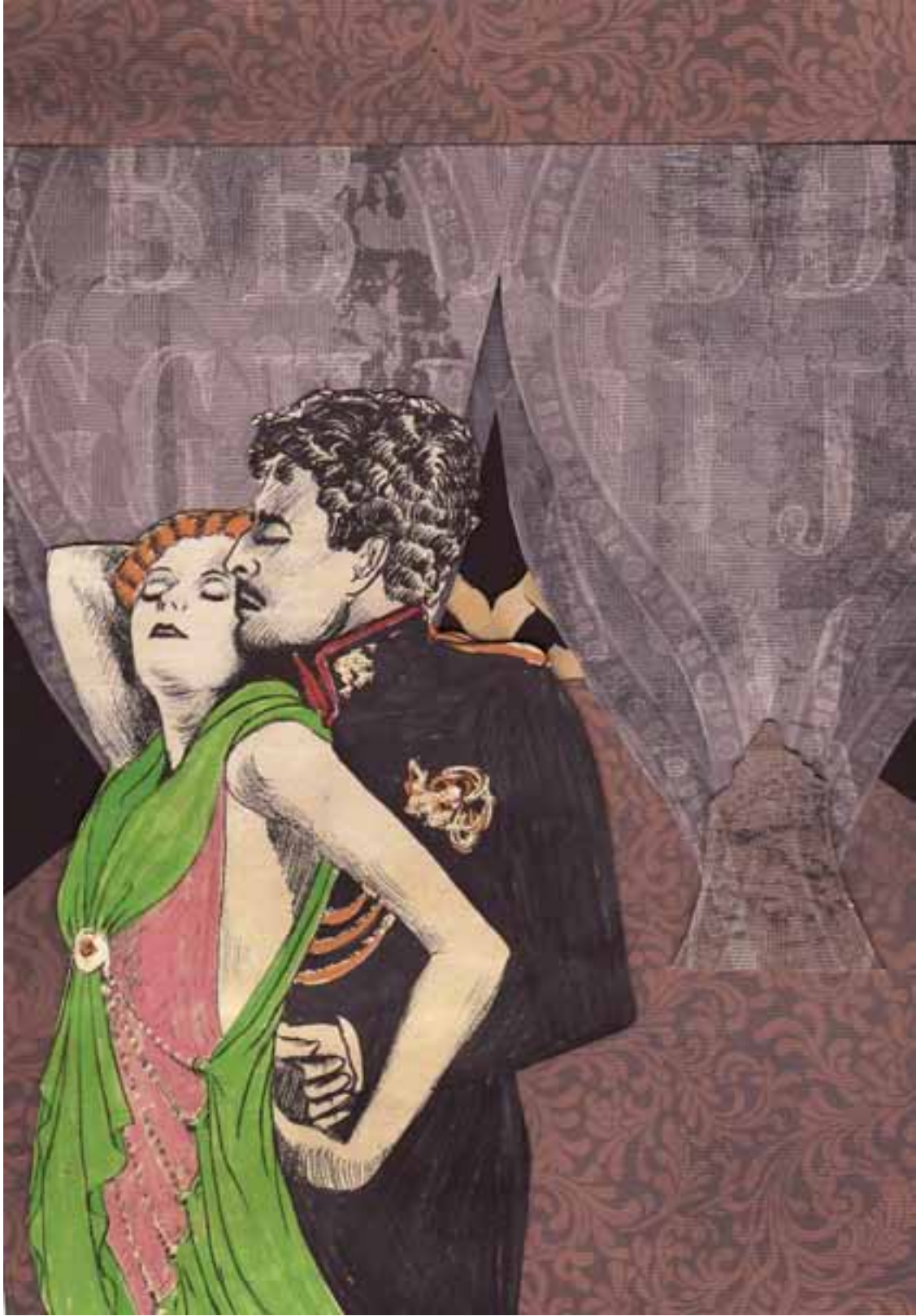


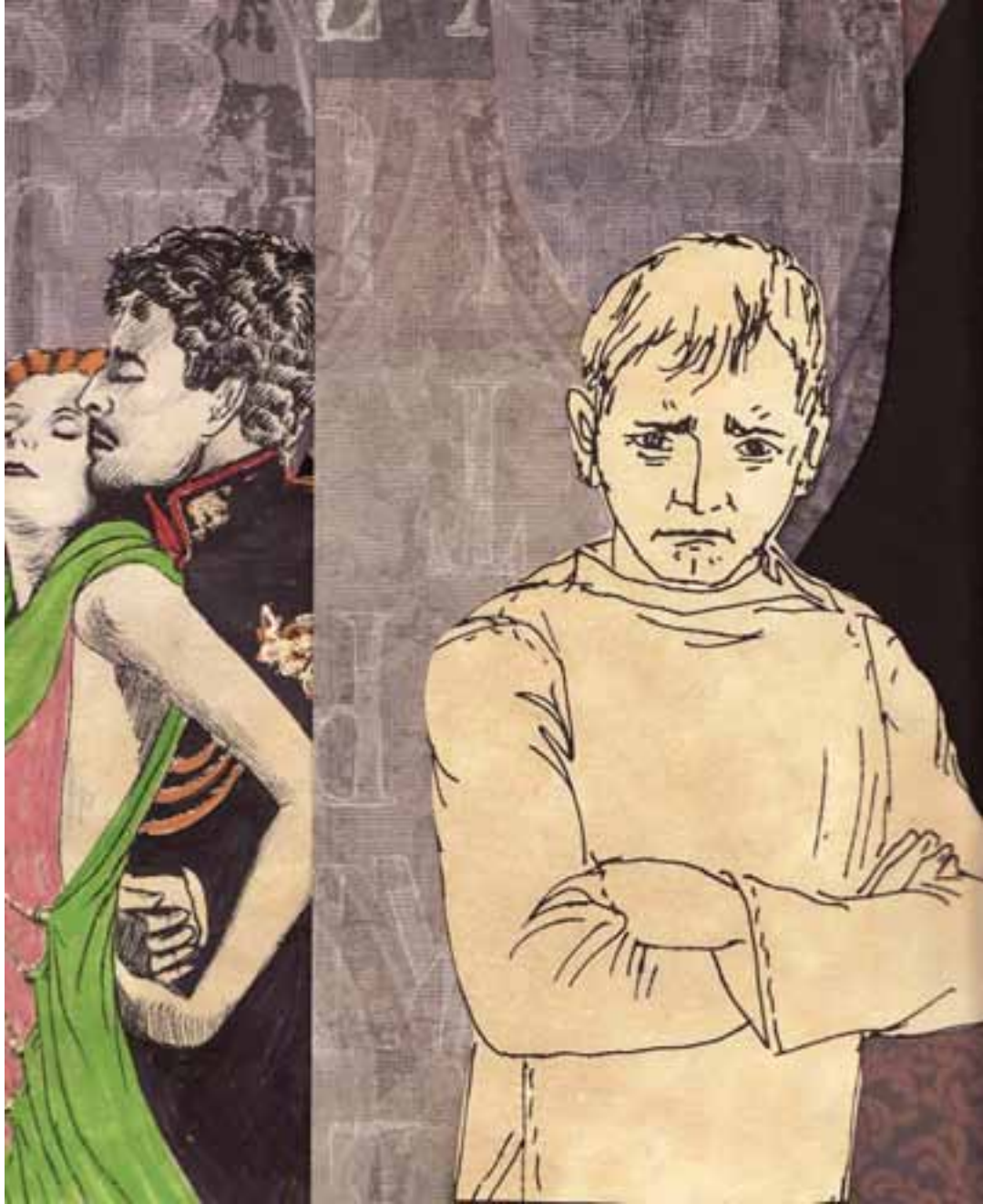
Anna found every reason to meet Alexei using her small son as a pretense. The small boy reminded Alexei of himself when he was a small, lonely little boy. Alexei tried to reach out to Sergei Alexeyitch Karenin, a lonely little boy between military schools. But the boy hated Alexei because he loved his mother from afar and Alexei came between the boy and his mother's love.



