**Isadora** **Duncan’s** **Russian** **Days**

А new page in Yesenin’s life was opened in 1921. He met a famous American dancer, Isadora Duncan, on his birthday, October 3.

She moved to the USSR to teach children modern free dance.

She explained her idea of mental liberation through her art:

«I bring you the dance. I bring you the idea that is going to revolutionise our entire epoch.

I bring to your theatre the vital soul that it lacks, the soul of the dancer. For you know...that the birth of the theatre was the dance, that the first actor was the dancer. He danced and sang. That was the birth of the tragedy, and until the dancer in all his spontaneous great art returns to the theatre, your theatre will not live in its true expression!»

(Isadora Duncan. [My Life](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2573376))

She opened her dance school on Prechistenka.

Duncan explicated her ideas to her students, school-age girls:

«My Art is just an effort to express the truth of my being in gesture and movement. It has taken me long years to find even one absolutely true movement. Words have a different meaning. Before the public, which has thronged my representations, I have had no hesitation. I have given them the most secret impulses of my soul. From the first, I have only danced my life. As a child, I danced the spontaneous joy of growing things. As an adolescent, I danced with joy turning to apprehension of the first realisation of tragic undercurrents; apprehension of the pitiless brutality and crushing progress of life.

When I was sixteen, I danced before an audience without music. At the end, someone suddenly cried from the audience, "It is Death and the Maiden," and the dance was always afterwards called "Death and the Maiden." But that was not my intention, I was only endeavouring to express my first knowledge of the underlying tragedy in all seemingly joyous manifestation. The dance, according to my comprehension, should have been called "Life and the Maiden.»

She knew only a dozen words in Russian, and Yesenin spoke no foreign languages by the time of their acquaintance. Nevertheless, they married on 2 May 1922. А week later Isadora went on a concert tour to raise more money for her school. Yesenin accompanied his celebrity wife on a tour around Europe and the United States.

**Around the World in… 450 Days**

They started the journey flying from Moscow to Konigsberg. It was the first flight on an aeroplane for the poet.

Then they visited Belgium, France, Italy.

Once the married couple was invited for dinner with Aleksey Tolstoy and Maxim Gorky.

Gorky wrote about that meeting:

«This famous woman, who was being glorified by thousands of European aesthetes, esteemed schematonics by the side of the young, like a teenager, amazing poet born in Ryazan, was the perfect personification of everything that he didn’t need.»

During the trip the wife and husband often glorified the USSR. «I’m red!» - Duncan often exclaimed during the performances. Sometimes it led to problems with the police.

Once at Duncan’s concert in Boston (Massachusetts) the crowd demanded to sing the anthem of the USSR.

But suddenly the doors of the huge pavilion were opened, the mounted police entered the hall and began to disperse the spectators.

That time Yesenin decided to drown despair in mischief: he opened the window of the toilet room, hanged out a red flag and began to wave it with the scream: “All hail Soviet Russia! All hail Bolshevism!”

After the concert, both the organizer of the concert and the participants had to write an explanation at the police station.

In his 1922 autobiography, Yesenin wrote:

«Russia's recent nomadic past does not appeal to me, and I am all for civilization. But I dislike America intensely. America is a stinking place where not just art is being murdered, but with it, all the loftiest aspirations of humankind. If it's America that we are looking up to, as [a model for our] future, then I'd rather stay under our greyish skies... We do not have those skyscrapers that's managed to produce up to date nothing but Rockefeller and McCormick, but here Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Pushkin and Lermontov were born.»

The married couple returned to Moscow in August 1923.