THE TWO NEIGHBORS’ LAUNDRY

House to house, one next to the other, there lived two neighbors and they chatted with one another, to so speak.

Tsjeta noticed that when her neighbor, Petra, did laundry, the weather was always beautiful—the sun shone and whitened the laundry. But whenever she wanted to do laundry it was always raining. This bothered her and she envied her neighbor and finally concluded that her neighbor controlled the weather with some sort of charm. One day, when again it began to rain as soon as she had stretched out the laundry, she couldn’t hold out any longer and went to her neighbor.

"Petra, I must ask you something, tell me truthfully, you mustn’t lie to me."

"Tell me, Tsjeta, what is it you wish to ask?"

"Petra, do you see that it’s beginning to rain just when I’ve done laundry, but when you do laundry you always have sunshine. Tell me, how is it that you pick a beautiful day for laundry?"

Knowing how dull Tsjeta’s mind was, Petra immediately planned a joke because she was clever.

"Just as you ask me, Tsjeta, I will tell you. There is no great miracle. When I intend to do laundry, just as soon as I get up I take hold of my husband’s rod and raise it, and then let it drop. If it falls to the left, then I don’t do laundry—the weather will be bad; but if it falls to the right, I begin to do laundry because I know that it will be sunny. There you have it, that’s the whole trick!"

The following day Tsjeta wanted to do laundry and as soon as she awoke she took hold of her husband’s rod. He was surprised and asked her:

“What’s this, wife, what’s gotten into you at dawn already?"

"Hush, husband!" she said to him and pulled at him. The rod became stiff so that she couldn’t drop it to see to which side it would fall. Immediately she left her husband and went to Petra’s. While still at the gate she asked:

"Petra, hey Petra, my husband’s prick straightenened when I raised it to find out if today would be good for laundry. Now what should I do?"

Petra burst out laughing and said to her:

"Forget the laundry, Tsjeta, and get to fucking!"

—Translated by Victor A. Friedman