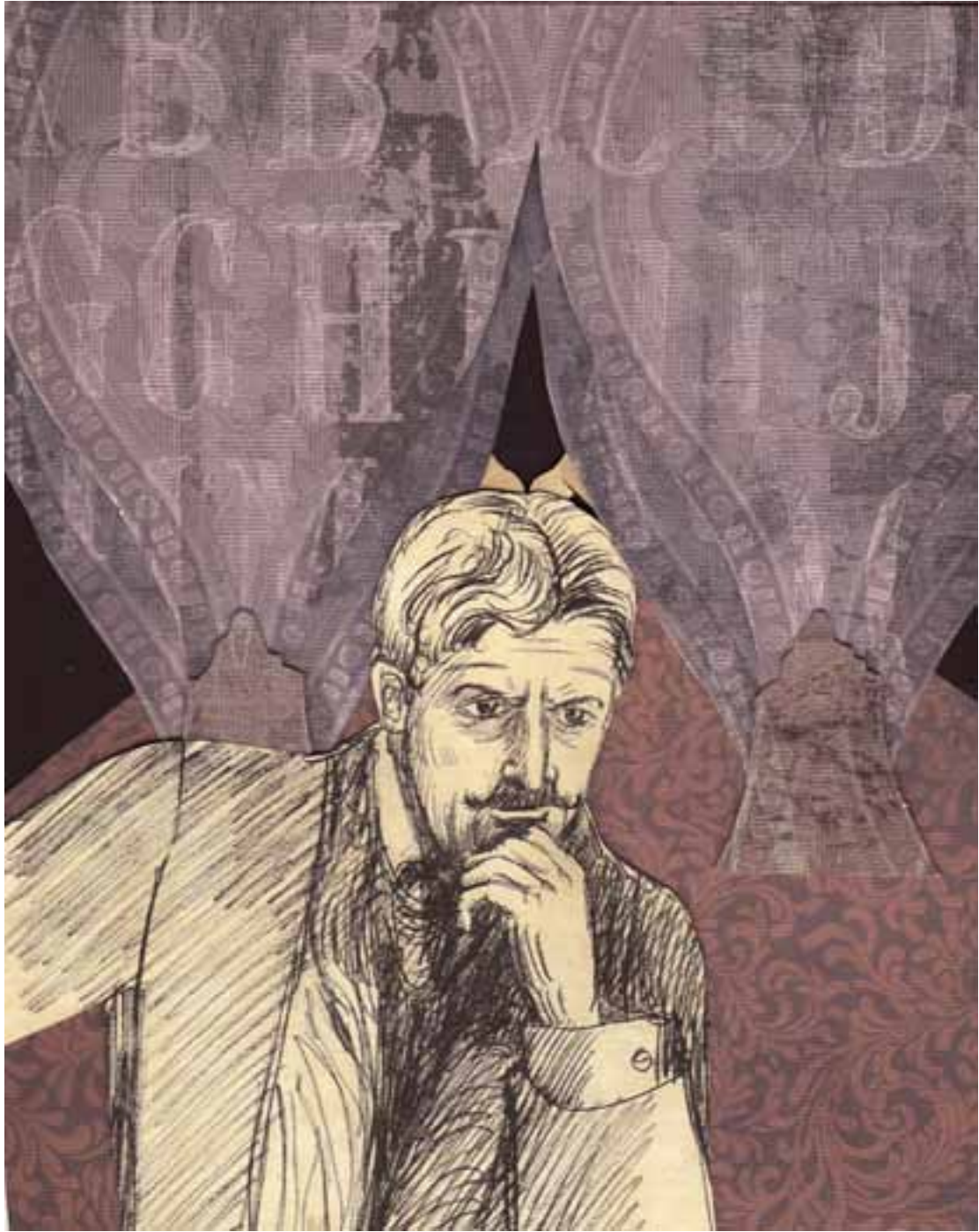






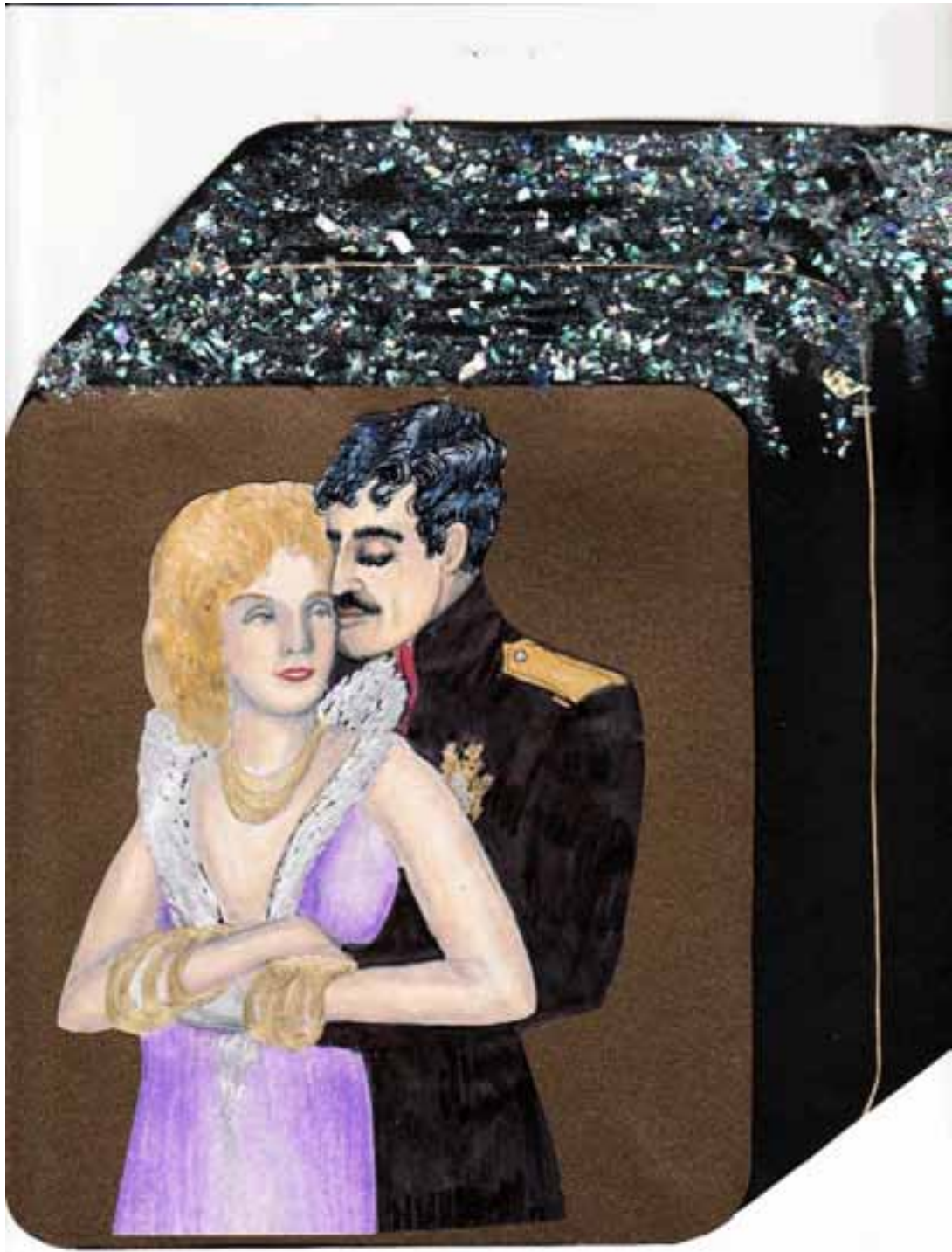






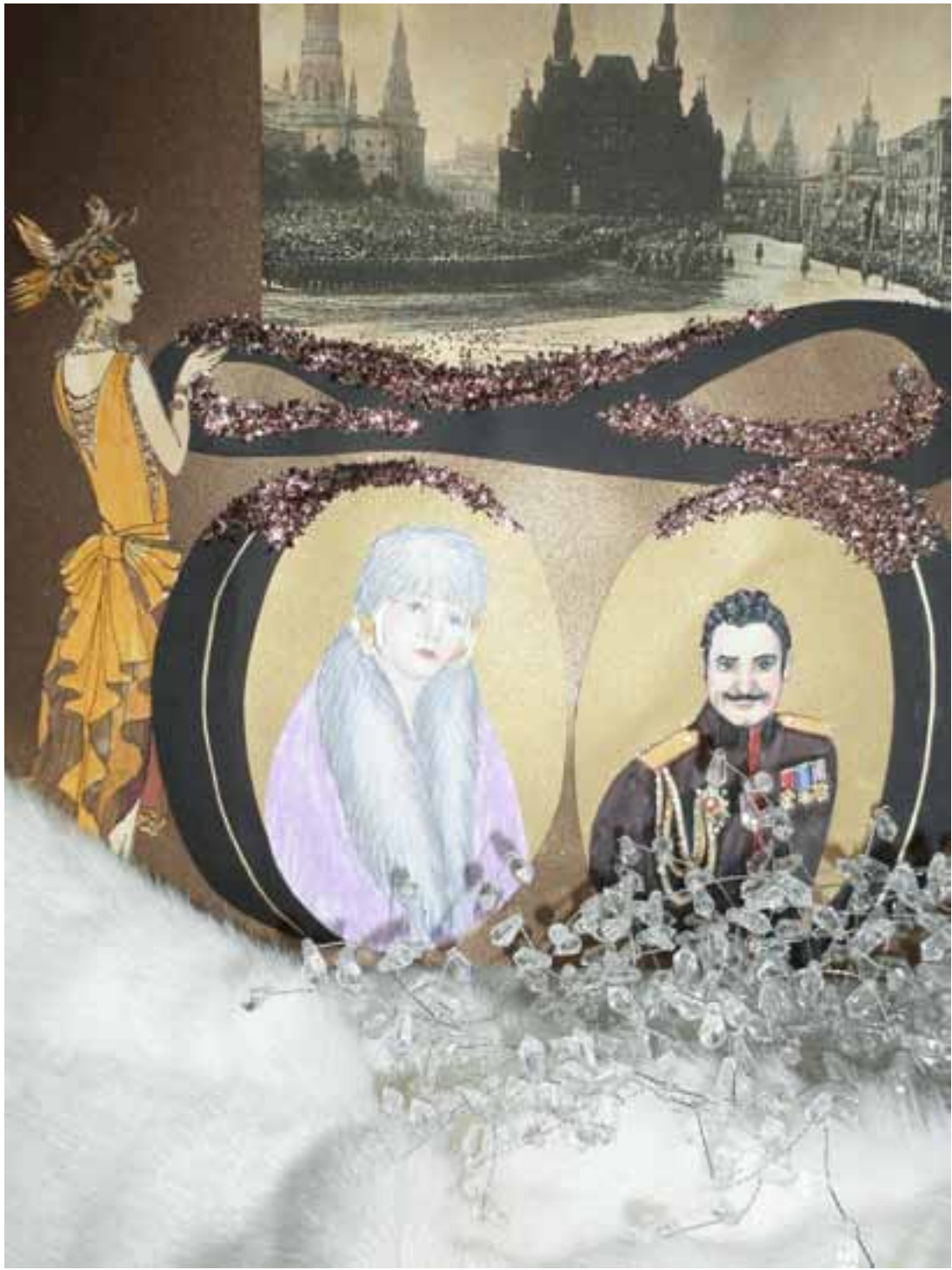


Alexei felt his
heart opening
at last! To
love!



Alexei and Anna met in gardens as the summer waxed warm and intoxicating. It was the last summer before the whole world stumbled into world war so it was especially warm and intoxicating precisely because it was the last year before the world of Alexei and Anna ---- died in maelstrom of ice and snow and blood and bullets. A convulsion that became a revolution that history rewrote as historic evolution.





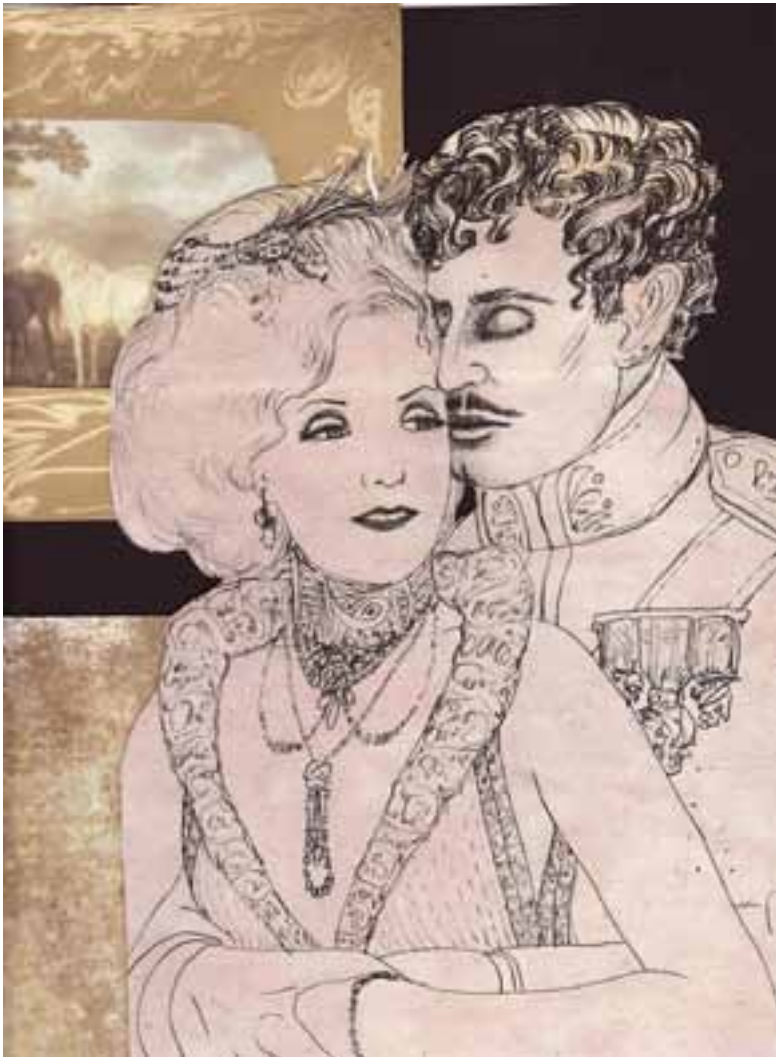


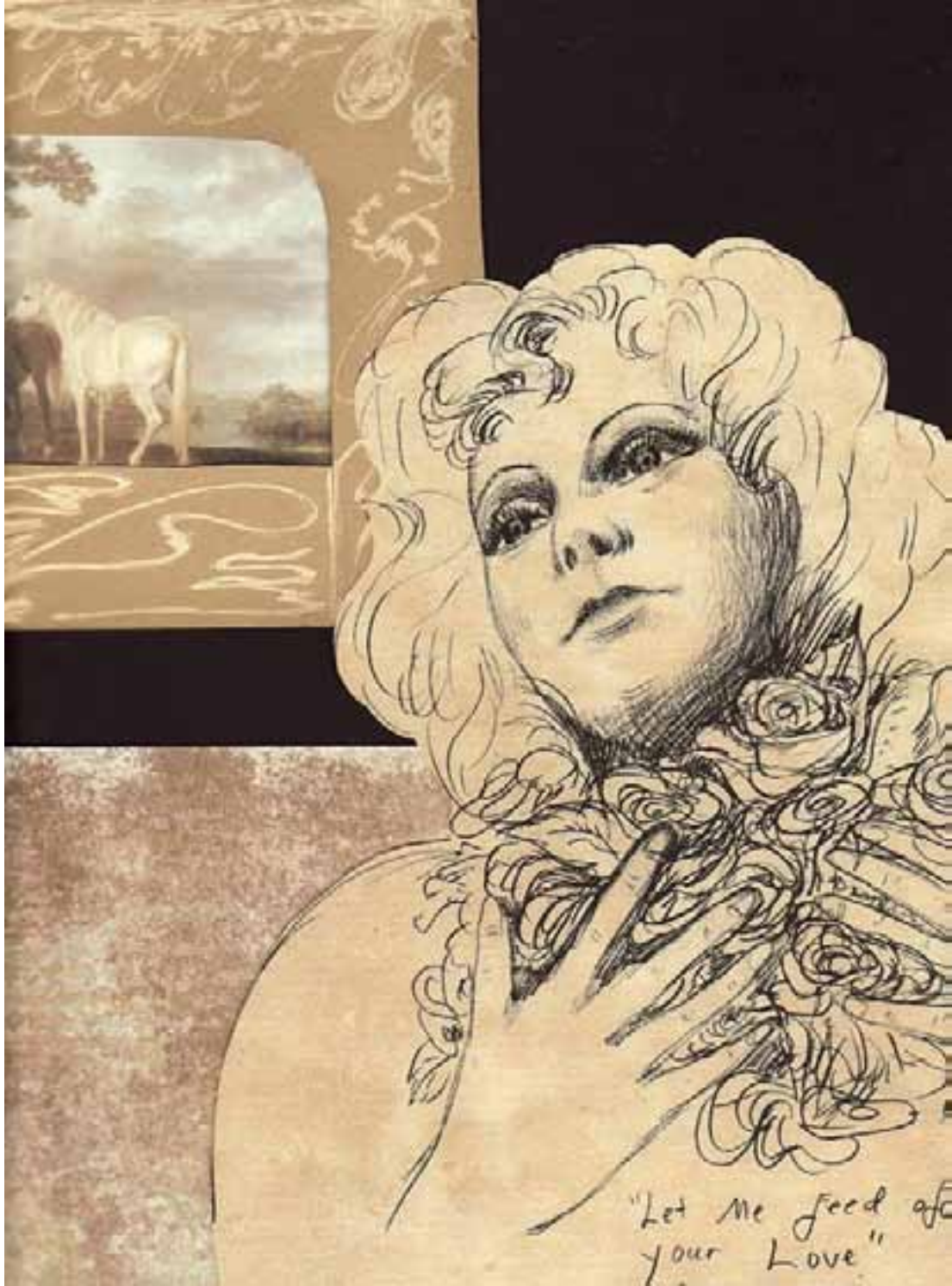
Alexei presented great masses of red roses to the object of his adoration and passion and Anna clutched the red roses in her arms as if embracing their warmth of ruddy fire. "Before your love I felt as if I was freezing to death in the icy embrace of perpetual winter!" Anna told Alexei. And Anna held the red roses tight even as the thorns pricked her arms drawing blood. And she held the bleeding roses in her arms as if embracing a child,

as if embracing their love like a child.

