

Polina Kisseleva



This is a photograph of my sister Polina. It was taken approximately in the 1980s in Leningrad. I don't know exactly where and by whom. I know that this is my sister's real hair on this photo, she never wore wigs.

In 1938 my mum gave birth to my sister Polina and died three weeks after delivery because of complications. It was my mother's brother Meir-Yosif, who chose the name for my sister. He wanted the girl to be named in honor of her deceased mother. My mum's name was Pessya. My uncle wanted her daughter to be called Pasha, which is a pet name of Polina. So that was the way the name Polina appeared. When Polina was a child, our stepmother took her to recitation school. Before the performances and concerts our stepmother Galina dressed my sister beautifully, styled her hair and called her Pashette - in the French manner.

My sister Polina didn't attend a kindergarten, because she had ill health from her birth. She attended a seven-year school on Kurlyandskaya Street. Later she finished a secondary school. After that she studied at a commercial college in Krasnodar. At school she studied so-so. She had no special abilities, no schoolmates.

Soon after leaving school she got married. Her husband was a senior lieutenant, Ushkov Victor. She gave birth to a daughter, Olga. After the putsch of 1956 they lived in Hungary, where her husband served, later in Krasnodar and other places. Polina worked as a sales assistant in different shops. She returned to Leningrad after she divorced her first husband and soon married a man, who was older than she, a captain in retirement named Alexander Alexandrov. Later they also got divorced. Then she married Valery - I don't remember his surname - and lived at his apartment. She got acquainted with Valery during her figure skating training sessions: he was a brother of her coach.

Polina worked as a sales assistant in a shop near the Baltic railway station. She had numerous customers. At that time in the context of serious deficiencies, it was her luck to work in a shop – she was able to get whatever she liked. Later she retired on a pension and didn't work any more. Polina got ill with an oncological disease. She sank all her savings into a financial pyramid and lost almost all money. The rest she spent for treatment of cancer. Polina underwent chemotherapy, but without success. The treatment was very expensive – all our family helped her to find money. The malignant growth was inoperable, and it developed into a sarcoma. Polina died at home in the presence of her daughter Olga.