



# Cherry Pierogi



director Olha Havrylova, producer Mykyta Moiseiev  
6' / Ukraine / Drama / 2D frame-by-frame

# SYNOPSIS

*Cherry Pierogi* tells the story of a single summer day shared by a grandmother and her granddaughter in rural Ukraine. Through the ordinary rhythm of the day — garden work, a bicycle ride, dinner — something quietly surfaces: the weight of a past the grandmother carries but never names. A film about intergenerational memory, told through warmth, habit, and the things left unspoken between the very young and the very old.



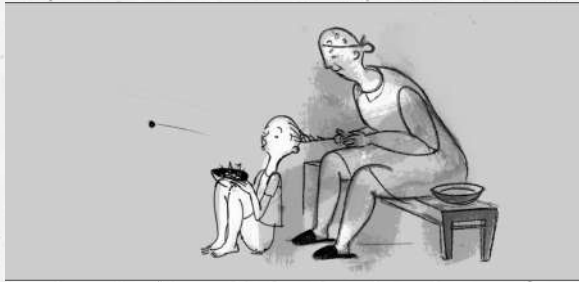
# BRIEF PROGRESS REPORT

The project is currently in the development phase. It was selected for the UK/UA Animation Lab (2024), and was pitched at the LINOLEUM Contemporary Animation and Media Art Festival (2024) and the Manchester Animation Festival (2024). It was also selected for the CEE Animation Workshop (2025) and participated in the Black Sea Animation Workshop (2025), where it won the opportunity to pitch at the MIFA Partners Pitch 2026.