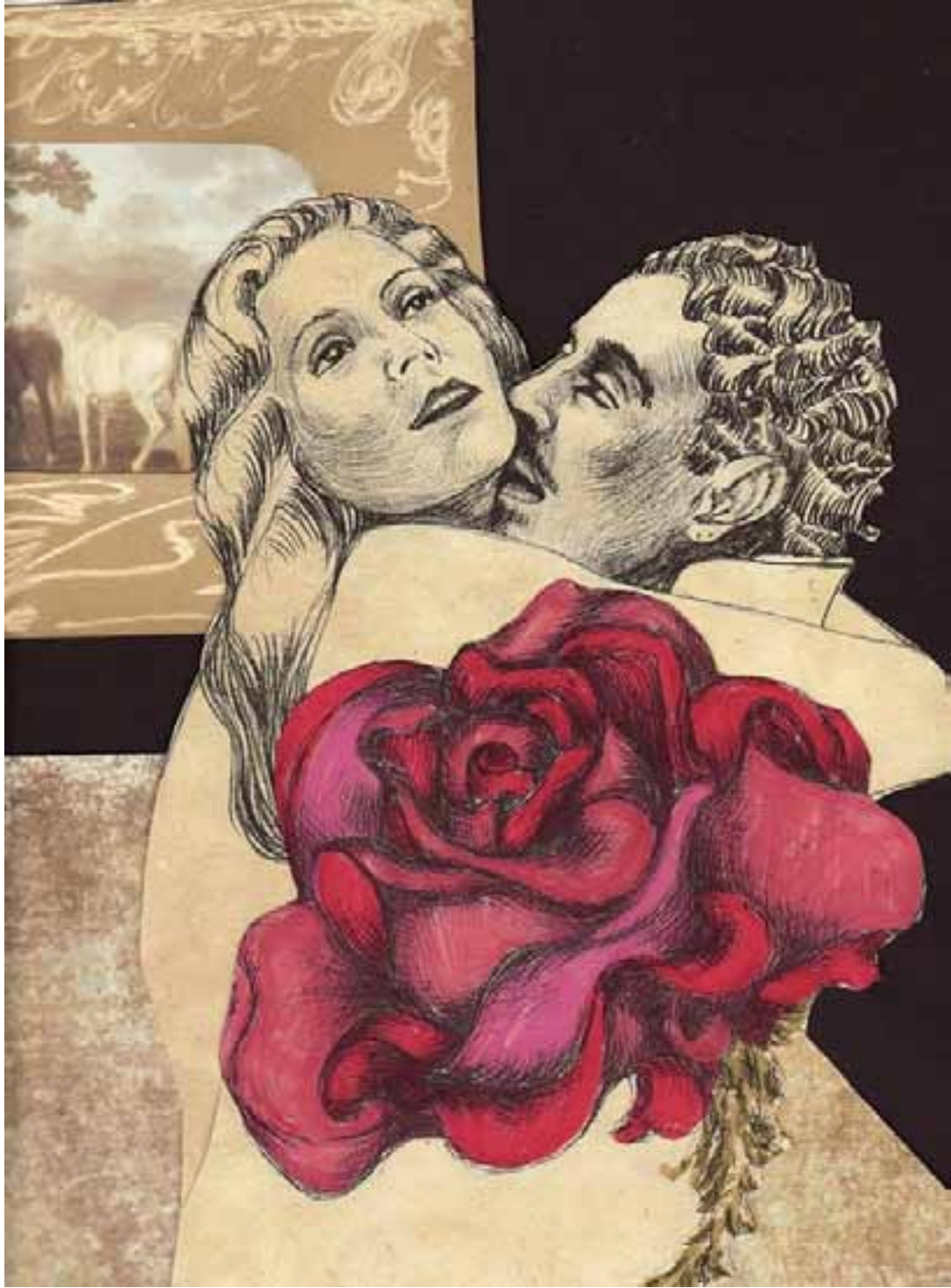
“My life is barren as my womb and only
love reminds me | am still alive! Let me

feed off your
love er | die!”





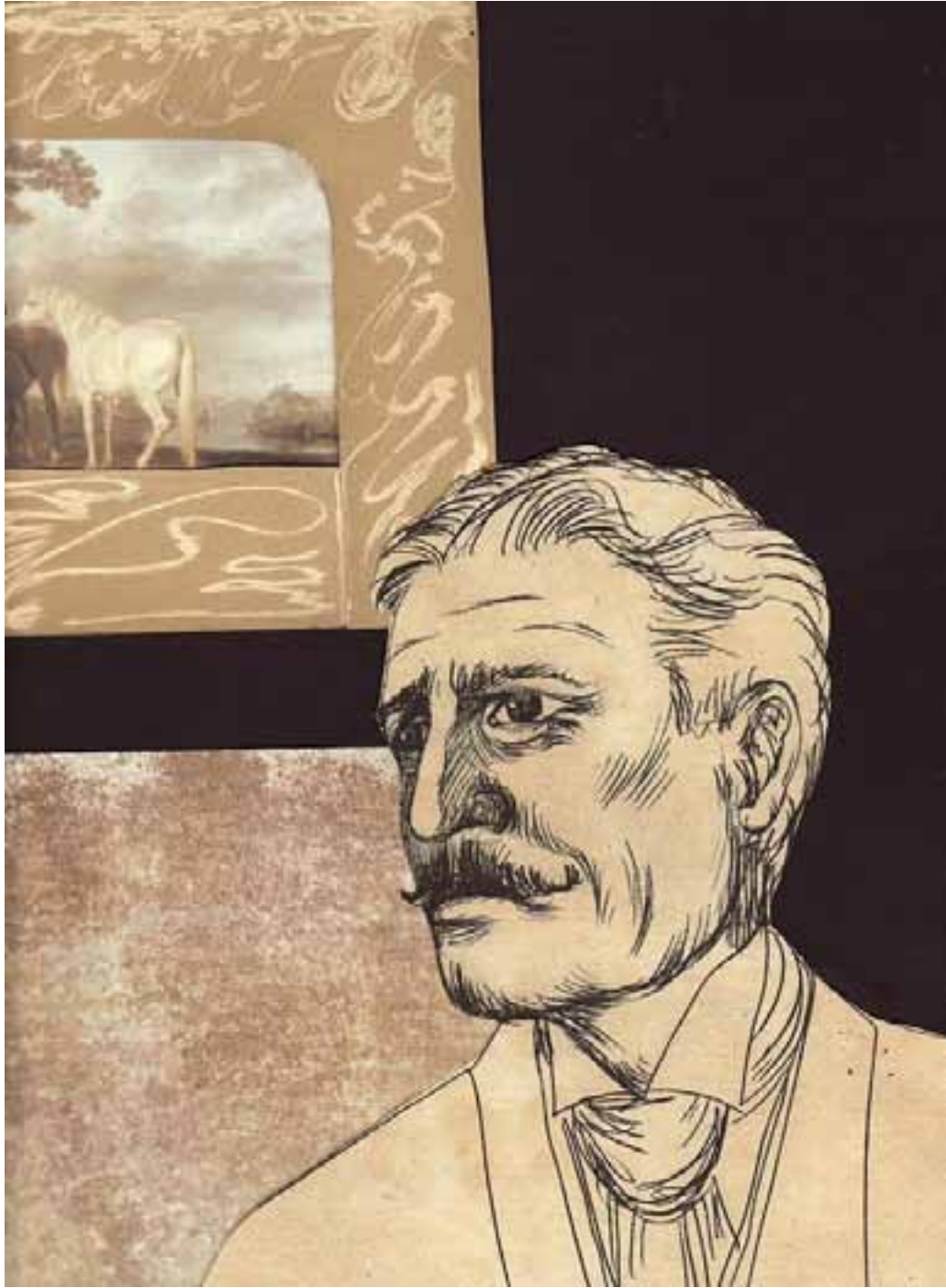
"Let Me feed of
your Love"



Alexei told Anna he was racing his horse in the steeplechase and asked her for a token of love as a knight might ask his courtly love just like in the fairy stories.

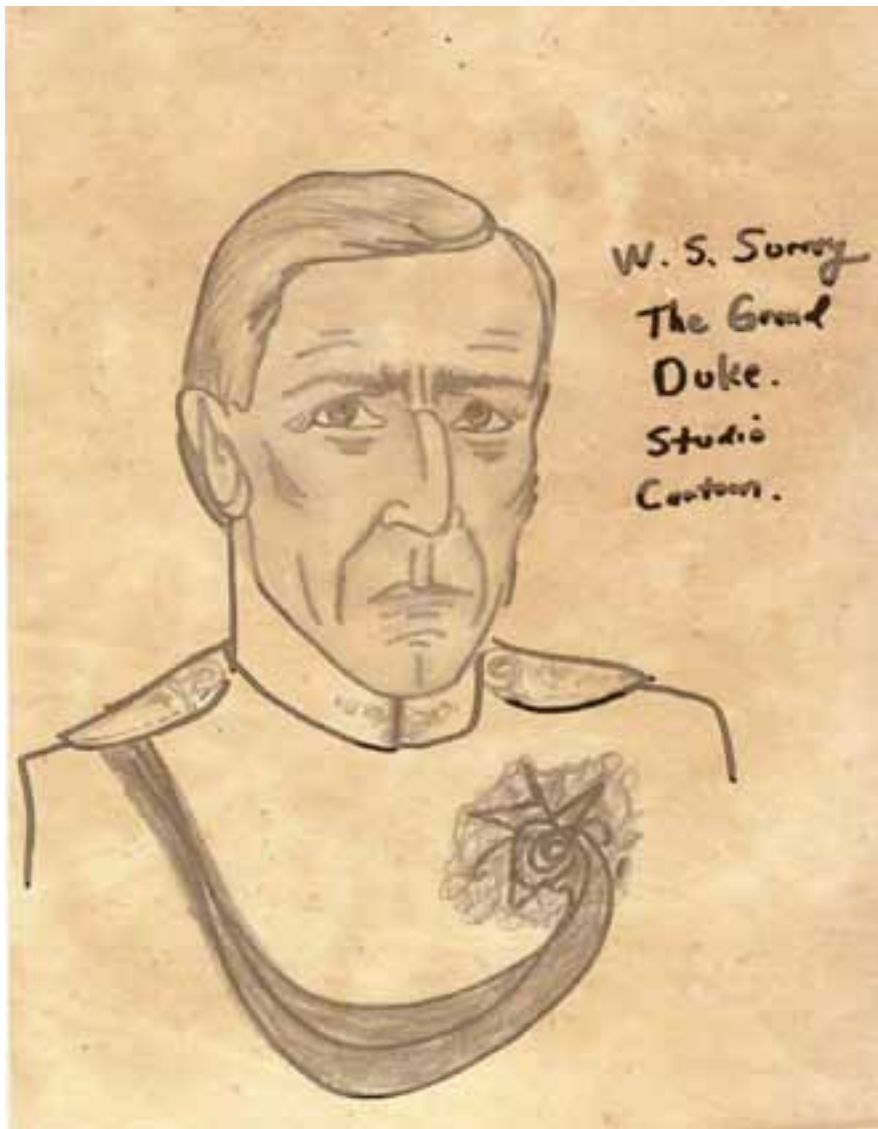
Anna gave him a billowing handkerchief for good luck. But during the race his horse fell and broke it's back. Alexei nearly died and had to shoot his beloved horse. He used the handkerchief to bind the eyes of his horse to kill it.

Anna exposed their love to all of Petersburg proving they no longer loved from afar. Anna came to Alexei's rooms to deliver an ultimatum and all of Petersburg knew. Karenin came to Alexei's rooms to deliver an ultimatum and all of Petersburg knew. The Grand Duke did not come to Alexei's rooms but he ordered Alexei to transfer to a regiment far away to love from afar but never again to love Anna.



“This love has become a farce!”

The Grand Duke's ultimatum was a direct order Alexei could not disobey!



