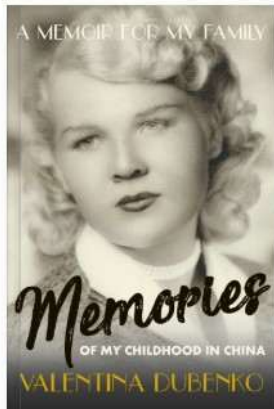


Chapter 12
Valya Dubenko





Memories of my childhood in China

A memoir for my family

By Valentina Dubenko

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Read the stories of an inquisitive child growing up on an ancient landscape in politically charged Western China. We hop between bliss and horror and back again as the revolution comes to town. Valentina's family pioneers eastward toward freedom, with the spread of Communism nipping at their ankles. Her adolescent adventures stretch from Gulja, Urumqi, Lanzhou and Shanghai, and ultimately deposit her on Samar Island in the Philippines, where a humble island paradise awaits. Valentina recalls sweet, wide-eyed moments that don't fade in the light of the undeniable refugee struggle. Tenacious in their Christian faith, her Papa, Mama and the community around them are resilient and determined. She reminds us of the legendary hard work of our predecessors, the simple pleasures in life and the drive only a quest for freedom can muster.

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<https://www.lulu.com/shop/valentina-dubenko/memories-of-my-childhood-in-china/paperback/product-kr7z8g.html>



Valya Pustobaef's story begins in 1942, when she was 5 years old. Her memories of her childhood in China are like sketches that she draws with descriptive words that bring back experiences she had while traveling the road from Alma Ata to Gulja to Urumqi to Hami to Lanzhou to Shanghai to Tubabao (Philippines), and finally to San Francisco. She writes this story in the first person, and therefore it is an autobiography, even though she calls it "a memoir for my family."

The 40 chapters that make up the autobiographical sketches are each succinctly titled to reflect the event that she experienced. Chapter 1 is named "1942" because that is where (and when) the story starts, and already she experiences a horrible mauling by a dog. But the pain and suffering are immediately followed by childhood pranks in Chapter 2, "Naughty Children." In Chapter 3 ("House Guests") a familiar name appears to those of us who attended the Geary Street Church in San Francisco: Ducia Krapifkina, whom we knew as the wife of Mr. Lyonya Lee; Tyotya Ducia is portrayed in a beautiful wedding dress on her wedding day. In Chapter 4 ("Jeleuzy fruit orchard"), we watch as the girls pick apricots for the owner of the orchard, and our mouths water as they eat the delicious fruit in a very large orchard. Valya writes: "Our job was to collect apricots, wash

them, cut them in half, dry them and then sort out the sweet apricot seeds from the bitter seeds. Sweet seeds were delicious to eat like almonds.” The fruit of their summer labor was to get half of the apricots for themselves.

In Chapter 5 (“Noviy Gorod”), Valya goes back to the beginning of her life and says that she was born in New Town (“Noviy Gorod”), a district in the city of Gulja (also spelled Kulja). There is a very descriptive paragraph that helps the reader visualize the Chinese architecture of “homes built in clusters of 4 or 5 homes around a large courtyard.” The children were able to play with other children in the safe confines of a central courtyard. Valya also mentions a memorable job she had of collecting cow pies, which were dried and used for insulating the floors, and also for the fireplace. There is also mention of two families that traveled to America with her: the Solovyov family (Tyotya Ganya, Nikolai, Luba, Tolya, Sasha), and the Lukianov family (Alya or Alice was Valya’s playmate).

Chapter 6 (“Heartbreaking love and labor”) shows Valya’s attempt at milking cows, which she was not good at. We are also introduced to another familiar name, Tyotya (“Aunt”) Nyura Prasoloff. And we are told of how the rich Pustobaeff family (Valya’s grandparents) lost their livelihood and dairy farm during the Communist takeover of land in 1919. Valya’s grandparents lived in the Ural Mountains, in the province called Nijniy Uralsk (“Lower Urals”). Valya also recounts how her parents got married in 1928, and she reveals that “before they were converted to the Christian faith, they were Stariveri (“Old Believers”).” Chapter 7 (“Our trip to Risan for the hot medicinal waters”) seems to be the last story of Valya’s childhood adventures. The trip to the hot springs in a large valley surrounded by mountains culminates in a bear story, in which the girls venture into the forest away from the mineral waters and are scared by a bear. They make it safely back to their parents, but they don’t tell them about their adventure. Valya says: “I like to think that God sent us guardian angels who kept us from being attacked by a bear.”

