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CHILDHOOD, MEMORY, AND THE COLD WAR

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Snowflake¹

Iveta Silova

Her most favorite New Year costume was made with the participation of all family members, which made it very special. The girl's mother, who worked as a nurse in the local hospital, brought home some medical gauze from work. It was then washed and heavily starched to create a ballerina-like tutu, which was a part of the snowflake look. The girl's grandmother sewed the costume, adding a sparkly silver garland from the New Year's tree—carefully attaching it to the edges of the tutu. But the most magical part was her father's construction of a snowflake crown! It was made of the silver lining from his cigarette boxes, carefully unfolded and straightened out, then glued onto the cardboard and cut and shaped into a delicate crown. The cigarette smell faintly emanated from the crown, but it did not bother the girl at all. It was a familiar smell associated with her father and it was comforting. It was as if her father was with the girl during all rehearsals and performances! The girl wore the costume with great joy and pride—she knew that nobody else would have exactly the same costume, although there would be many other snowflakes at the New Year's celebrations in the kindergarten.

1 This is a childhood memory produced as part of the Reconnect/Recollect project discussed in the introduction to this book.



Photographs of Iveta Silova dressed as a snowflake at her kindergarten New Year's party in Soviet Latvia, n.d. From Iveta Silova's family archive.