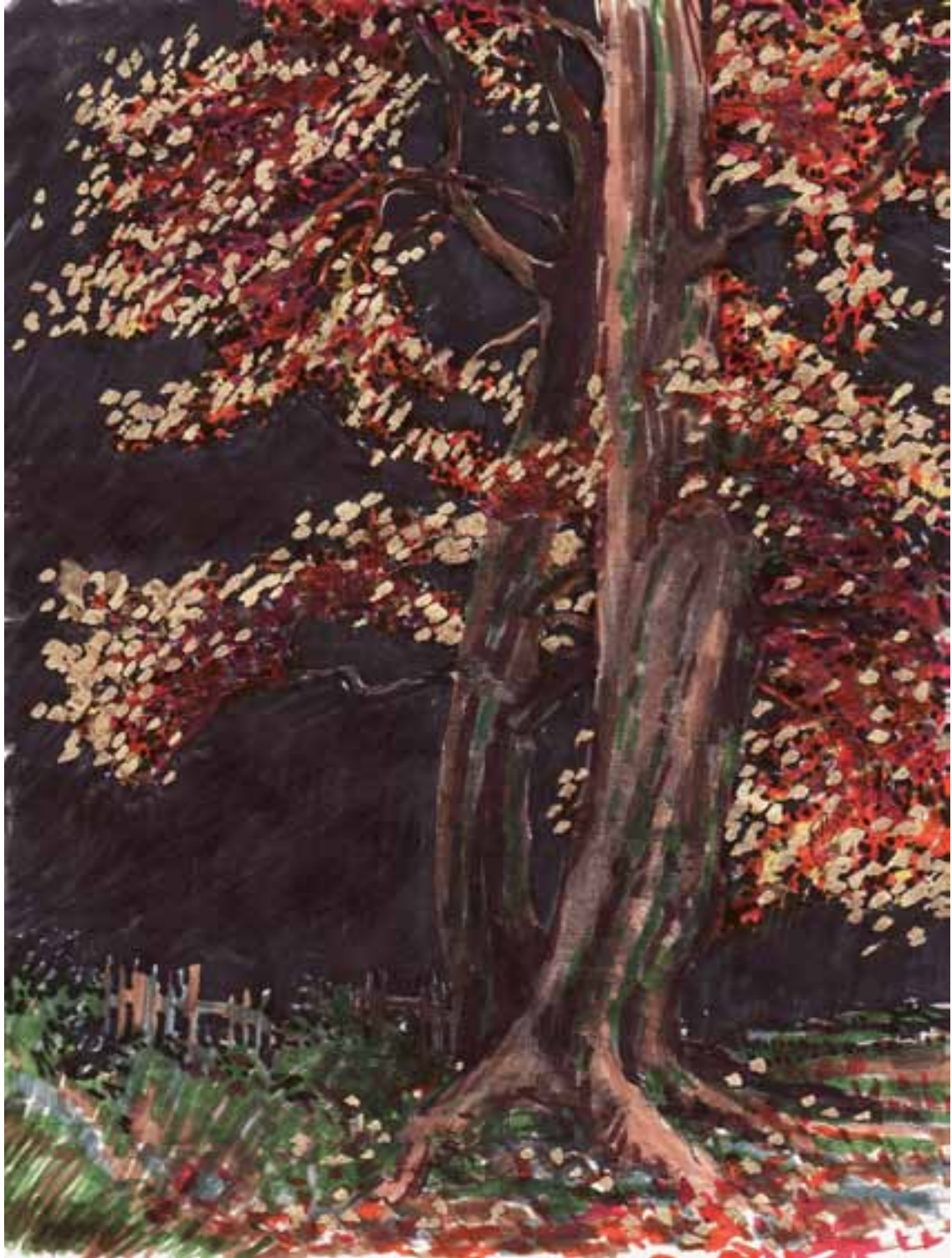
Anna's ultimatum was also a direct order
Alexei could not refuse!. Did Alexei love
her? Or did he love his career and
regiment and duty more? Alexei could be
the perfect soldier and everyone would love
him — from afar. Or Alexei could love
Anna near and dear and oh so close but
be banished from Fairwayland.

Karenin's ultimatum was also a direct order Alexei could not refuse! "I was perfectly willing to endure this liaison for the sake of the child but really! This has become a farce! The only bitter consolation will be seeing you two destroy each other! But I won't let you drag the boy down with you!"



Alexei raced his troika through the autumn countryside and the whole world appeared ruddy red and gold like fool's gold. Alexei walked in the red and gold forest wonderland as if a fairy tale forest and the world never felt so hot but Alexei knew over the horizon was dire winter.







Alexei found a wild red rose. He plucked the wild red rose and held it up to drink in it's intoxicating scent declaring he would cut his own flesh on it's cruel thorns to give a bleeding rose to Anna. The Red Rose of His Passionate, Bleeding Heart!



At that moment Alexei saw the Snow Queen walking in the red and gold countryside of ruddy autumn and as she walked her billowing veil cast an ice storm across the face of the world, transforming the real world into a fairyland of ice as she waved her handkerchief edged with lacy ice. And in the distance black clouds of a deadly snow blizzard billowed to roar across the fairytale world of ice to bury life under a shroud of snow.



The Snow Queen cast her lacy ice
handkerchief over the wild red rose and
Alexei's red rose froze into a perfect
token of icy perfection. Now it would not
decay but stay



pristine and
perfect unless
melted by the
cruel breath of
hot passion.

Alexei carried the icy rose in his troika to give to Anna. But two microscopic splinters of ice from that frozen rose pierced the eye and heart of Alexei as he admired and adored

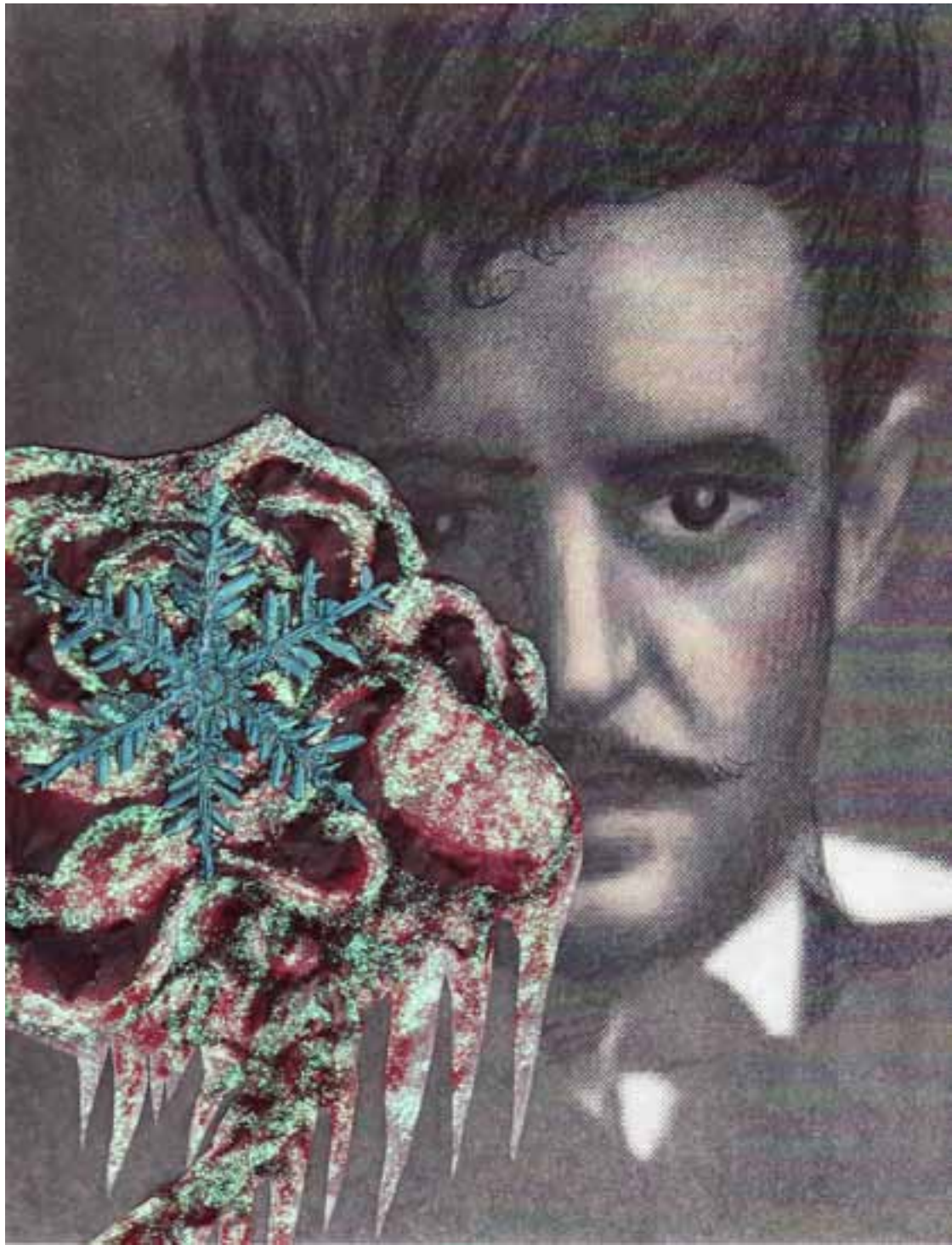


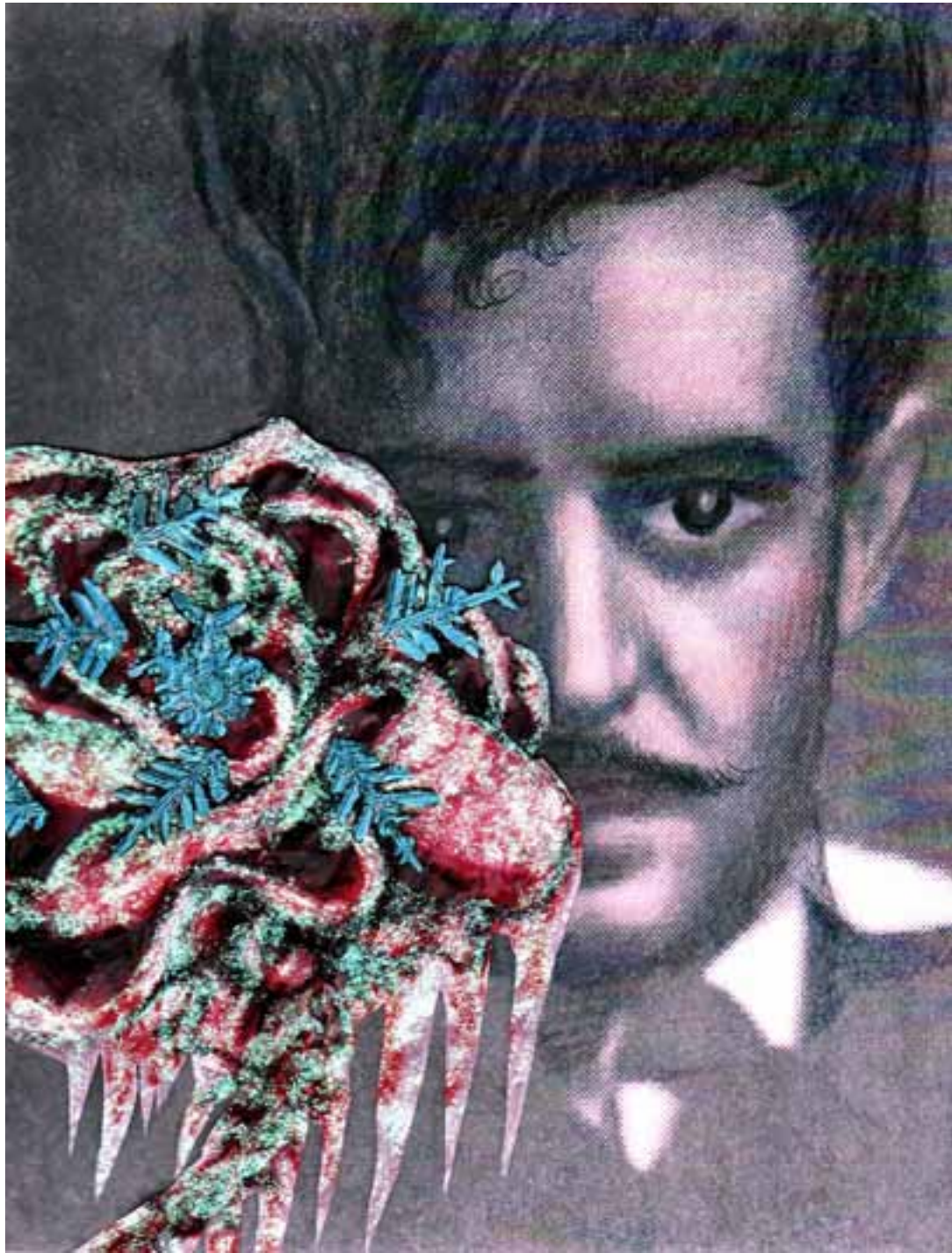
the magical fairytale token of eternal love the Snow Queen had given him.