Chapter 8 (“Prayer Meeting”) reveals Valya’s maturing growth in spiritual matters, as she learns how to pray: “O Lord, speak to us through the Holy Spirit, tell us how to be and guide us.” She experienced the presence of God “as if electricity was passing

through me.” Chapter 9 seems to be a missing or skipped chapter (or an error). Chapter 10 (“Not knowing what’s ahead”) brings us to 1945, when Valya’s father is accidentally shot by a plane in the leg, and thus avoids military service and “inevitable death.” Valya reflects on the incident: “The Lord God loves his children and protects and guides our feet as He did with the children of Israel.”

Chapter 11 (“Pelechinka”) shows the family moving to a region in Gulja named Pelechinka and renting a house from an Uzbek man who was a Mullah (Muslim minister who led public prayers). The Ramadan holiday is mentioned. It’s summertime, and we watch as the girls once again play silly games and even put mud on their faces to make themselves look like Africans.



Chapter 12 (“The revolution comes to us”) introduces the reader to the horrors of war and the revolution that began in 1946. The families were now caught up in the turmoil of the Chinese Civil War (1945-49). “In China, the revolutionary period was known as the War of Liberation.” In Gulja, the family experiences the Soviet troops from Russia fighting against the Chinese. Chapter 13 (“Worries, Concerns”) shows an increasing dependence on prayer. Sometimes they are forced to seek refuge in another house, like Lokteff’s house. Chapter 14 (“Rescuing Chinese brothers from the red Russian captors”) tells the interesting story of heroism on the part of David Pustobaef (Valya’s father) and Alexander E. Shevchenko, who later

becomes a pastor in San Francisco. They rescue three Chinese church members from a prisoner of war camp by dressing them up in women's clothing and pretending to lead them out of camp as their own wives. At this time, we learn that several male Chinese members changed their names to their wives' family's names for security purposes; one such person was Mr. Lee, who became Alexei Krapifkin, taking on his wife Evdokia's family name.

In Chapter 15 ("Gymnasium"), we watch the children in school, which like a gymnasium is a "training facility." In Chapter 16 ("Disaster strikes when filing for papers to leave"), we witness the Pustobaeff family's first attempt to leave the country. The father is imprisoned for wanting to leave. After being released, the father takes his family to his friend Misha's house in a different city. Chapter 17 ("Preparation for departure from Gulja") shows the father building a frame for a wagon and the families of Andrei and Pasha Akimoff and Gavriyel Ivanovich Abramenko and wife Elizaveta joining them on the road out of Gulja. Valya concludes: "The Lord was with us. He kept us on the road and delivered us from the hand of Pharaoh."

[interlude: pages 80 to 106 have many interesting black and white photos of their days in China and also color photos of their days in America.]

Chapter 18 has a very long title ("A long discussion about how to avoid a similar tragedy on our own journey, and how to shoulder the burden with the animals"). It could be shortened to "Avoiding tragedy" and tell of how a truck accident caused the death of many people during the crossing of a dangerous mountain route. Valya kept a positive attitude about their own crossing: "I knew that God was with us." Chapter 19 ("Deserted by our drivers") tells of the incident where the drivers who were paid in Gulja to take them to Urumqi suddenly disappeared and left the family stranded on the way. Fortunately, or as Valya puts it: "We thanked God for providing new transport." Chapter 20 ("Continuing the journey to Urumqi") concludes with a successful arrival at their destination, where they find former refugees, all from the same church community.

Chapter 21 ("Support from Chinese rulers") shows a kind government helping settle the refugees in active military barracks. However, there is an incident in which several families suffer smoke inhalation from the wet tar that was in the fireplace chimney. Chapter 22 ("Leaving Urumqi") has the family tightly crammed into military trucks on the journey to Lanzhou. Of course, an incident occurs, like in other chapters. This time a flash flood covers the road, and they have to wait to continue their journey. Chapter 23 ("Hami") depicts their arrival in a small town named Hami. They find