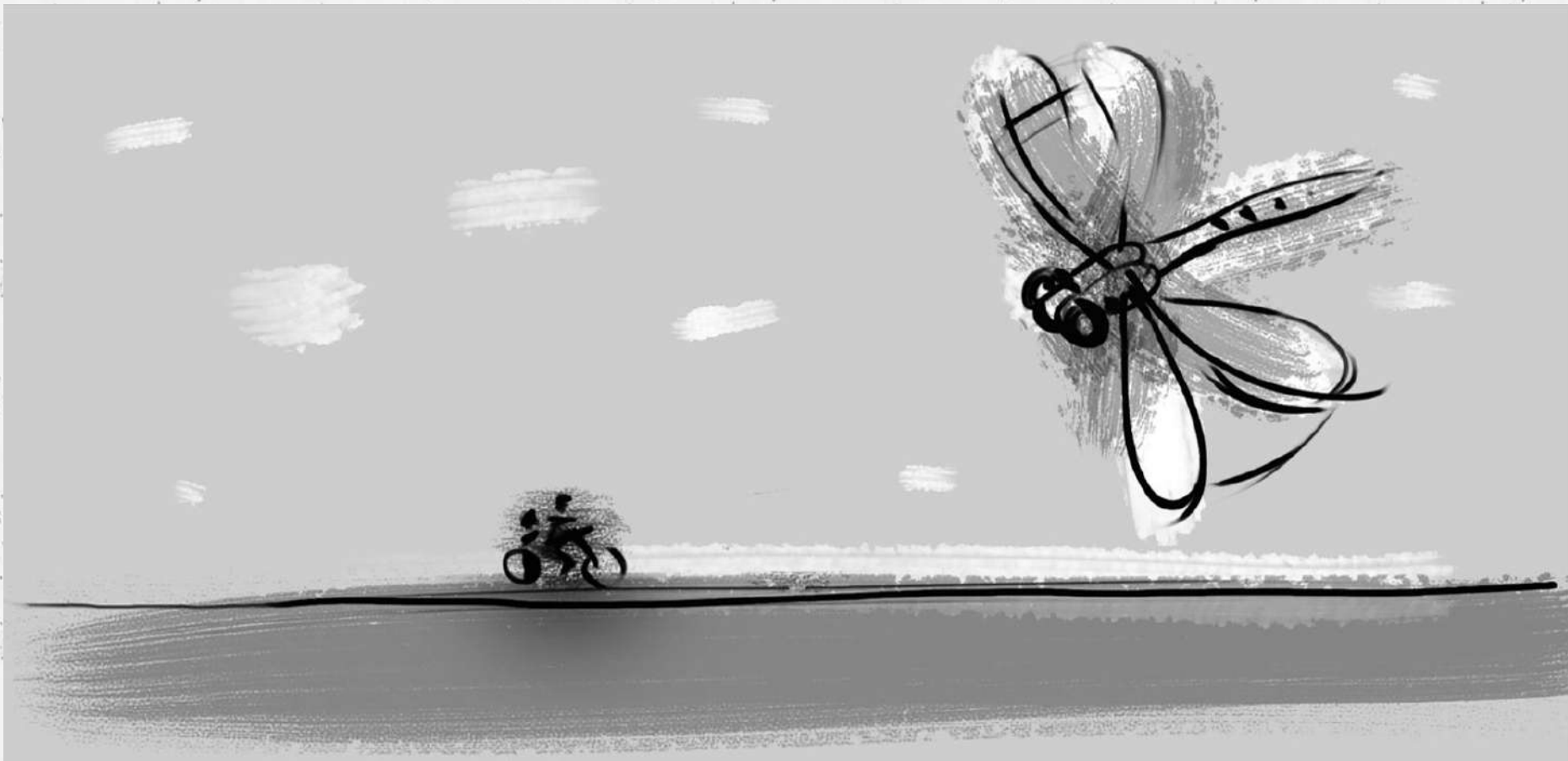
# STORYBOARD



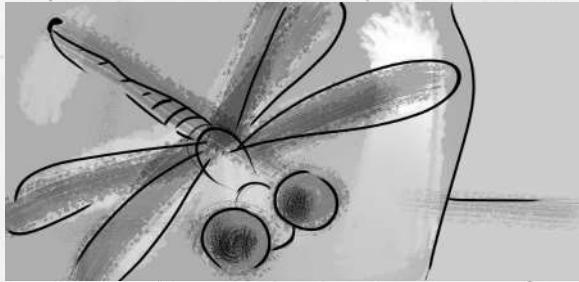
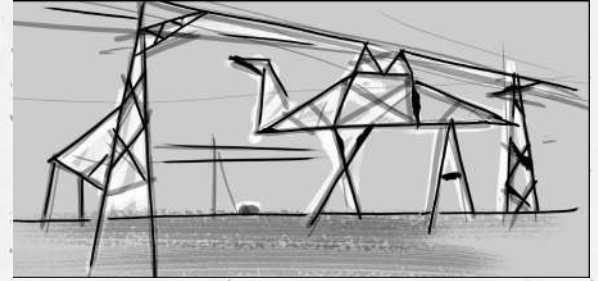
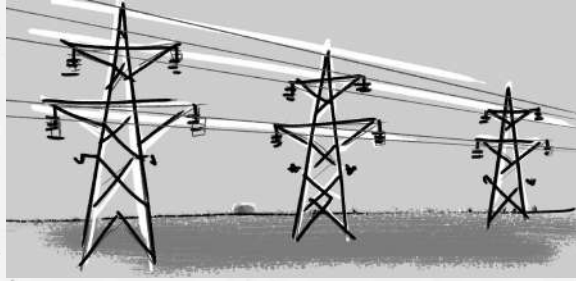
The events take place over the course of a single summer day in a Ukrainian village. In the morning, in the yard, a grandmother (65+) braids her granddaughter's (6-7) hair, wetting her hands in a bowl of water. The girl sits on a small stool, eating cherries from a plate.

-“Grandma, why can’t you sew on yourself?” the girl asks.

-“They say you can sew up your memory,” the grandmother replies.



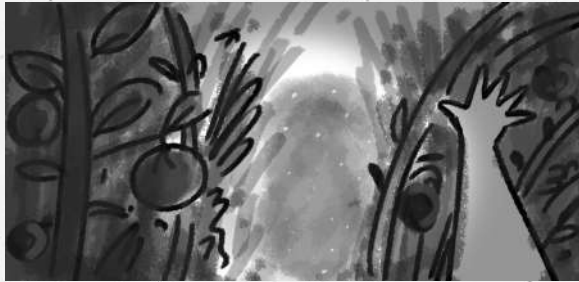
Grandma is riding a bike, while granddaughter is sitting on the rear rack. Butterflies flutter around. The air is shimmering with heat.