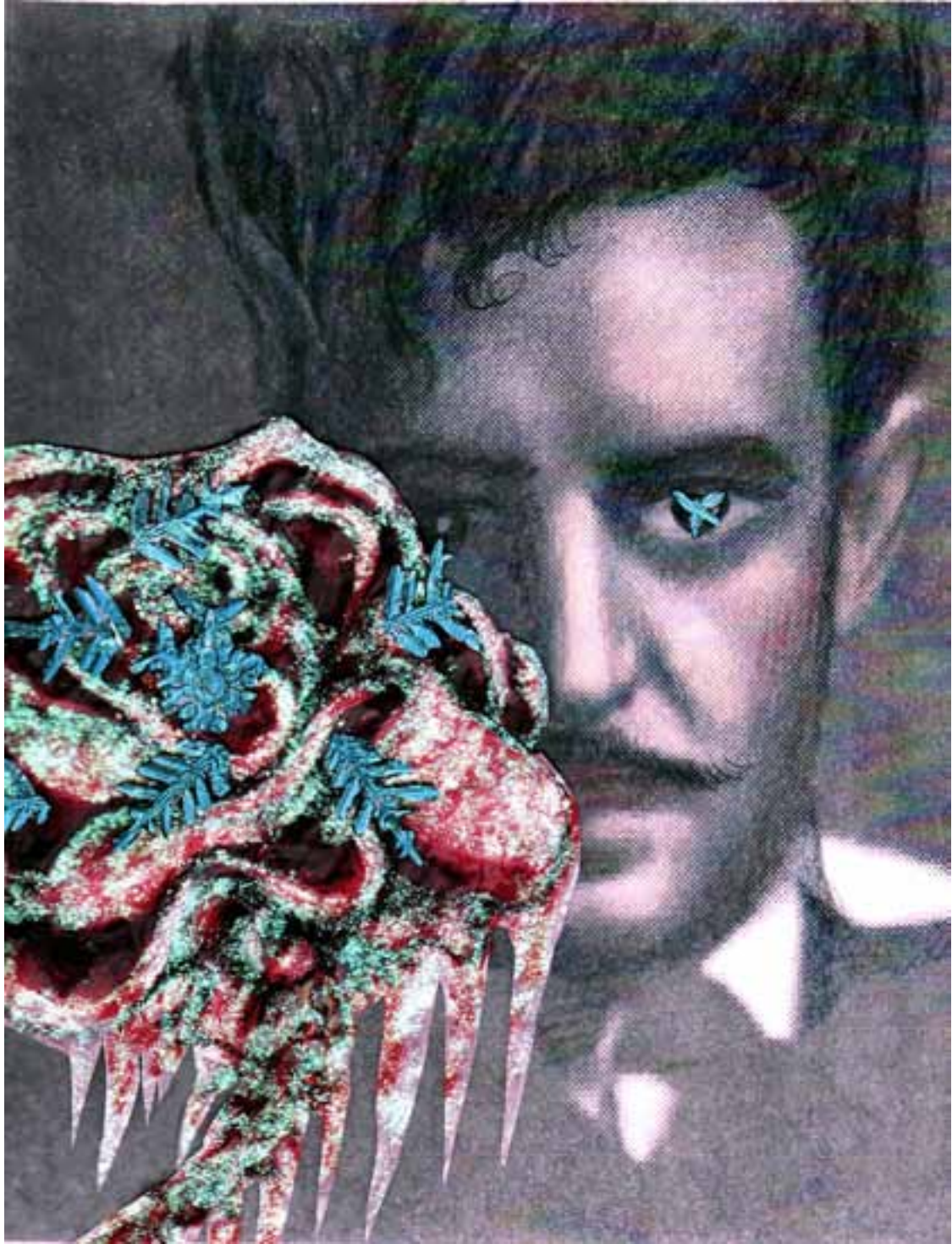












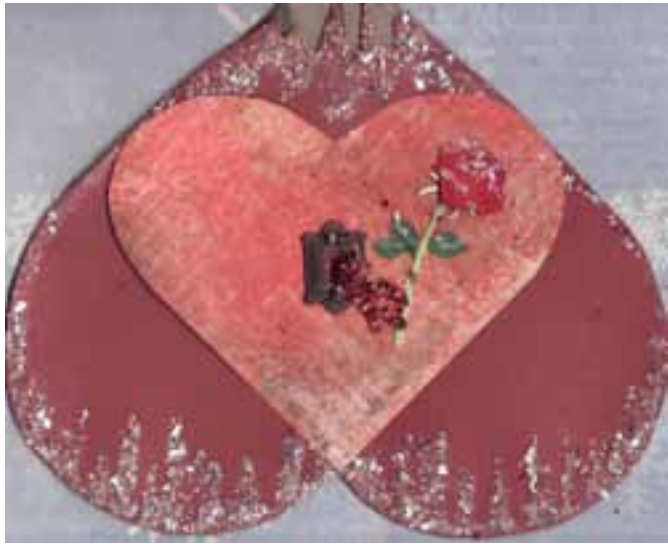
"I have always loved the Winter best" he said to his soul. "For then the world is truly Fairawayland: pristine and remote and distant and perfect the way only ice can be! Ice and snow flakes! And there are no flaws and no decay and nothing disappoints. The lacy ice is pristine and pure and every snow flake is unique and perfect. The crisp white snow is a unsullied mantle hiding the decay of the world.



You can only love from afar. The hot breath of passion melts it and the suffocating closeness of mundane living ruins it. Love from afar is perfect as ice

and snowflakes. But love too close in all
it's torrent strife befouls it! Up close you
see the flaws and foibles, the absurdity,
the compulsion, and the futility of life.
The futility and absurdity of passion.







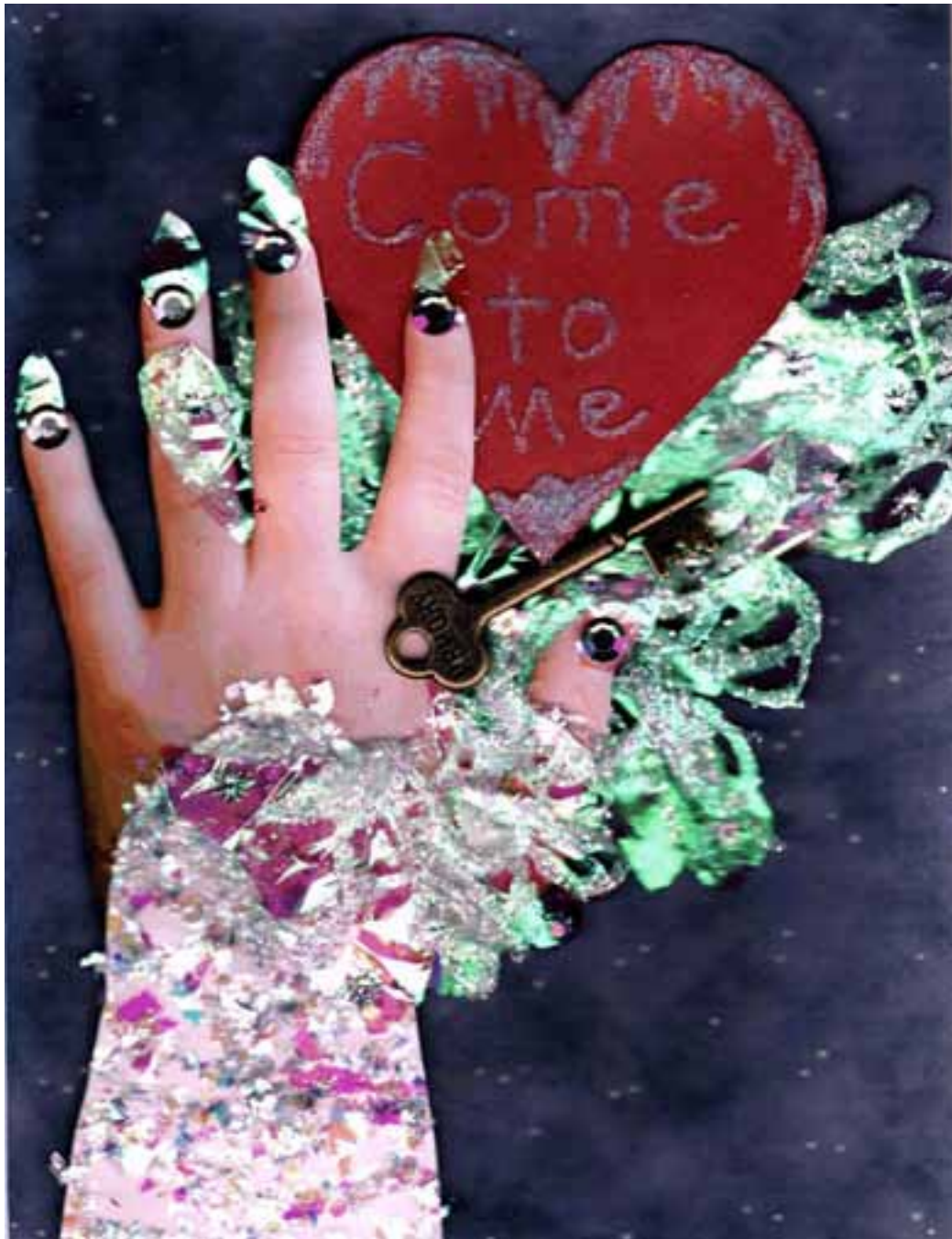
My infatuation for Anna is destroying my career and Karenin's career both.

He is trying to negotiate peace to prevent war and I am training peasants to be cannon fodder if Karenin fails —which he will because my love for Anna is destroying him as much as it is destroying Anna and myself. This love affair has to stop before it destroys all three of us!

No! Make it four! For the child is being consumed too! And I cannot take Anna

away from her son! And Karenin cannot
surrender his only child and heir!”



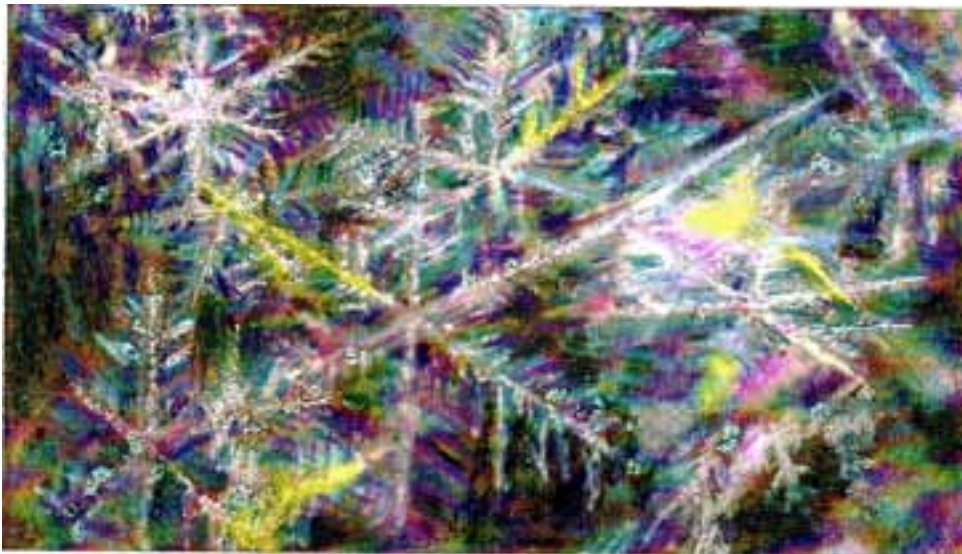






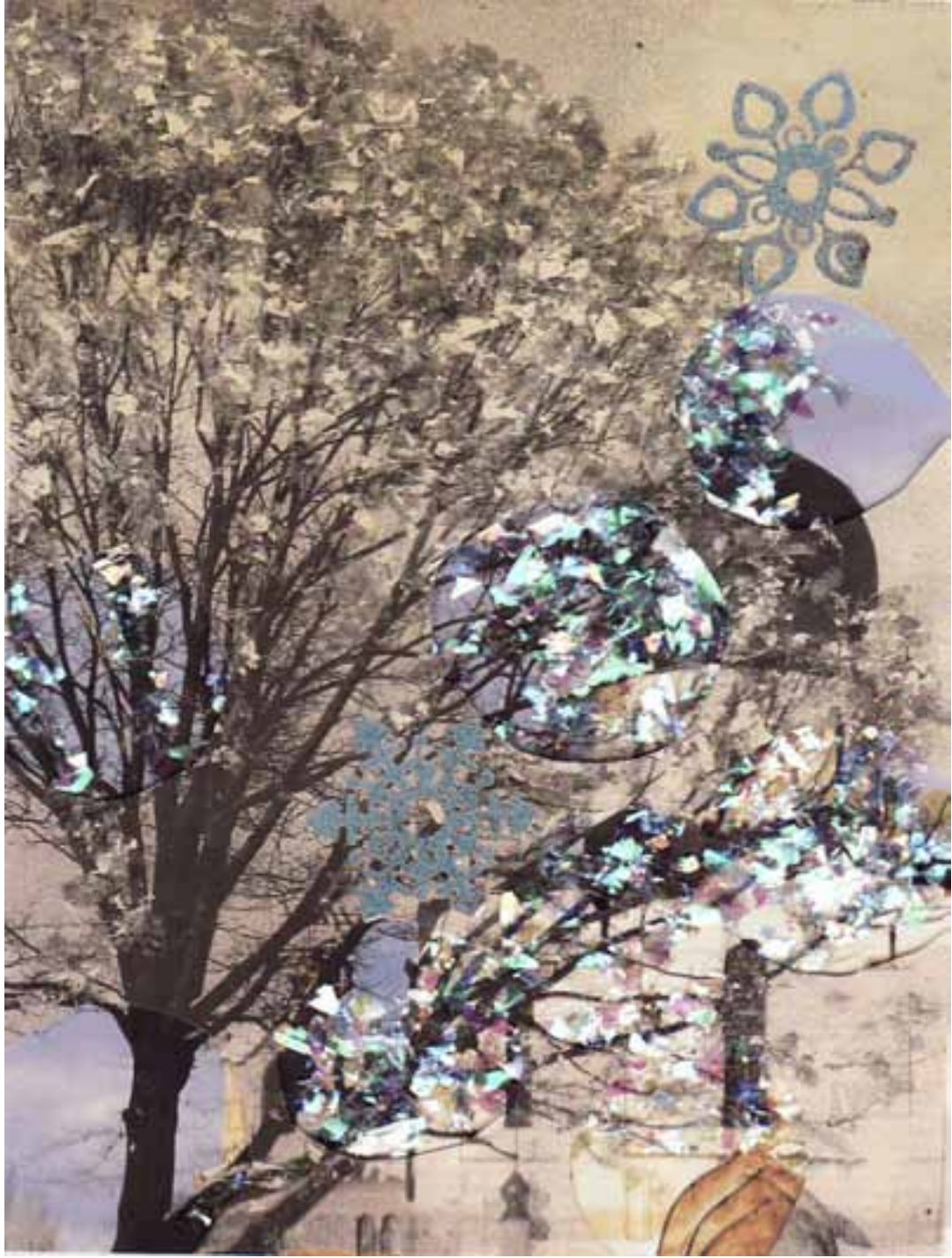
Alexei raced back to Petersburg on the cusp of an icy storm that transformed the world from ruddy red to pristine white. "I am not being a cad or coward for putting an end to this affair!" Alexei told his soul. "But rather I am being rational and logical! It is not too late to use common sense to salvage this fiasco! I am after all thinking of Anna too! She is too frail and self destructive to cope alone without friends or allies the way I can. And when

a wife abandon's her husband and child for passion in the arms of a lover then all of Society abhors her and Fairawayland closes it's gilded gates to her for ever. Eloping with me would be exile from Eden and closure from the Court forever."