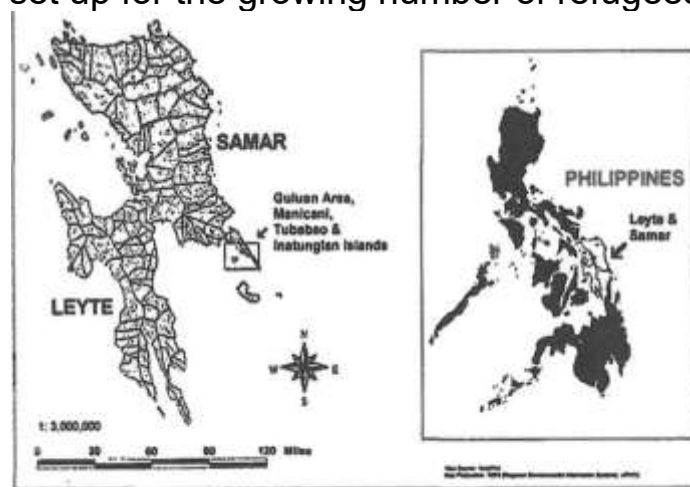
accommodations in a Chinese monastery, where, of course, we have a humorous incident where they see statues of gods and monks in black robes. Valya's mother says: "It's like Satan himself lives here." Valya also experiences a phenomenon of her blanket being uncovered throughout the night, and she feels as if she had to struggle with the devil to keep herself covered.

Chapter 24 ("Lanzhou and the Yellow River"). Here, in Lanzhou, they find accommodations in military barracks. The father builds a Russian oven for baking bread. They get water from the Yellow River to wash clothes. They discover that the locals use human feces for fertilizer. There's an incident where they find a child wrapped up at the bottom of a pit, most likely a girl who was not wanted by a family who desired a boy. In the barracks, they stay with the Dumanovsky, Shevchenko, and Lokteff families. Later, they move to a courtyard setting with the following people: Gavriel Abramenko and his wife Elizaveta; Romanoffs; Evdokia Dubenko and her sons; Sobolovs; Kiril Ilyin and his family; Akimoffs; Solovyovs; and Andrei Velichko and family.

Chapter 25 ("Raya's Incident") is a short story about how the children were playing tag, and Raya (Valya's sister) ran out into the street and got run over by a bicyclist who didn't stop. She was hurt and in pain, so they took her to the hospital, and it took her a while to recover. Chapter 26 ("Employment") is about how the father takes odd jobs to make money while they live in Lanzhou; he does painting work, white-washing walls. Later, the father is given a government job to build a mill since he had electrical and engineering skills. Chapter 27 ("Construction of the Mill") relates the story of how the father, as chief engineer, hired some Russian brothers to build the mill; it turns out some of them complained too much and were let go. After the mill was constructed, and it produced good flour, the father was paid a large sum of money. Chapter 28 ("Plane Tickets") continues the story of how the father used the hard-earned money to buy plane tickets to Shanghai. Chapter 29 ("Preparing to leave for Shanghai"), and it turns out that at the airport, they are told by a dishonest travel agent that there was no room on the plane, and they had to turn back. Later, when Mr. Pipkin finds out that the family he helped was dishonestly treated, he reprimanded the ticket agent. Immediately afterwards, the family was given seats on the next flight to Shanghai.

Chapter 30 (“First flight”) gives a short account of the first time for the family to fly in an airplane. Valya notes: “The next chapter was upon us.” Chapter 31 (“Arriving in Shanghai”) gives a short account of the World Council of Churches helping the family settle in. It was June 1948. Of course, there was an incident of mosquitoes in the area, which made their stay intolerable. They stayed in Shanghai for 8 or 9 months, and the children went to school. And the government gave out food rations to the refugees. For me, it was always interesting when Valya mentioned the families that stayed with them because I became acquainted with them when my family arrived in San Francisco in 1953. Here is Valya’s list of families with them: **Abramenkos**, **Akimoffs**, **Prasoloffs**, **Tarasevs** (Ducia Zakatchenko’s family), **Kiril Ilyin’s** family, **Shevchenkos**, **Dubenkos**, and **Brachunovs**. This same group traveled together to the Philippines, later. Chapter 32 (“Getting by”) continues the story of their stay in Shanghai. Valya says it best: “We always had bread.”

Chapter 33 (“Hvalyen”) is about how the Chinese steamer Hvalyen took the group to a Philippines island as a temporary solution before their departure for another country. Father Pustobaef explained to the group that President Quirino had compassion for all the Russian refugees and offered them refuge on an island. One incident stood out in Valya’s mind: she was the only one along with her father who didn’t experience seasickness as the ocean waves tossed the ship from side to side. Of course, there were plenty of prayers for a safe journey to their destination. The storm subsided, and they reached the island of Samar after sailing past extensive wreckage from the war. Chapter 35 (“Life begins in the Philippine island of Samar”) relates how the group was transported to a smaller island named Tubabao in January 1949. They were given military barracks to stay in for a while. Afterwards, large tents were set up for the growing number of refugees.