In the heat haze, the power line towers look like metal dinosaurs. They hum like may beetles. Doves are heard cooing. A dragonfly flies by. Snap! – and it's in a jar.

Granddaughter is standing in the middle of a green potato field. She's holding a glass jar with the dragonfly in it. The girl admires her catch. The dragonfly is twisting its head, its wings aflutter.

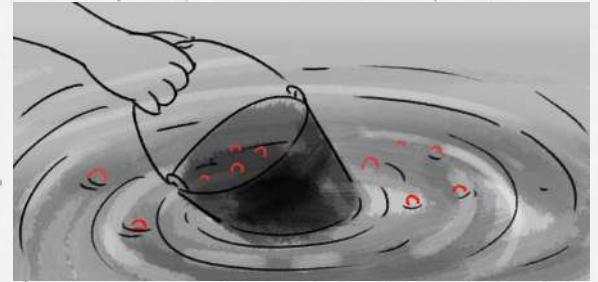
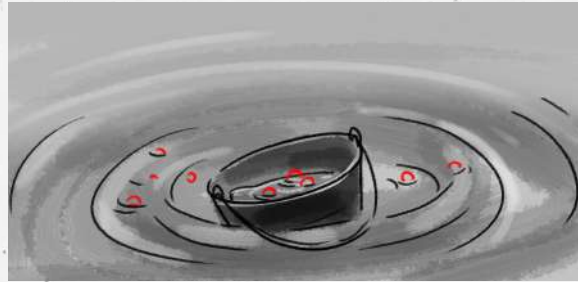
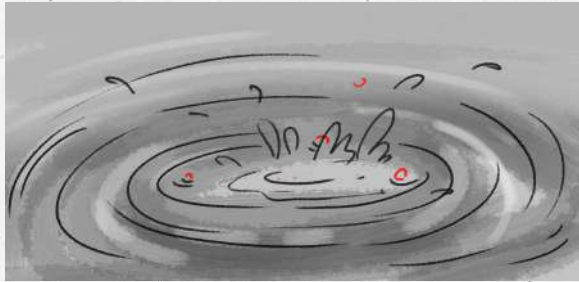
A distant voice, Grandma is calling the Granddaughter. The little girl plunges into the greenery of potato plants like a seasoned diver.



A black cat is stretched out like a panther, with eyes half-closed. The potato jungle as high as the little girl, Colorado potato beetles are crawling; Granddaughter parts the plant curtains, humming a counting-out rhyme.

GRANDDAUGHTER - Nana! It's real jungle in here!

GRANDMA -That's because the river floods the meadow each spring. Take this...



Granddaughter is sitting in a cherry tree eating cherries. On the adjacent branch, the bucket is hanging on an S-hook.

The branch snaps and the bucket falls.

Splash! - the bucket falls in the water.

Grandma's hand fishes it out.

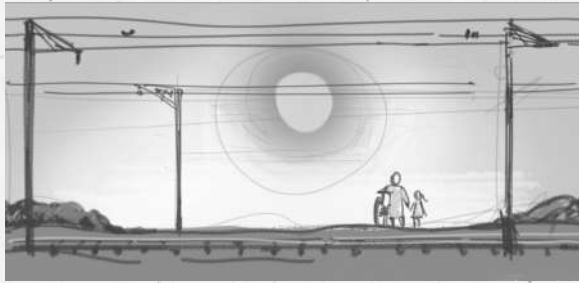
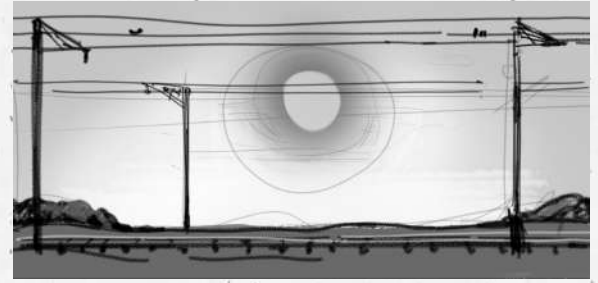


Grandma's hands pour the water out of the bucket into the potato patch.