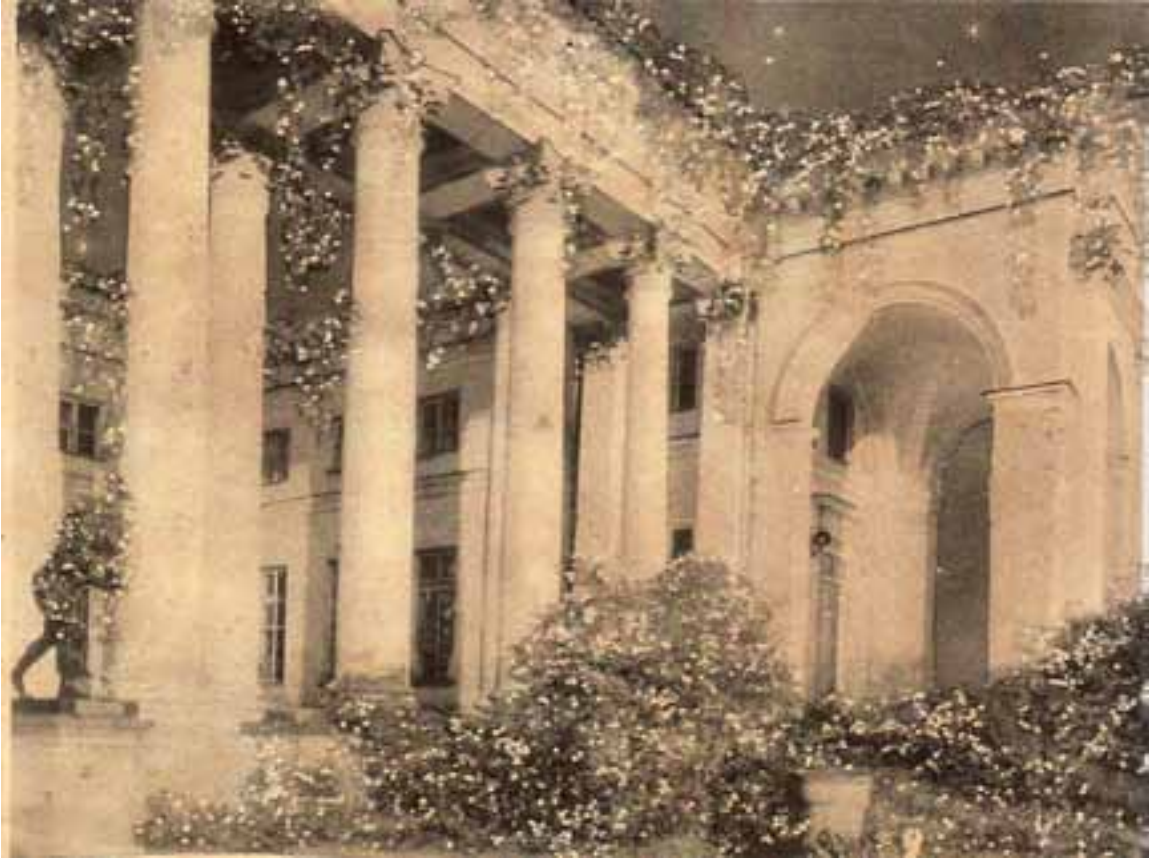














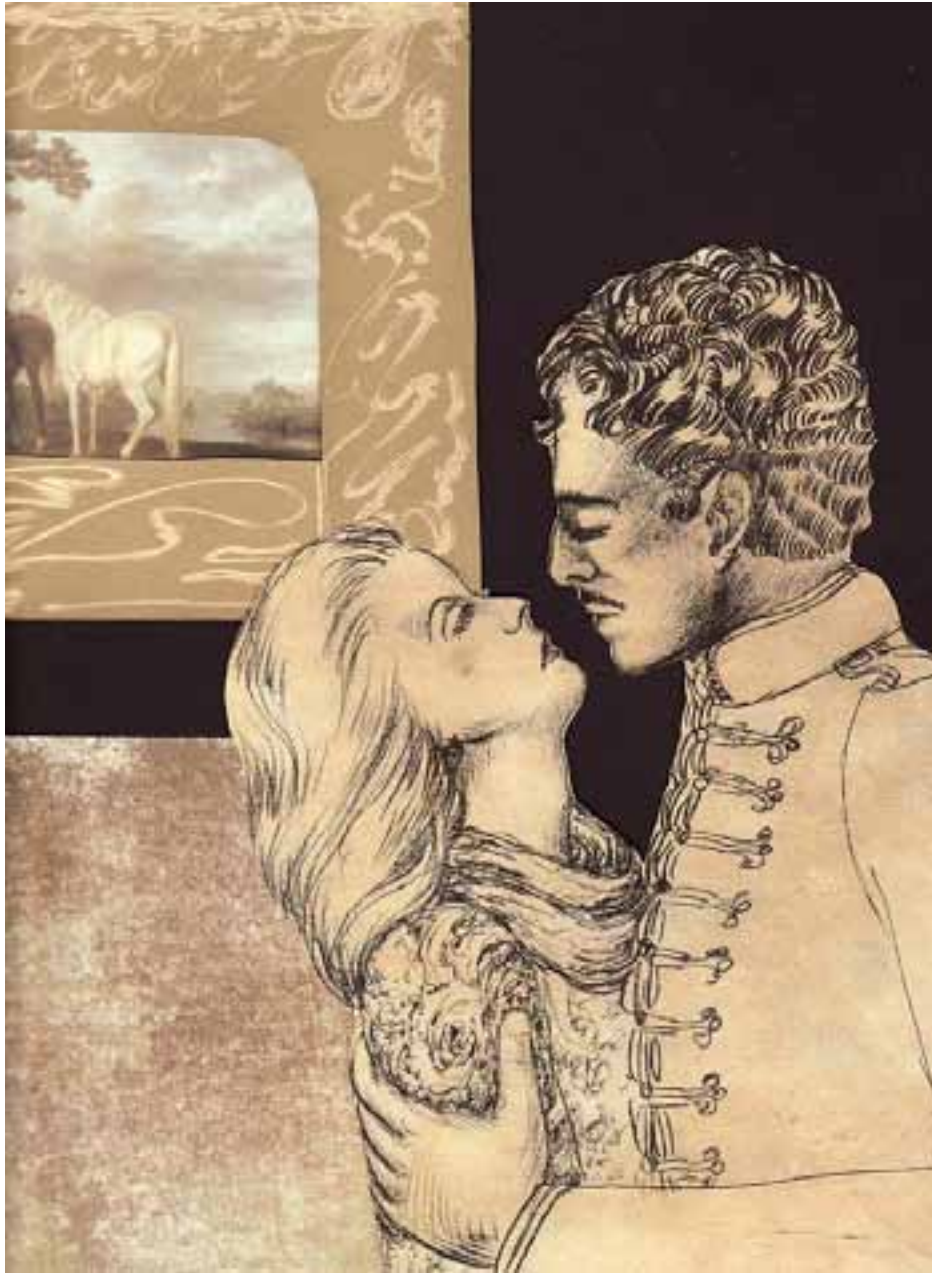


Alexei met Anna at his rooms as the icy snow swallowed up their summer of passion. And scandal like ice crusted the canals and river of Petersburg. "Let us race the Snow Queen!" Alexei shouted to Anna. "To bring you back home before Karenin is forced to act!"



"I can not return home!" Anna replied.

"I have crossed the Rubicon." She



pointed to
suitcases
at her
feet.

“The river is freezing and snow is blinding
but we might yet beat the Snow Queen
to deliver you back from the cusp of
scandal and ruin!”



"No. Rather let us race the Snow Queen to Venice and laugh at winter and scandal from it's warm and balmy shores of romance! Karenin has already asked the Grand Duke to expunge you from the records of honor of the regiment. We are both ruined!"



Alexei and Anna raced the Snow Queen to balmy Venice but by New Year's Carnival the fat of their romance had wasted away and the bloom of their love had withered to blight.



Venice partied wildly before the Day of Atonement bought by the Blood of Christ to bring forth still frozen Spring back to the ice shrouded world of long Winter. But the lovers could not atone for their illicit love without renouncing that love even as it withered into a masquerade as grotesque as the masque balls of Carnival.



Anna yearned for her son which enraged
Alexei who yearned for total love such no
mother had ever shared with him.



Alexei waxed first bored and then anxious
as newspapers reported the drumbeats of
approaching war.



They played the farce their love affair
had turned into but knew it was
increasingly a hollow sham no less than a
mask.



They performed the roles Society expected and muttered tattered lines no one believed any more — least of all them. They wore their fancy dress ball costumes but they were just as tattered.



The Great Love Affair of the
Century was a pantomime they performed
for parties jaded foreigners invited them
to attend. But no Russian left calling
cards and no courtier left invitations.





Alexei
stared into
the icy
mirror as

he shaved each morning and fancied it was
the icy Mirror of Reason, that mirror-
like ice covering precariously a dark and
churning lake that surrounded the icy
throne of the Snow Queen.



And Alexei fancied he saw in the distant reflection of the hovering, clinging, nervy Anna's tattered face the face of the Snow Queen.

And while he still loved Anna he loved her more and more from afar. Not up close. Up close Love was cloying and clinging and needy and jealous. Love was no longer remote and pristine.



The magical ice rose was breaking apart into brittle pieces as each fragile red petal cracked off and fell to the ground in brittle icy splinters. And sometimes Alexei could not help but feel Anna was like some vampire feeding off his love with love that was destroying them both.



The
Vampire's
Kiss



The Kiss of the
Vampire
Becomes... Love





And Alexei fancied he saw in the mirror
each morning snow flakes slowly and
languidly dropping down one by one —
forming words — forming one word:
Eternity. “If war comes then I will face
an eternity of shame! Disgrace!
Cowardice! When my nation needs me
most and my regiment rides into battle
without me!”











During the freezing heights of the Grand Ball Masque Alexei toured the Great Plaza before the Basilica of Saint Mark with Anna. And low and behold Alexei saw in the biting cold of midnight the Snow Queen arriving on her gondola. Grandly she marched up the steps to parade through the Ducal Palace of the Doge. And all of the fantastically dressed carnival revelers bowed to her as if to a conqueror.

“The Snow Queen transforms the fading sepia world into brilliant color even as dire events threaten to slaughter the Imperial World” Alexei thought to himself. “We are becoming battle fodder at the feet of the Snow Queen!”



And the Snow Queen looked directly into the eyes of Alexei as one who knew him utterly to the depths of his frozen soul and frozen heart. And she was as remote and distant and perfectly beautiful as Anna no longer was. And Alexei loved the Snow Queen. And Alexei no longer loved Anna.

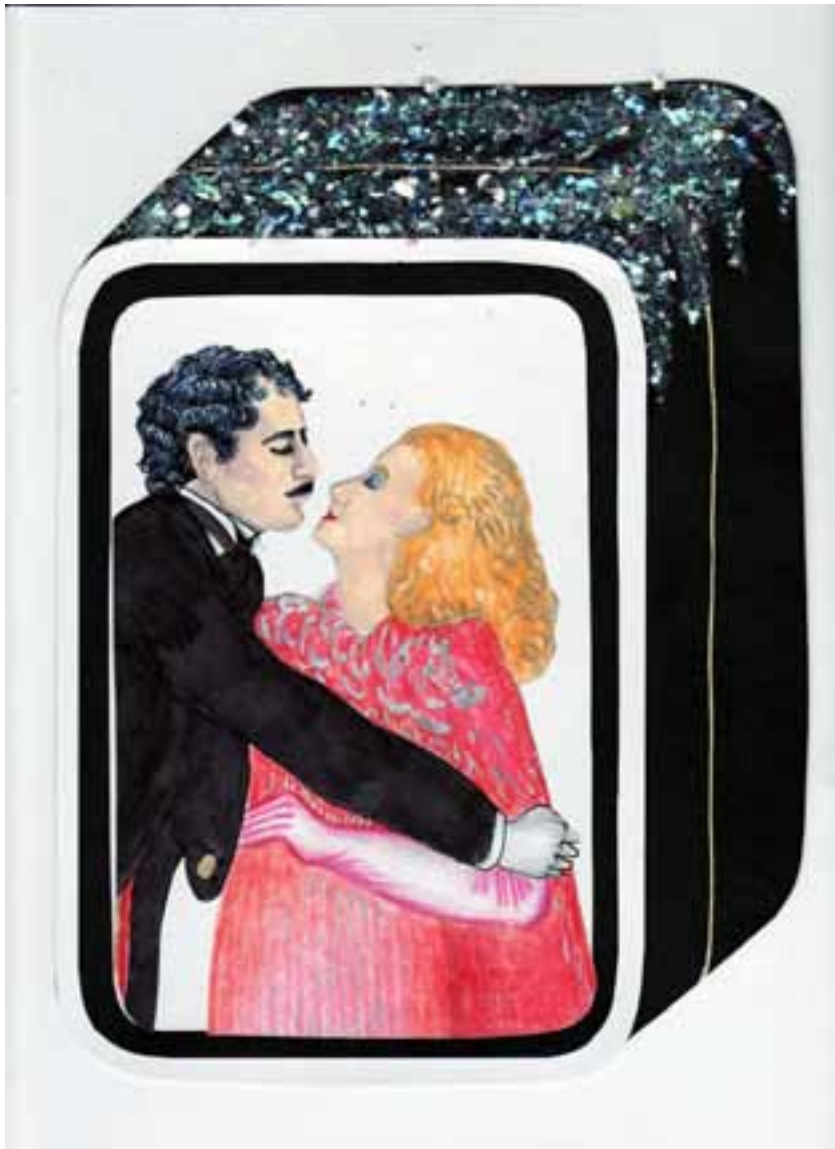


“The world has turned cold” Anna said to Alexei. “And you have turned cold and cruel! Your hard eyes only see my flaws and your hard heart is as cold as ice. And I am freezing to death here in this accused foreign city!”