Map of the Philippines indicating the location of Tubabao

Chapter 36 (“Meduza”) is about an incident with the “Meduza” (jellyfish) that inhabited the waters around the island. Everyone was just getting used to the tropical, humid weather, and the children loved playing in the clear water at the beach, which, unawares to them, was infested with stinging jellyfish that wrapped themselves around their legs. Valya tells about the insufferably painful incident: “When I had no more tears to cry, I noticed a meduza or jellyfish wrapped around my leg, so I pried off all the tentacles, and the places where it stung me became bright red and swollen.” Needless to say, Valya was taken to the camp hospital, where she was given an injection, ice packs and some ointment for her skin. It was a lesson learned. She needed to wipe the tentacles off and keep swimming.

Chapter 37 (“The Kitchens”) gives an account of how 5,000 people were well fed each day, mainly on a diet of rice with **katleti** (meatballs), fruit compot, bread, and **gribovniy sok** (mushroom juice, similar to a kombucha beverage). An interesting side story is included of how Vanya Zakatchenko, with his mechanical skills, helped assemble large tanks for hot water for the camp. Chapter 38 (“Very good aim”) has an interesting story that is amusing to children, of how Valya was hit with a banana by a monkey hanging in a tree. Chapter 39 (“the Power Plant”) continues building on the resources the refugees had at the camp. This time father Pustobaef helped engineer the building of a power plant to provide electricity in the camp.

[Interlude: copies of documents, p. 181-186]



Young people from our church. Many pictured here were lifetime friends. I'm the blondie on the right end of the second row. Tonya is on the right end of the front row.

Chapter 40 ("Arrival in San Francisco") is a fitting conclusion to the story of Valya leaving the island on the military steamer General Haan and arriving in San Francisco on January 25, 1951. The Pustobaeff family was brought to Geary & 4th, to a 3-story house rented by the church (in a hall below the apartments). Here they lived for a while with 6 families, 25 people on each floor. The father was able to get a decent-paying job at Bethlehem Steel, where a lot of Russian refugees worked, and eventually he saved enough money to rent an apartment on Russian Hill (aka Potrero Hill) near the Mission District, overlooking the San Francisco Bay. And so, the journey was over. Life in the United States of America began a new chapter in their lives.

The book ends with a glossary of Russian words used and their meaning in English.

Also, since the book is "A Memoir for my Family," Valya makes sure to give her blessing and a benediction for the children in her family: "The stories of God's handiwork continue, of course, because life continues. May you be blessed, my children and children's children, by God's hand in all that you do. Stay in His will and pray often, and you too will live lives of adventure in God."

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace
May His favor be upon you and a thousand generations
And your family and your children and their children
And their children

May His presence go before you and behind you
And beside you, all around you and within you

He is with you in the morning, in the evening

In your coming and your going

In your weeping and rejoicing

He is for you

Amen

-excerpt from The Blessing based on Numbers 6:24-26

(Elevation Worship, Kari Jobe, Cody Carnes)



<https://wigowsky.com/RGT/GearySt/Philippines.jpg>

Tubabao, Philippines



Valya is in the center of this photo

What follows are photos from the **Geary Street Church** in San Francisco, where Valya attended. Names of people in the photos are included in the chapter on the Geary Street Church (Chapter 4).

<https://wigowsky.com/RGT/Church/Ch4.pdf>



SF

CA







Valya was my Sunday School teacher at the Geary Street Church in San Francisco.

Violet (Valentina) Dubenko

February 7, 1937 - July 25, 2022 (85 years old)

Daly City, California

<https://www.echovita.com/us/obituaries/ca/daly-city/violet-dubenko-14994418>

<https://www.sullivansfuneralandcremation.com/obituaries/Violet-Valentina-Dubenko?obId=25466450>

Funeral Service

Thursday, August 4, 2022 10:00AM

Duggans Serra Mortuary 500 Westlake Ave. Daly City, CA 94014

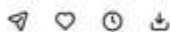
Final Resting Place Cypress Lawn Olivet 1601 Hillside Blvd Colma , CA 94014

<https://vimeo.com/734245535/57fed6aafc> Violet Dubenko - Livestream - 8/4/2022 - 10:00am



