

CONTENTS

♦ ♦ ♦

Chronology: Russia After Stalin	ix
Remarks from an Accomplice	3

ONE ♦ THE CONSOLATION OF APOCALYPSE

Snatches of Street Noise and Kitchen Conversations (1991–2001)	15
--	----

Ten Stories in a Red Interior

On the Beauty of Dictatorship and the Mystery of Butterflies Crushed Against the Pavement	41
On Brothers and Sisters, Victims and Executioners . . . and the Electorate	78
On Cries and Whispers . . . and Exhilaration	91
On the Lonely Red Marshal and Three Days of Forgotten Revolution	107
On the Mercy of Memories and the Lust for Meaning	142
On a Different Bible and a Different Kind of Believer	165
On the Cruelty of the Flames and Salvation from Above	187
On the Sweetness of Suffering and the Trick of the Russian Soul	210
On a Time When Anyone Who Kills Believes That They Are Serving God	236
On the Little Red Flag and the Smile of the Axe	248

TWO ♦ THE CHARMS OF EMPTINESS

Snatches of Street Noise and Kitchen Conversations (2002–2012)	285
--	-----

Ten Stories in the Absence of an Interior

On Romeo and Juliet . . . Except Their Names Were Margarita and Abulfaz	305
On People Who Instantly Transformed After the Fall of Communism	320
On a Loneliness That Resembles Happiness	337
On Wanting to Kill Them All and the Horror of Realizing That You Really Wanted to Do It	350
On the Old Crone with a Braid and the Beautiful Young Woman	366
On a Stranger's Grief That God Has Deposited on Your Doorstep	389

On Life the Bitch and One Hundred Grams of Fine Powder in a Little White Vase	403
On How Nothing Disgusts the Dead and the Silence of Dust	414
On the Darkness of the Evil One and "The Other Life We Can Build Out of This One"	434
On Courage and What Comes After	454
 Notes from an Everywoman	 469
Translator's Acknowledgments	471