

*The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov, translated by Michael Frayn

KONSTANTIN:

Nina, I've cursed you, I've hated you, I've torn up your letters and your photographs - but not a moment when I didn't know that I was bound to you, heart and soul, for all eternity. It's not within my power to cease loving you. I've found my life unliveable - nothing but pain . . . It's as if my youth had suddenly been stripped from me - I feel I've been living in this world for ninety years. I say your name - I kiss the ground you've walked upon. Wherever I look I see your face - I see the tender smile that shone on me in the summer of my life . . .

I'm all alone. I've no one's affection to warm me - I'm as cold as the grave - and whatever I write, it's dry and stale and joyless. Stay here, Nina, I beg you, or else let me come with you.