

PROFESSOR. It's a lovely garden now, Sonia, lovely. I mean, not astonishingly, *movingly* lovely like Switzerland, like those practically incandescent meadows near the base of the Tschingelhorn in the Bernese Alps, but lovely all the same...

SONIA. Thanks. I think...

PICKLE. It's sometimes hard to tell if you are complimenting us or insulting us...

PROFESSOR. (*Cheerily...*) Isn't it?

VANYA. The...*Shingelhorn*...?

PROFESSOR. *Tschingelhorn*. With a "tsch" at the beginning...

VANYA. I've always wanted to go to Switzerland.

PROFESSOR. Sonia remember that couple we met at the Tschingelhorn? That terribly skinny ophthalmologist with the enormous mole...

SONIA. ...gynecologist...

PROFESSOR. ...on his face. Oh, yes, gynecologist. Not ophthalmologist?

SONIA. No.

PROFESSOR. Climatologist? I feel almost sure / that he—

SONIA. No. I know the difference between an eye, a vagina, and a hurricane.

PROFESSOR. Yes, well, Gynecologist. As the poet says: *Instabilis est memoriae amici*. Anyway, I swear, you could not have a conversation / with this man

VANYA. What does that mean?

PROFESSOR. Sorry?

VANYA. What does that *mean*? You know none of us speak Latin, why / would—

PROFESSOR. "The memory is a fickle friend." It's from Virgil.

VANYA. Then why the hell didn't / you just say...

PROFESSOR. Anyway, you could NOT speak with this...person...

VANYA. (*Overlapping.*) ...isn't language designed to communicate, not to...

PROFESSOR. without staring right at this incredible mole. I swear, it was not humanly possible. And he had a stutter, which I'm sure he developed in response to people staring at his...m-m-m-monolithic m-m-m-mole whenever he talked.

VANYA. I've never been anywhere...

PROFESSOR. Well, you must go! Travel! It's the only thing!

VANYA. Fascinating. An hour ago you said erudition was the only thing. Last night you said a great macchiato was the only thing. How many / only things...

PROFESSOR. Did someone say something? I heard a buzzing...a / gnat or...a fly or a...

VANYA. Yes, ha ha, very funny, very witty ha ha ha...

PROFESSOR. Travel is *enlightening*. It lets you know who you are and what really matters. You can never really understand where you are until you leave.

VANYA. And you understand, do you? Where you "are"?

PROFESSOR. I believe I do, yes.

VANYA. Where the hell are you, then? No, seriously, I really want to know. Where are you? From what great height do you presume to pontificate and / lecture us

PROFESSOR. (*Beating the air...*) There it is again, that annoying gnat...

VANYA. I'm serious, we've been listening to you hold forth for / all these years and I

SONIA.

Uncle Vanya, please  
don't...

VANYA. All right. Down, boy, down! Heel! I mustn't talk, never ever talk!