“You wanted to come. I had no say in the matter” Alexei replied coldly.

“I want to go home” Anna said.

“Let be so then and let it be on your head” Alexei replied.





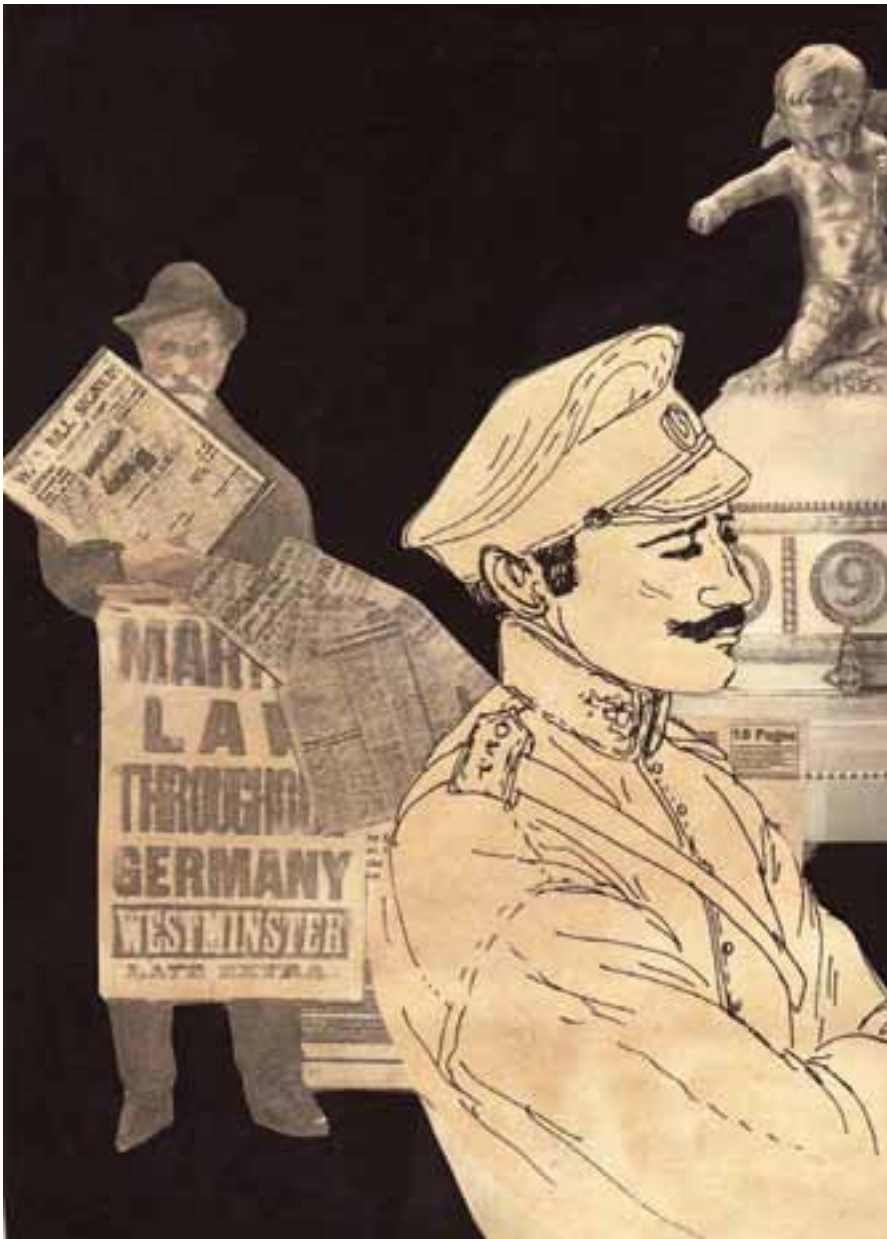




Alexei returned to Petersburg to rejoin his regiment with Anna in tow. But the Grand Duke refused to see him. "No one loves you anymore Alexei because you are not the honorable soldier but only an unemployed cad and coward" Alexei told his soul as he tore up the rejected calling card returned crossed off by the Grand Duke, his godfather.

"I must get into this war!" Alexei told his soul. "Or I will be damned before the eyes

of Imperial Russia and the men being led
to slaughter!”



Anna went to see her son but Karenin refused her admittance. "No."

"Let it be so then!" Anna replied. "And let it be on your head!"



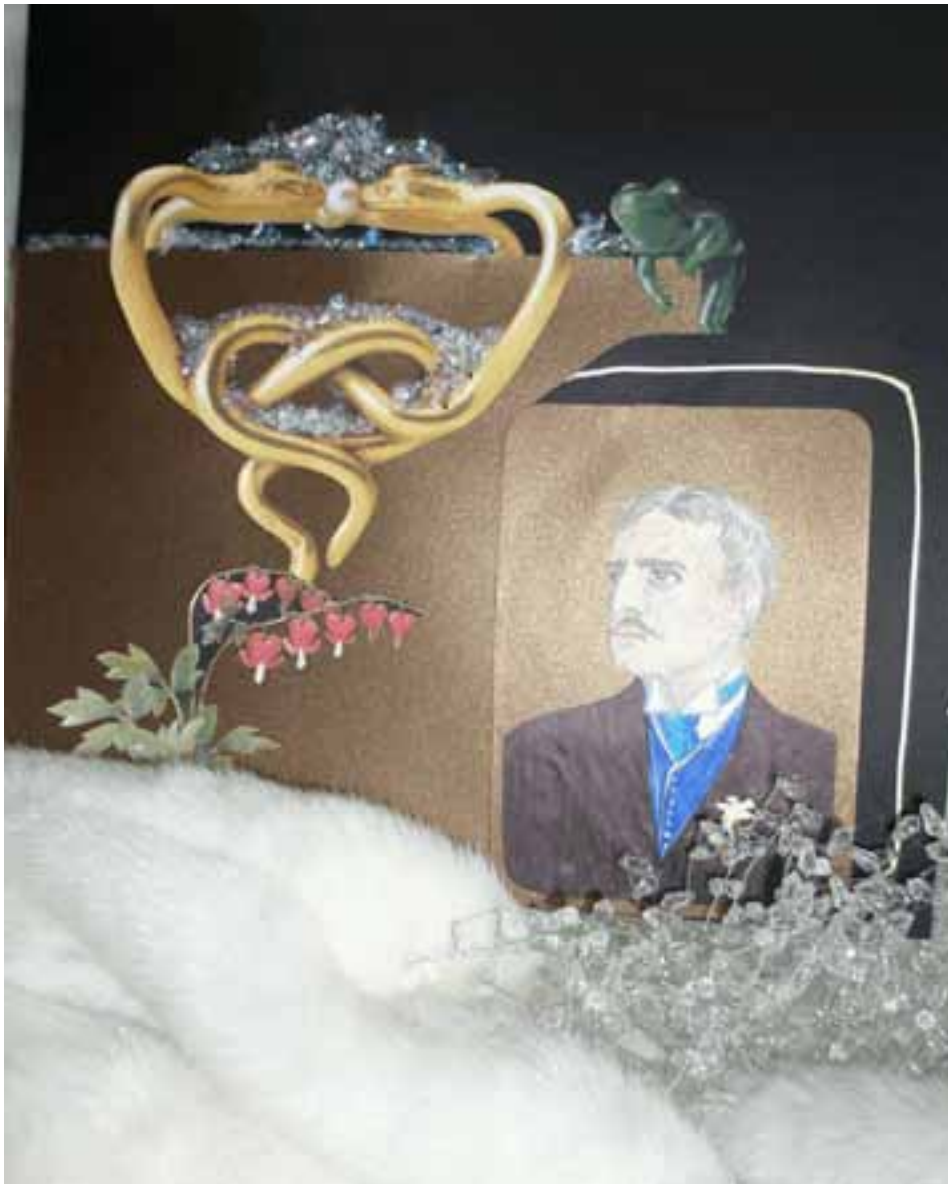
"It will be!" Karenin replied. "If this war comes this nation will fall! And I will fall with it! I will not run away

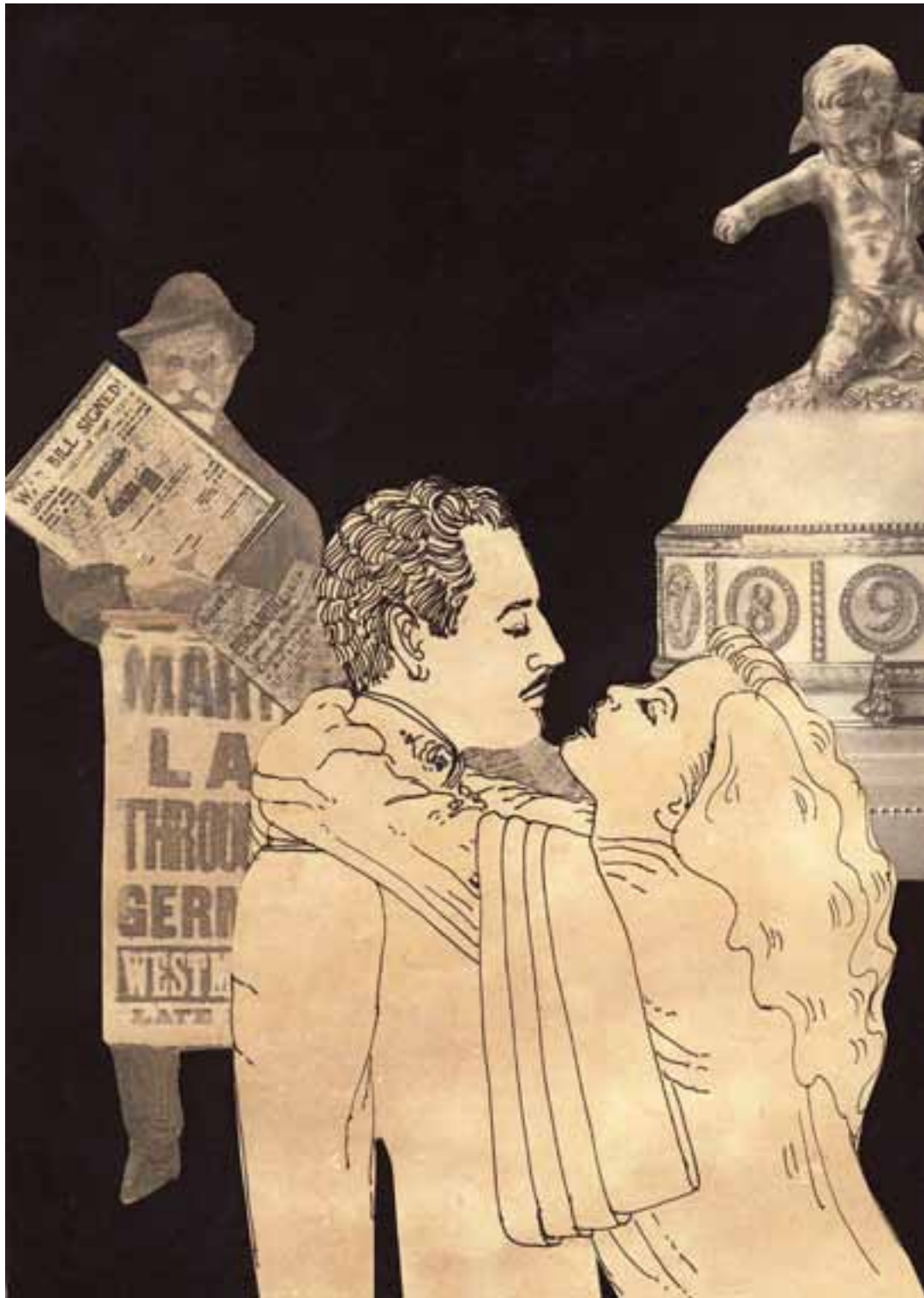
like others are planning to run! I will stay

and face the revolution and probably

perish

doing my
duty!"





Alexei made plans to embrace bitter exile at his country estate. For the last night in Petersburg Alexei took Anna to the theater and dinner for she pleaded frantically in deadly fear of exile at his oppressive country estate. "It will be like being buried alive! It is surrounded by dark forest and wild wolves howl and they frighten me."



“Nay!” Alexei replied in scorn. “They are but werewolves, the bodyguard of lovers of the Snow Queen and if anyone is in any danger it is me and not you.”



During the theater everyone cut them from seats close and far. At dinner everyone cut them from seats closer and nearer. Anna pleaded to leave. Alexei forced her to waltz for he remembered the mad monk's warning not to waltz with the Snow Queen. Too late he realized the wisdom of the Mad March Hare.



Then it was the cusp of spring. Now it was the depths of winter and spring seemed fatally too far away to ever come

again to warm the frozen world. Anna writhed in the cruel arms of Alexei and ran outside.



