IN MEMORIAM

Ol'ga Grigor'evna Rastvorova, 1933–2010

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Ol'ga Grigor'evna Rastvorova, an assistant professor, a candidate of biological sciences, and the oldest researcher of the Department of Soil Science and Soil Ecology of the Faculty of Biology and Soil Sciences of St. Petersburg State University, passed away on January 12, 2010, at age 76. She worked at St. Petersburg State University for over 45 years.

Ol'ga Rastvorova was born on July 11, 1933, in Leningrad. In 1956, she graduated from the Department of Soil Science of Leningrad University with a diploma with honor. She was assigned to the Department of Soil Science, but, since this position was cancelled at the last moment, worked at the Institute of Land Improvement for two years, being involved in both field and laboratory studies. In 1958, she returned to her department and never left it again, first working as a senior laboratory assistant (six years, including teacher's responsibilities), next as an assistant lecturer

(seven years), and then as assistant professor (more than twenty years). She gave her last lecture on April 30, 2006, and then retired. She defended her Ph.D. thesis in 1968 and accepted an assistant professor's position in 1972. From 2005, Ol'ga did not work at her department on a permanent basis, but her colleagues continued to feel her presence and her interest in the life of the department and, in turn, felt a need to keep in touch with her.

Being a true scientist, she taught students of the Department of Soil Sciences and Soil Ecology of St. Petersburg State University for more than fifty years. She was an author of several textbooks and more than 150 scientific publications in the field of ecology and soil sciences. She also was the author of the well-known textbook *Practical Guide to Soil Physics* (1983) and the coauthor and editor of a series of guide books on field soil studies, soil physics, and soil chemistry

(1980–2002). Ol'ga headed the group of authors from St. Petersburg who participate in the preparation of the fundamental work *Theory and Practice of the Chemical Analysis of Soils* together with scientists from the Faculty of Soil Science of Moscow State University (2006).

Rastvorova was a scientific adviser for dozens of students. She was a recognized expert not only in the field of soil physics but also in soil ecology and biology. Ol'ga Rastvorova was a tireless researcher and an active participant in international and national scientific conferences and workshops devoted to soil science and soil ecology, chemistry, physics, and biology.

For many years, Ol'ga Rastvorova was one of the leading teachers of the department. She headed the Soil Physics program. She developed and realized some new and original courses of lectures and gave them not only to the students of the Faculty of Biology and Soil Science but also to the students of the Faculty of Geology. She performed a huge volume of research work; it is enough to mention a ten-year cycle of observations on the soil moisture in the Les na Vorskle forest reserve performed in the 1970s within the framework of the International Biological Program.

Ol'ga Rastvorova was a permanent and benevolent editor of the materials of different scientific conferences organized by her department. She also edited many collected articles and monographs. Her almost long work at the Department of Soil Sciences and Soil Ecology allowed her to write a lot of so-called “anniversary” poems devoted to the birthdays of her colleagues and defenses of Ph.D. theses, as well as poetical scenarios for department celebrations. In spite of the momentary and festive character of this poetry, many of the poems have an undoubted literary value.

The main object of Rastvorova's studies was an oak forest located in the forest-steppe of the Belgorod region and protected since the reign of Peter the First. This forest determined not only her object of studies but also the themes of her poems (“The history of the Les na Vorskle forest reserve from Peter the First to Ipatov” (1959)) and her poems and texts devoted to her colleagues working in this reserve.

Later, fate decreed that Ol'ga met with another similar oak forest—Dubki—located at the former

Peter's residence in Sestroretsk. Settling in this town in 1985, Ol'ga studied the Dubki complex and the history of the palace and park ensemble. As a result, she wrote a series of scientific publications, one book (*The Oaks of Sestroretsk from the Epoch of Peter the First to Our Time: An Historical and Naturalistic Study* (2004)), several chapters in the multivolume edition *History of Sestroretsk* (2006, 2007), and a cycle of poems (“My Sestroretsk”).

Ol'ga was a very talented person, and her art could easily “animate” usual stones. She won many awards of festivals of folk arts, including international ones (1999, 2000), and poetic contests. She participated in the first University vernissage exhibition (2002) and was a permanent text writer for all the departmental celebrations. If she was involved in any activity, all she did was easy, beautiful, and interesting. Ol'ga was an active member of the Lukomor'e poetic club and was a winner of the contest for the best poem about Sestroretsk (1997) and the regional contest Poetic Voyage (2006). She wrote a book of memoirs *Memory of the Blockade* (2005) and was an author of poetic translations from the German language for a folk ensemble. She was a wonderful poet and a unique painter able to understand the soul of stones. She was a member of the club of regional studies and an honorary citizen of Sestroretsk, which became her second homeland.

All the colleagues and students of Ol'ga are mourning her death. We will always feel gratitude for her unique teaching talent and her inestimable contribution to the development of the fundamentals of soil science, including soil physics and soil chemistry. Ol'ga Rastvorova was a true teacher, because she not only taught young students the fundamentals of soil science but also formed their view of world while generously sharing her various talents with them.

Let Ol'ga be remembered forever!

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