The water flows between the plants like a river. Insects and squeaking field mice scatter, trying to flee from the flood. They scramble on the plants like on trees.

Grandma and Granddaughter are hauling the bicycle on top of the embankment. The bicycle is loaded with hoes and a big sack of vegetables.

he Grandma is pulling it by the handlebar and the Granddaughter is pushing it from behind. Her feet are slipping on the ground with the sound of crunching gravel.

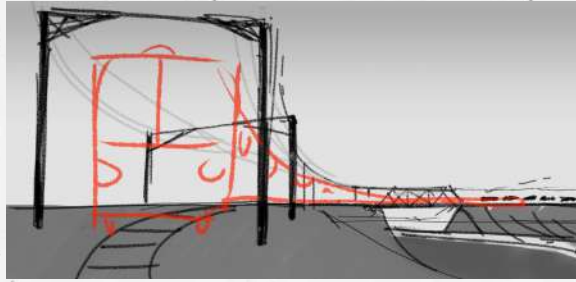
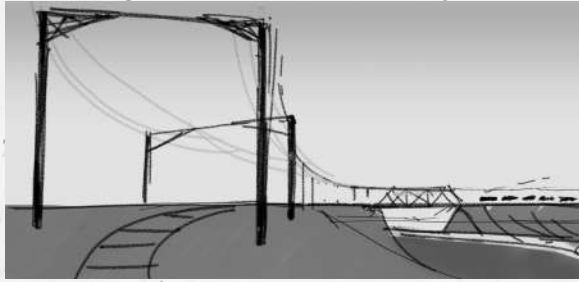


The red sun is approaching the horizon. Swallows are sitting on wires.

Granddaughter and Grandma are standing with the loaded bicycle in front of the tracks atop the embankment.

**GRANDDAUGHTER - Why do you need to plant so many vegetables? Your cellar is already full of them!**

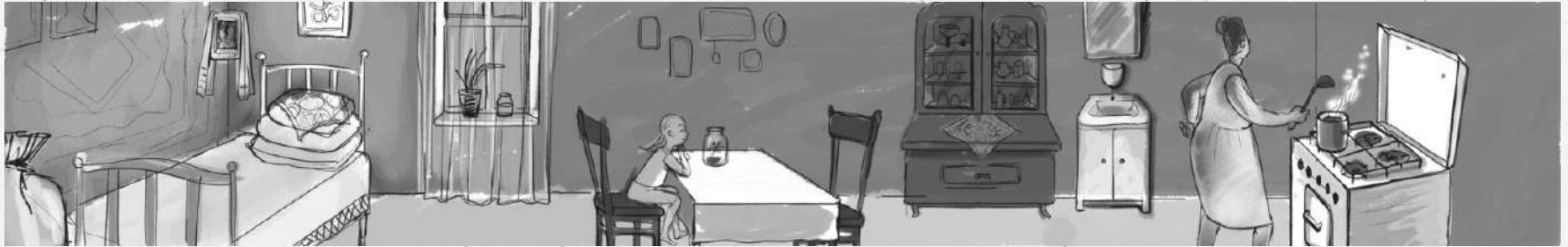
A loudspeaker makes a booming but unintelligible announcement about an arriving train.



A train is moving across the bridge in the distance.

In the foreground, the train moves across the screen. Through its windows, we see people eating, talking, and reading inside. In the gaps between the coaches, we see Granddaughter and Grandma getting on the bicycle and starting to ride away.