Violet Dubenko - Livestream - 8/4/2022 - 10:00am

2 years ago



Transcript

Duggan's Serra Mortuary [Follow](#)

Violet Dubenko - Livestream - 8/4/2022 - 10:00am

Streamed on Aug 4, 2022 at 11:18 am

Transcript

think I can relate to that being the little one. So guys you have the very best parts of mom and

00:28:15

you and I love you very much. I have a lot more to say so hang in there. Mom was

00:28:21

born Valentina davidovna. Push the boyev on Sunday, February 7th, 1937 includesha, China her parents were David isakovich and Natasha kuzmeenichna who are both

00:28:28

from udoif Russia. Her parents escaped a violent persecution during the Bolshevik Revolution and along with many Cossack Russian friends encountered all kinds of darkness and

00:28:41

miracles. God LED them to Western China where they could raise a family in. Peace. Mom spent her childhood living and traveling

00:28:52

Svetlana, daughter of Valya, reads the obituary:

“I’m going to start by reading a short part of Mom’s book. This is her book – Svetlana shows “My Memories of my Childhood in China.” Very short, I promise. The title of this chapter is called ‘Very Good Aim’ (chapter 38).

“Living on this island was one of the most special times of my life. As kids, we weren’t allowed to go into the jungle,, but one time Tonya and I were near the edge of the jungle, and we heard monkeys. We wanted to go see them up close, so we went looking for them. We followed their funny sounds further into the jungle when suddenly the monkeys started screeching at the top of their lungs. We looked around but could not see any parts of them. They were hiding their bodies from us, and we could not even see a tail. But they were loud, and we knew they were there. Then, one of them attacked me with a banana! Yes, a monkey threw a banana at me, and it hit me right in the back of my head. Instantly, my sister and I decided that it would be wise to turn around and leave the jungle. As soon as we ran out of sight, the monkeys became silent, and we understood they did not want our company. From that day, we learned to stick to the beach instead of the jungle.”

“Mamochka, a pretty funny story. My name is Svetlana, and Valya was my mother. And I need you to pray that we don’t cry right now. I am the last of her six children, and this is one of many stories Mom shared with us in her book, and it was about her childhood in China. She worked hard to write down these stories and turned them into a memory for us. And we have seen a wonderful side of her through them. She was very curious and sweet and vibrant and even a little bit sneaky. And through her stories I feel I’ve learned a lot more about my five big brothers and sisters as well, because they are so much like her. I can see why John is such a Defender – for how things should be, the things that he finds true. And he’s loyal to the end, to his family, just like her. And how Mike can be creative and resourceful, making something amazing out of nothing. And that’s something Mom had to do most of her life. And how Danny has the gift of pleasantry – his playful character and bubbly nature is so comfortable and loving. Just like Mom when she wasn’t weighed down with hardship. And that’s probably why they got along so well. And I’m not surprised that Zina is so gifted in the kitchen, after hours

of torture and slavery in the kitchen with Mama. Mom taught her how to cook with love first and food second. And she's been everybody's nurse along the way, always trying to make it better. Just like Mom. And Gail is just as much a peacemaker as Mom ever was, knowing how to choose the right battle, how to lead others by serving, and always encouraging us to pray. And every one of them just keeps going; even when they feel done, they persevere. I have witnessed this as the youngest. I have seen them do life. And there's not a lazy one in the bunch, and they just do the hard work, like our Mom.

So, I want to say that even though she's not with us, I have all of you, and that's really important for me. But there was also a time in her childhood, and those stories are in this book, when Mom was just a little too little. And she tried to come along to everyone else's adventures anyway, just to prove that she was able – and I think I can relate to that, being the little one. So, guys, you have the best parts of Mom in you, and I love you very much. I have a lot more to say, so hang in there.

