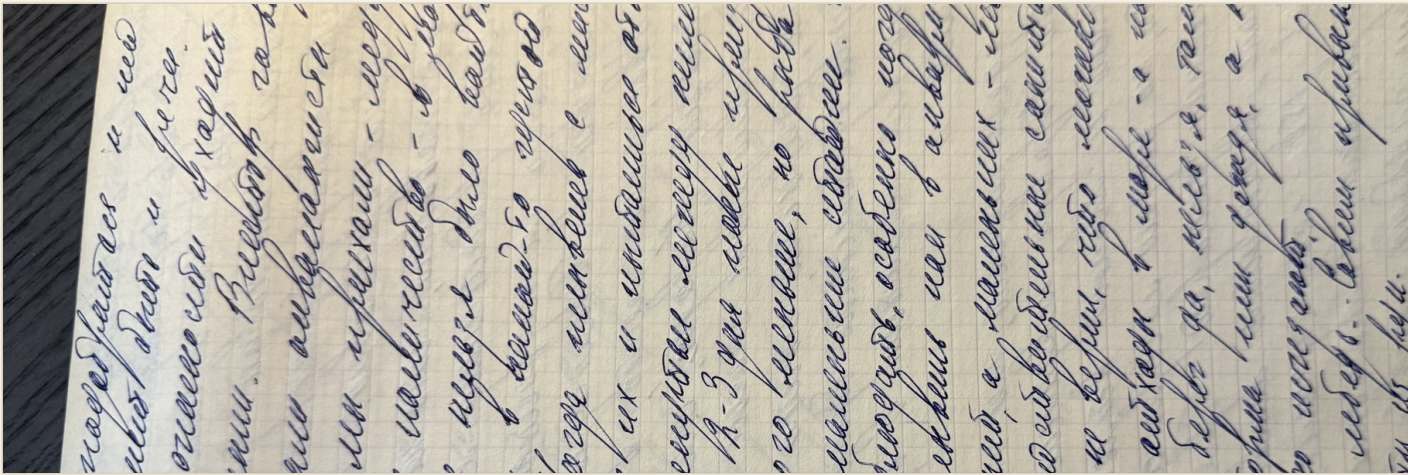


«Плывешь как в аквариуме»

“You swim as if in an aquarium” — a seaside holiday letter recounting swimming, diving, and marine life



The page as photographed.

AS WRITTEN

о стаи, чтобы подобраться к ней с рожьем - не может быть и речи. Она при малейшей опасности уходит с быстрой молнии. Виктор говорит, что рыбу распугали аквалангисты и медузы. Когда мы приехали - медуз было невероятное количество - в море без маски вообще нельзя было войти, погружаешь как в какой-то густой взболтанный суп. Когда плывешь с маской хотя бы видишь их и пытаешься оттолкнуть и протиснуться между ними. Слава богу! ...

As for getting close to it with a spear gun, that's completely out of the question. At the slightest hint of danger, it darts away with lightning speed. Viktor says that scuba divers and jellyfish scared the fish away. When we arrived, there was an unbelievable number of jellyfish—you couldn't enter the sea without a mask at all; you'd plunge in as if into some thick, stirred-up soup. When you swim with a mask, at least you see them and try to push them away and squeeze between them.

Thank goodness! Two or three days after arrival, there were much fewer of them, though the fish didn't return, only small schools. They are very

interesting to watch, especially when the sea is calm—you swim as if in an aquarium. There are no large crabs, but small ones are everywhere—they are the real cleaners of the sea. At first I couldn't believe you could drop food into the sea—then I saw that on shore they would rot waiting for a storm or rain, but in the sea they sink and vanish without a trace.

The swan returned again. It has grown completely tame—it takes biscuits almost from our hands.

One day we drove out with Volodya and Andrei...

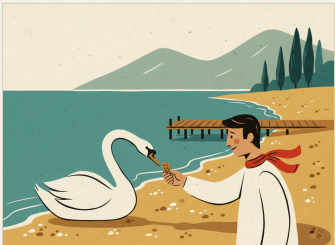
The letter, drawn

scenes from its own words, in the manner of its time



“When you swim with a mask, at least you see them and try to push them away and squeeze between them.”

Когда плывешь с маской хотя бы видишь их и пытаешься оттолкнуть и протиснуться между ними.



“It has grown completely tame—it takes biscuits almost from our hands.”

Совсем привык - берет печенье почти из рук.



“especially when the sea is calm—you swim as if in an aquarium.”

особенно когда на море штиль - плывешь как в аквариуме.



“At the slightest hint of danger, it darts away with lightning speed.”

Она при малейшей опасности уходит с быстрой молнии.

[†] **HOW WE KNOW** **CONFIDENCE · MEDIUM** The use of the word ‘аквалангисты’ (scuba divers) and references to recreational spearfishing (‘с ружьем’) indicate the post-WWII Soviet era, as the hobby became widely popular from the 1960s onward. · Describing the water as a ‘thick soup’ of jellyfish (‘медузы’) is a common phenomenon during the late summer months on the shores of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. · The presence of standard Russian names like Viktor, Volodya, and Andrei confirms a Russian-speaking cultural context, likely Soviet citizens on vacation. · Phrases like ‘When we arrived,’ ‘Two or three days after arrival,’ and daily swimming activities strongly point to a summer vacation trip. Tell FamilyLore the year and the drawings redraw. Dotted words (9 on this page) are the reader’s best guess.



✂ The drawings were made by FamilyLore from the words of this letter, in the manner of a 1970s Soviet magazine or children’s book illustrator; they are imagined, not photographs, and show no real person. The letter is the owner’s photograph, kept private; this page is theirs.