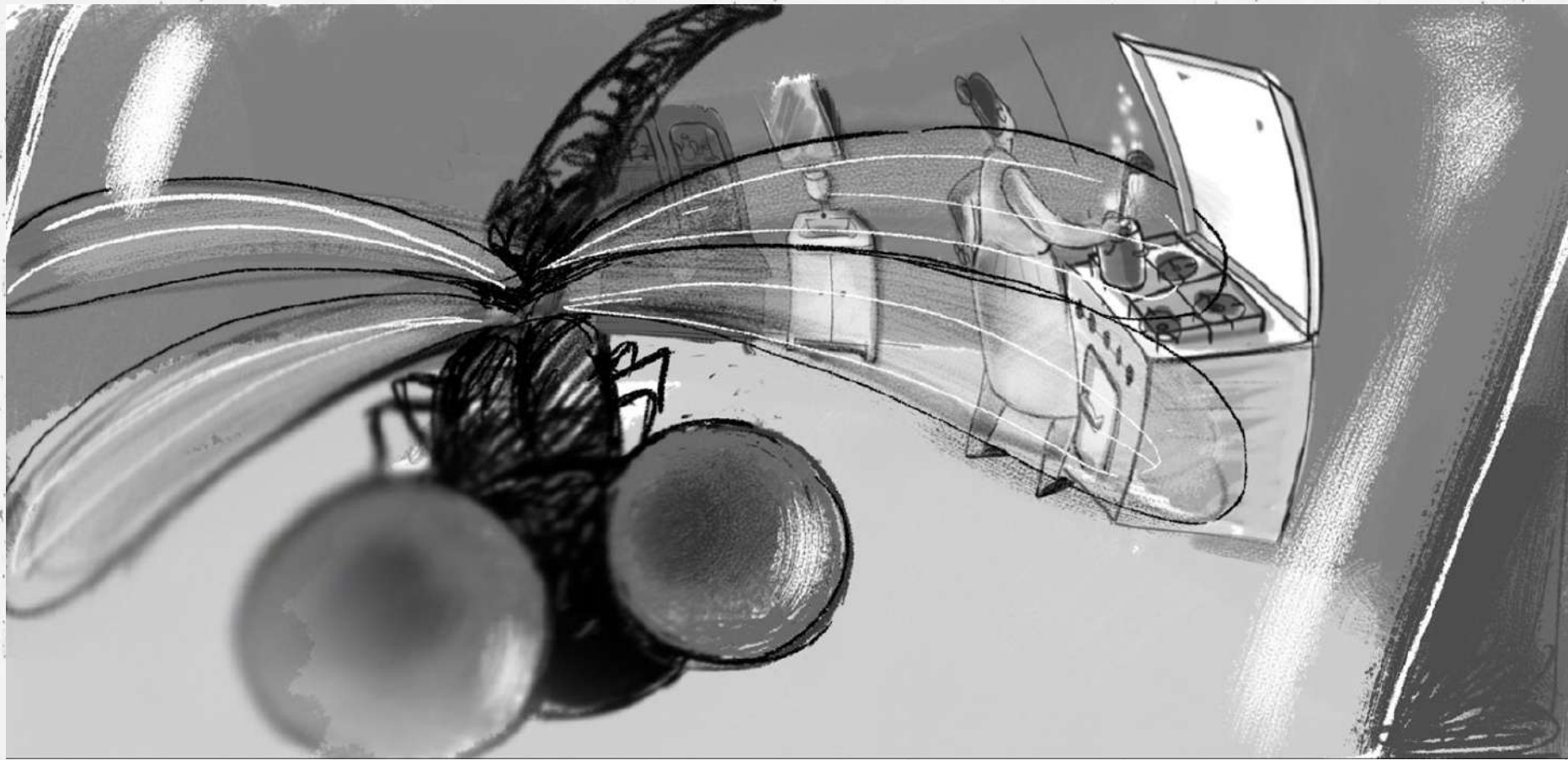
**GRANDMA (O.S.) - There were times when we had nothing to eat at all. Those were terrible times...**