Mama was born Valentina Davidovna Pustobaef on Sunday, February 7, 1937, in Gulja, China. Her parents were David Isaakovich and Nadezhda Kuzmenichna, who are both from Uralsk, Russia. Her parents escaped a violent persecution during the Bolshevik Revolution and along with many Cossack Russian friends encountered all kinds of darkness and miracles. God led them to Western China where they could raise a family in peace. Mom spent her childhood living and traveling across the length of China and places like Gulja (Kulja), Urumqi, Hami, Lanzhou, and Shanghai. In 1949, her family eventually escaped the rise of Communism in China into the safety of the Philippines, where they lived on a remote island, maybe with some of you. There a tent city was formed for 6,000 White Russian refugees. After their ocean steamer was nearly lost at sea, they were deposited on an almost empty island, given some tents, old army supplies, and tin food, and told to survive. And it may have appeared tragic, but for them, it was a paradise considering where they had been. When I looked on a travel site for Tubabao -- that's the remote island where they lived – it said Tubabao is the definition of nowhere. There's no running water, pests are everywhere. It is so far removed from even the poor man's civilization, but the scenery is beautiful, and there's a story of courage to be admired by the White Russians who

inhabited it and brought it to life long ago. Mom made great memories of life in the Philippines.

In January 1951, her family stepped off a boat and settled in San Francisco as one of hundreds of refugee families from China. Many of them stuck together as a strong community, started a church, and were each other's glue through all of this. She arrived as a 13-year-old, attended Horace Mann Middle School, like some of us. And she graduated from Mission High School. She married our father, Peter Dubenko, when she was 22 years old, and the rest is history. Mom had a few jobs: she was a clerk at Model City's Agency, and her claim to fame there was knowing actor Danny Glover, who was just getting a start in his career, and he would come to Mom's desk and hang out while he picked up his weekly paycheck. And so, she loved seeing every movie he made. Her favorite Danny Glover movie was "Bat 21" – if you haven't seen it go home and watch it. It was a war movie. She loved war movies and Jackie Chan movies, and one's a Chuck Norris, and she loved reruns of Perry Mason, and really scary stuff that I didn't know about, but Zina can tell you about it.

At the Pacific Telephone Company where she worked, she was in charge. Well, she worked in the Yellow Pages Division, and it was in charge of the letter "M." I don't even know if Yellow Pages exist now. And after raising her six children, which is probably the most impressive of her jobs, she also spent 25 years working as a teacher's aide in the San Francisco Public School District. She volunteered her time, also.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, our Russian Church began to sponsor Slavic families to come to San Francisco, some of your families. Mom dove right into this ministry. I remember taking drives with her, looking for apartments for rent for incoming families all the time. When we'd spot a vacancy, my job was to write down the phone number on the sign in the window and make the first call. Families would arrive at the airport, and she would meet them, drive them to their new home that she arranged with, furniture she helped find. She would explain how life works in America. She would help them pick out clothes from our donation station at church, teach them where the employment centers are, all of it. She wasn't the only one,

of course, who did this, but she was devoted to help, and she built quite a family of people who were grateful for her help and loved her.

Speaking of family, she was the third of five daughters. Her first sister Maryusa contracted measles as a toddler and never recovered. Her second sister, Antonina, was six years older than Mom, and Mom followed her everywhere. However, Mom was six years too little for some of those activities. So, when Mom got to do something amazing with her, she was really head over heels. She really looked up to her, and interestingly, we buried Aunt Antonina six years ago, and now Mom gets to do something amazing with Tyotyia Tonia again, and this time it's to see the face of Jesus. And I bet Mom is just thrilled to be with her. And Gail knows this better, but in the last days, she called out for her Mama and her Papa, and for Tonia. So, Tonya had four children and her son, our cousin Mike Darfeev is here today with his daughter Mandy and Tonya's grandson Mikey. Mikey White, I'm going to call you Mikey forever. Mama's younger sister, Raisya, was born two years after her. My mom talked about Tyotyia Raya a lot. She loved to brush her hair as a child and help her with her braids. Tyotyia Raya lives a long distance away, in British Columbia, Canada. If you're watching, we love you. Tyotyia Raya has four children, and two of them are here today, our cousins David and Pete Dumanovsky, and the wives. Sorry, five children. Forgive me. Luba is mom's younger sister by four years. And in their adult years, Luba and Mom were two blonde petite peas in a pod. Some people used to ask if they were twins. They continued to live near each other and raise their children together. Luba has four children and with us are two of her sons, our cousins, Tony and Dan Shevchenko and his wife Lily. Thank you for being here.

Our Mamochka leaves behind six children and their dearly loved spouses. Twelve grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. I'd like to quickly introduce them to you, and we have two of her seven great grandchildren here and they are still resting in their momma's bellies over there. And over there. John Dubenko and his son, David. Just raise your hand. Zina and Bo Price and their children, Zach and Alex. And her husband Jeff, Hannah and Maddy. Mike and Rita Dubenko, hiding here with their children Michelle and husband Dan, Tony and wife. Kayla's not here, and Samantha. Mom's

favorite son, we all know it's okay, with his new Canadian citizenship. We love you, anyway. That's okay, Danny Dubenko and his awesome wife Valerie. Gail and Dan Bear, and their children Ilana and Andrew.