"You are the perfect soldier Alexei because you have no heart!" Anna screamed as her nails clawed his face.



Anna cursed Alexei and ran away in the gently falling snow of the all but perpetual winter's night of Arctic Petersburg.

Alexei waited in the hotel room but she



did not
appear.

Alexei yet again telegraphed the Grand Duke imploring him to receive him. "If there is war you will need every trained officer for the German Front! For the sakes of the common soldiers employ me! Even if you do not respect or love me anymore!"

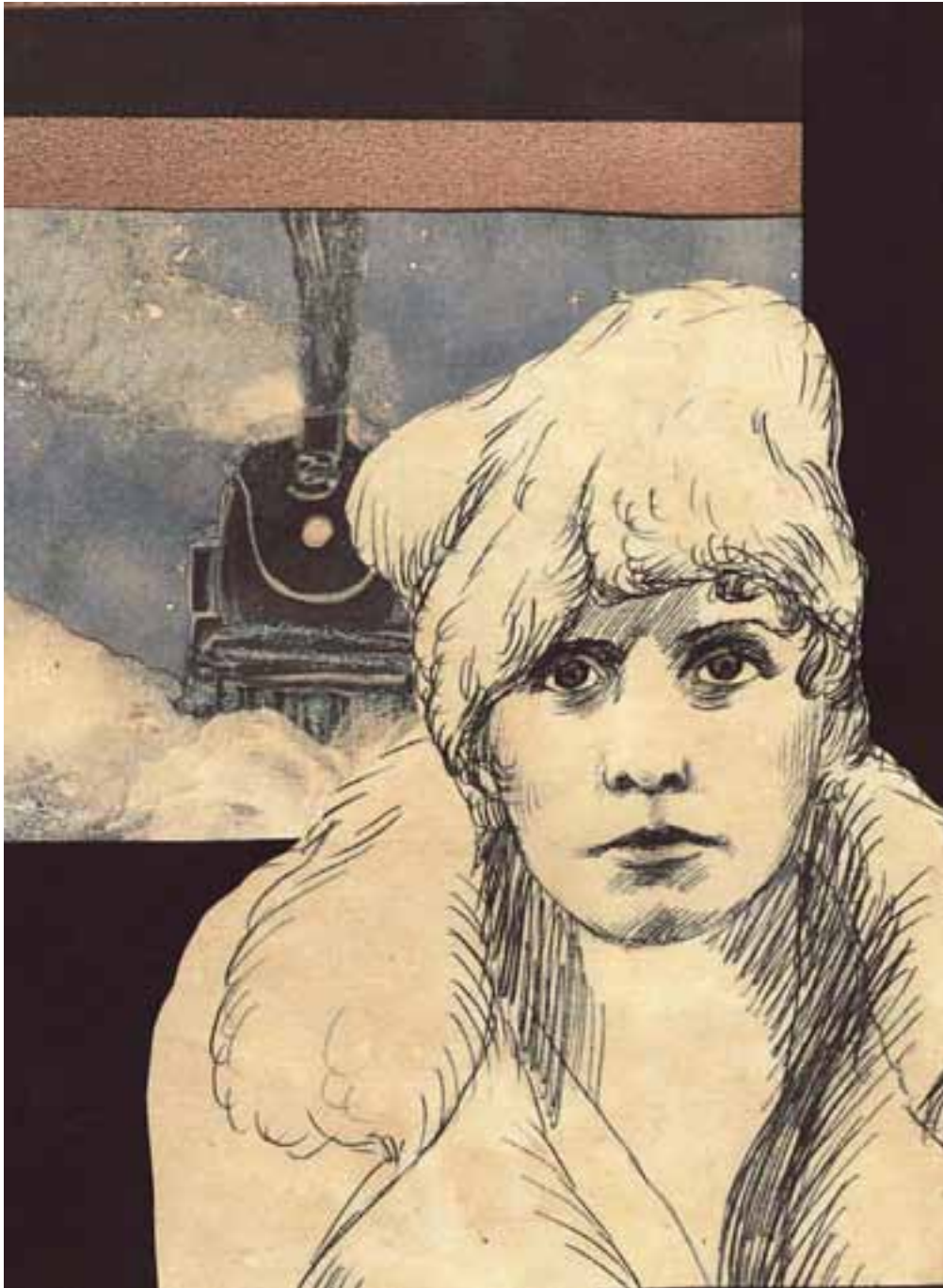


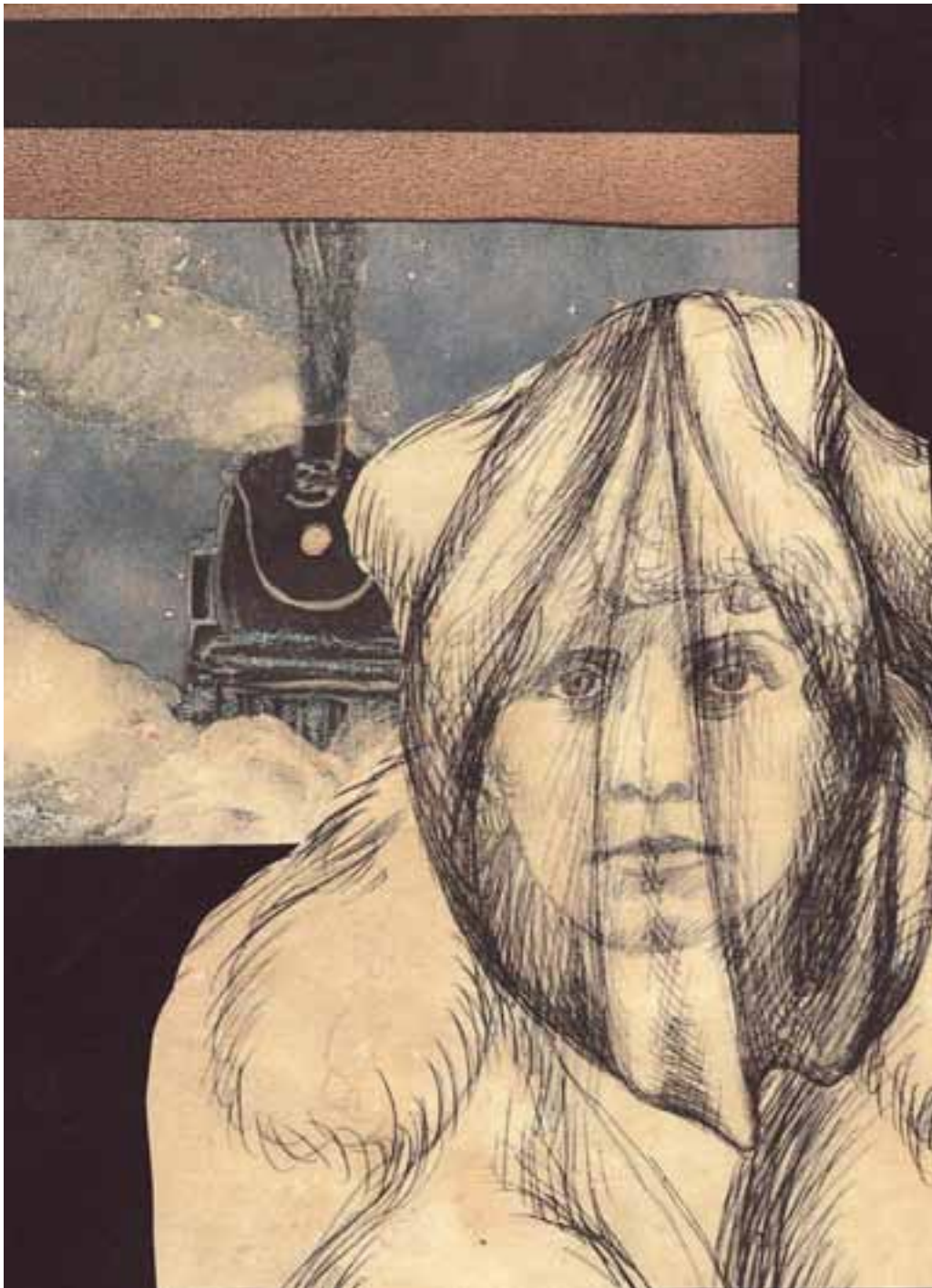
The Grand Duke relented and Alexei attended a regimental dinner with all his fellow officers now long estranged, alienated by his anger and mad infatuation for Anna Karenina.

"You see Alexei we all love you!" The Grand Duke told Alexei. "Come back to us Alexei! Come back to your home and the warm embrace of everyone one here!"

Alexei resisted touching his still bloody face and mimed smiles and laughter with his one time comrades and godfather. He did not find out Anna Karenina killed herself until he returned to his hotel room at midnight.







He rushed to the railroad station but
found only the tatters of a billowing veil
like a shroud left on the cruel icy rails of
the railroad.



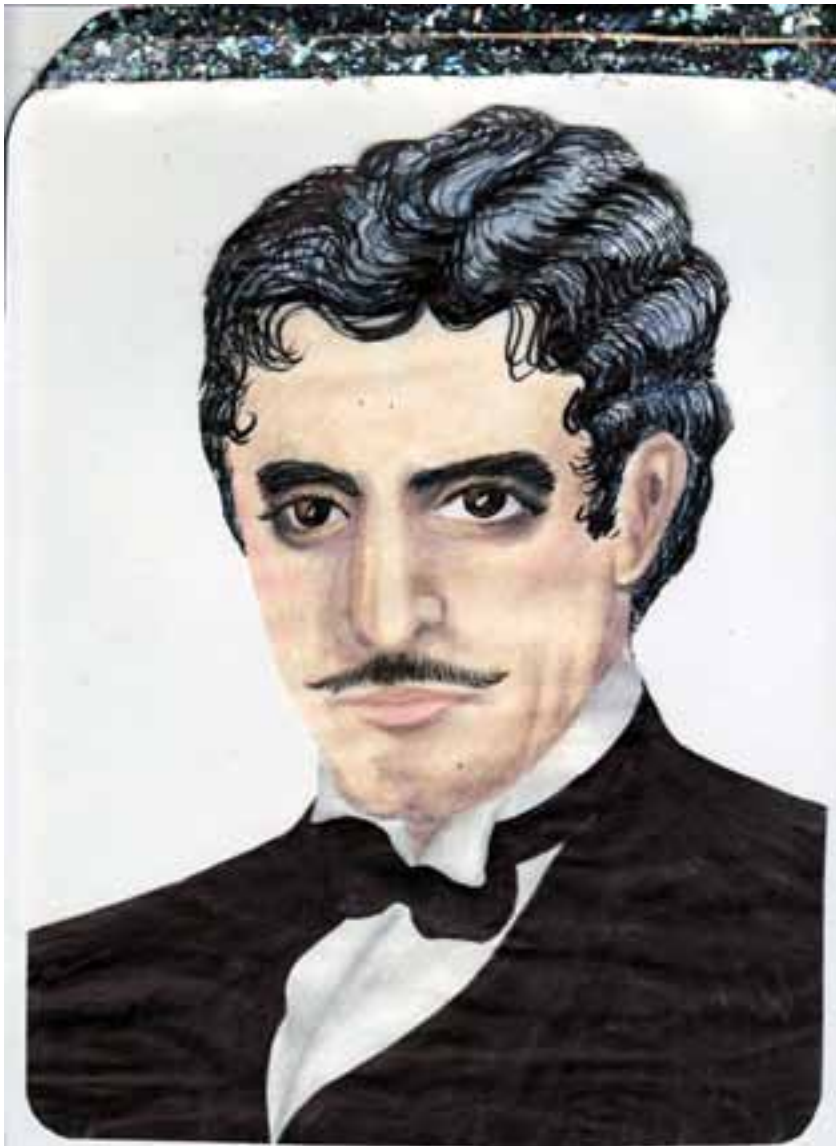
He went with the policeman but could only identify the body by the handkerchief still clutched in the frozen hand, a gift from him to her last Christmas. At the time Alexei said it reminded him of the lacy ice handkerchief of the Snow Queen. The police pulled the shroud back over the mangled body of a stranger.

Alexei paid for the funeral but no one attended the taboo rites of the suicide in the dark forest where wild wolves howled because no church could or would embrace the body of a suicide into hollowed ground.



This is a story about a little boy's lifelong search of love.

The boy's name was Alexei.





He died a bitter soldier during the
Revolution.



He died in the depths of winter during a futile cavalry charge across the frozen ice of a lake led by a callow young officer, newly orphaned, from a nearby military school named Sergei Alexeyitch

Karenin — directly into machine guns.





The frozen lake shattered into shards and splinters big and small under the impact of that cavalry charge straight into machine guns. And the icy depths of that dark,

churning lake swallowed up the world of
Alexei and Anna as if a giant mouth of
a black wolf.

Alexei fell into the snow that edged the
frozen lake as he died, still trying to stop
the angry boy from killing everyone
because the lonely boy now hated the
world. Alexei died on the pristine snow
and he dyed the pristine snow red with his
ruddy red blood.





And magical snow flakes such as he adored as a small, lonely child, slowly and languidly fell from the grey sky that was the billowing veil of the Snow Queen until they covered his bloody hand as if with a magic shroud. And the Snow Queen embraced the lonely boy at last.



And Alexei came home to the real Fairawayland, her magical Winter Palace of Eternal Winter, to live forever with the Snow Queen who looked so much like both his mother and Anna

that he felt compelled to love from afar
—but not near enough to really find
—much less understand ---- the fatal allure
of intimate human love.