And again, I'm Svetlana and my husband is Steve Robinson, and my cute kids are Mila and Liam. Now my sister Gail is going to share some memories about Mama." <https://www.facebook.com/sdubenko>

Svetlana Dubenko Robinson My sweet little girl wrote a poem for her Babushka, **Violet Dubenko** and read it during the burial. Here it is for guests who missed it.

Better than before.

Once upon a time, it was a time of joy.
Now, it's the opposite.
So when I feel sad I ask, "Why cry?"
Aren't we supposed to rejoice?
While she was here, in her final year,
she mostly felt pain and fear.
But now that she's gone, why sing a sad song?
When you could say, "Violet is better than before."

Once upon a time, it was a time of sadness.
Each person trying to remember.
So encourage them all, and ask, "why cry?
Violet is better than before."
She's in a place winning a race,
with legs she can move on her own.
Strong legs, never stopping.
Smart brain, never failing.
Heart of gold, never dying.
Our memories, never ending.
"Violet is better than before."

-Mila Robinson
08/04/2022
For my Babushka

VIOLET DUBENKO - BELOVED MOTHER TO JOHN P DUBENKO, BO ZINA PRICE, MIKE DUBENKO, RITA DUBENKO, DANIEL DUBENKO, VALERY DUBENKO, GAIL DUBENKO BAER, DAN BAER, SVETLANA DUBENKO ROBINSON AND STEVE ROBINSON (JULY 26, 2022)

WE'D LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR SWEET, DARLING MAMACHKA TOOK HER LAST BREATH YESTERDAY, MONDAY JULY 25TH. IN DECEMBER, THE DOCTORS TOLD US SHE HAD DAYS TO LIVE, AND SHE CALMLY FOUGHT BACK COMPLICATIONS WITH HER HEART AND KIDNEYS. A DETERMINED MATRIARCH, SHE DEFIED THE DOCTORS AND GAVE US SEVEN EXTRA MONTHS OF JOY. EVEN AS HER HEALTH DECLINED, HER SILLY SENSE OF HUMOR BROUGHT US SMILES TO THE VERY END. SHE DID NOT GIVE UP, NOT ONCE. HER RICH AND STORIED LIFE POINTS US TO CHRIST EVERY STEP OF THE WAY AND STILL REMINDS US TO PUSH THROUGH LIFE'S TRIALS WITH GOD'S HELP. WE MISS HER SO MUCH AND KNOW MANY OF YOU HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF HER AS WELL. WE REJOICE THAT SHE IS CELEBRATING WITH YOUR BABUSHKAS AND DEDUSHKAS AND MOTHERS AND FATHERS RIGHT NOW IN HEAVEN. THANKS TO YOU, OUR FRIENDS, FOR KNOWING HER AND LOVING HER. SHE WAS A HUMBLE SERVANT WHO ADORED HER GOD, HER FAMILY AND HER CHURCH. IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN US TO SAY GOODBYE ONE LAST TIME, SERVICE DETAILS ARE BELOW. WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU. A CASUAL RSVP TO ANY OF THE CHILDREN OR BELOW THIS POST WOULD BE NICE, AS IT WOULD HELP US AS WE PLAN THE DETAILS- BUT BY NO MEANS REQUIRED. MAMA LOVED COLORS, SO WE INVITE YOU TO WEAR A COLOR THAT BRINGS YOU JOY. *BLACK ATTIRE IS NOT REQUIRED.*

FUNERAL SERVICE FOR OUR MOTHER:

VALENTINA (VIOLET) DAVIDOVNA PUSTOBAEFF DUBENKO

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 2022 10:00 AM

DUGGENS SERRA MORTUARY 500 WESTLAKE AVE, DALY CITY, CA 94014





<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/25468475/violet-valentina-dubenko>

Violet (Valentina) Dubenko Obituary

We'd like to announce that our sweet, darling Mamachka took her last breath yesterday, Monday July 25th. In December, the doctors told us she had days to live, and she calmly fought back complications with her heart and kidneys. A determined matriarch, she defied the doctors and gave us seven extra months of joy. Even as her health declined, her silly sense of humor brought us smiles to the very end. She did not give up, not once. Her rich and storied life points us to Christ every step of the way and still reminds us to push through life's trials with God's help. We miss her so much and know many of you have fond memories of her as well. We rejoice that she is celebrating with YOUR Babushkas and Dedushkas and mothers and fathers right now in HEAVEN. Thanks to you, our friends, for knowing her and loving her. She was a humble servant who adored her God, her family and her church. If you'd like to join us to say goodbye one last time, service details are below. We would love to see you. A casual RSVP to any of the children or below this post would be nice, as it would help us as we plan the details- but by no means required. Mama loved colors, so we invite you to wear a color that brings you joy. *Black attire is not required.*

Funeral Service for our mother: Valentina (Violet) Davidovna Pustobaeff Dubenko Thursday, August 4, 2022 10:00 AM Duggan's Serra Mortuary 500 Westlake Ave, Daly City, CA 94014

Livestream Link: <https://vimeo.com/734245535/57fed6aafc> Burial immediately after chapel service: Olivet Gardens of Cypress Lawn Memorial Park 1601 Hillside Blvd, Colma, CA 94014 Luncheon for guests to follow burial gathering In lieu of flowers, kindly consider a donation to a cause close to our hearts-- an Emergency Relief Effort for Ukrainian Refugees, in honor of our Mom. Visit the link below for an easy PayPal payment with the comment "Ukraine 2022 in Honor of Violet Dubenko".

Donate:<http://www.newmanna.org/donate.html> We'll be informed of your generosity so it won't go unmissed.

Tribute Wall

Welcome to Violet (Valentina) Dubenko's memorial page. Share your

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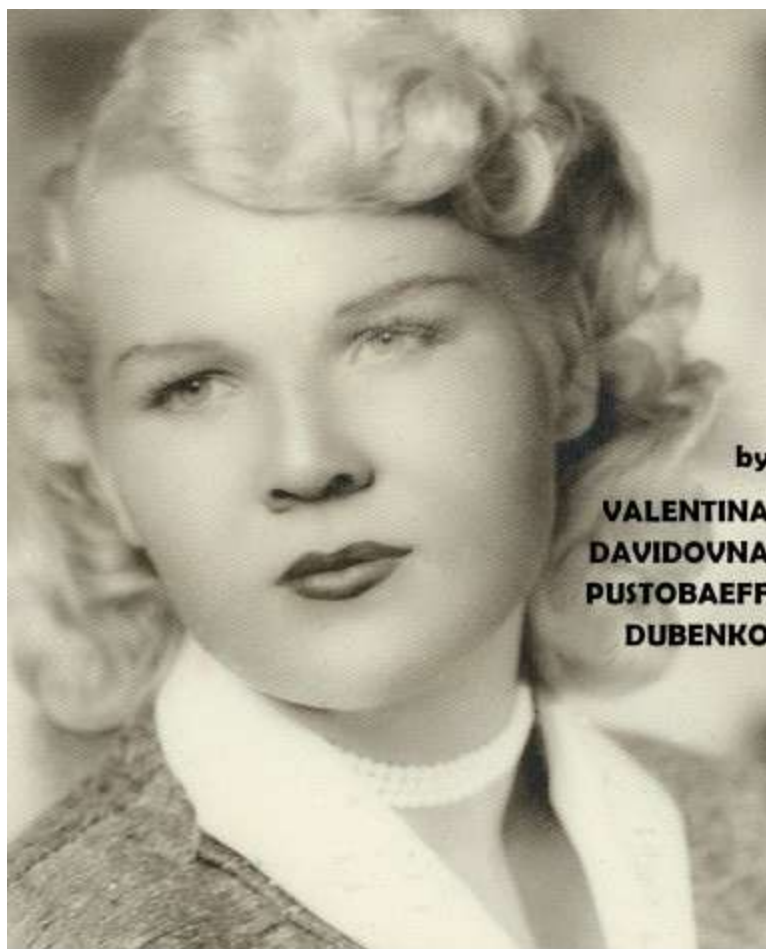


Paul J. Wigowsky

a few seconds ago

Valya Pustobaeff was my Sunday School teacher at the Geary Street Church in San Francisco. I'm posting three photos I have from that era. Valya is in all three photos, pictured with the young ladies of our congregation. -- by Paul J. Wigowsky





by
**VALENTINA
DAVIDOVNA
PUSTOBAEFF
DUBENKO**

**MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD
IN CHINA: A MEMOIR**
for my family