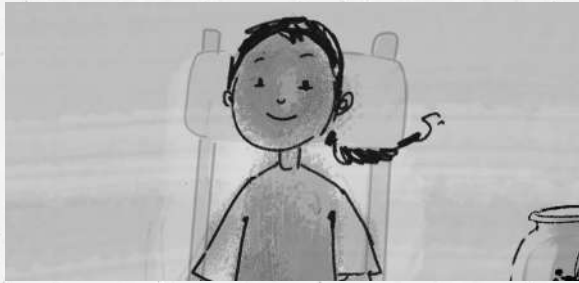
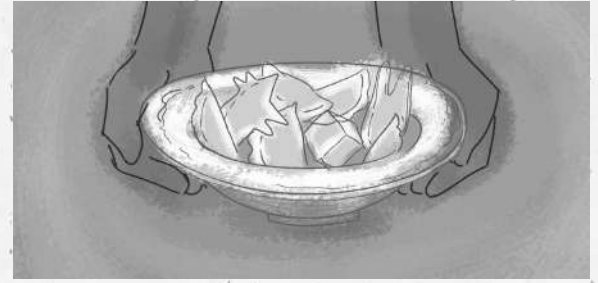
A railway signal dings. The train gives a loud whistle. As the last coach passes, the evening sets in.

The window of the last coach becomes the window of a house. Sounds of a busy kitchen come from inside.

On the stove, water is boiling in a saucepot. Enveloped in steam, Grandma uses a huge skimmer to take something out of the saucepot. She hums in the process. Granddaughter starts to sing along.



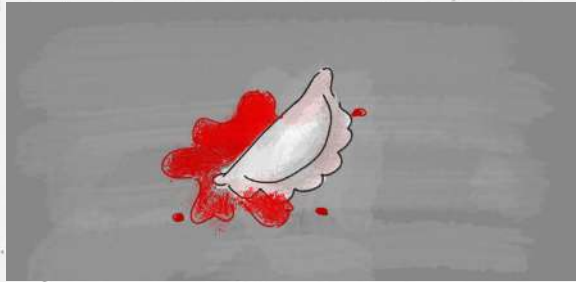
Seen through the glass, the Grandma is moving by the stove in the distance. She looks small and curved, as if viewed through the spyglass in reverse.



The Granddaughter is at the table staring at the dragonfly. Her nose almost touches the jar.

The Grandma sets a bowlful of pierogi on the table. They have various shapes, some are regular pierogi, and others resemble animals. Granddaughter picks up a pierogi with a fork and looks at it turning the fork in her hand.

**GRANDDAUGHTER - So if I want to forget something, should I just sew a button onto my clothes while wearing them?**



The Dog is poking about under the table.

- Plop!

The girl accidentally drops one pierogi onto the floor. It bursts open, and red cherry juice spills out of it. The dog instantly runs over and starts licking the juice, then eats the pierogi.



The girl notices that her grandmother looks upset. She doesn't like food being wasted. But she does not scold her granddaughter.

The girl's whole face is smeared with cherry juice. Grandma's hand wipes her cheeks and lips with a handkerchief.

**GRANDMA - There are things you won't be able to forget, even if you sew on a hundred buttons.**

## character: GRANDMOTHER

A woman who survived famine in childhood, war in her youth, and hard labor in a collective farm. She remembers dead bodies in the streets, grass instead of food; she also knows of cases of cannibalism. Later there were new hardships — yet she still held her family together. Now the children have moved away, her husband is gone, but she continues to work: it restores her sense of belonging to a greater life. She has not become cynical or bitter. She loves nature and her granddaughter. She understands she will not always be there when the girl grows up and faces her own troubles, so she passes on her wisdom through everyday gestures of care — like a postponed letter into the future.







character: GRANDDAUGHTER

A lively child with a rich imagination. For her, the vegetable garden is a jungle with “tomato trees,” and the black cat is a panther. She has not known great hardship; her world is filled only with the warmth of summer days in her grandmother’s home. Yet memory preserves more than it seems: later, the mosaic of recollections – the house, the meadow, the “jungle” – will fit into the broader context of events that are difficult to grasp in childhood.



# SETTING

The events take place in a village, in a small tidy house, and in the surrounding area. The granddaughter has come for the holidays, helping in the garden and around the house. At first glance, it seems like just a bright, uneventful day. But within this simplicity lies more than meets the eye.



## GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE



Grandma's house is clean and bright. A typical Ukrainian village home. It has lace curtains, carpets, a bed with a stack of pillows, and an icon decorated with embroidered towels. Poetic details in the background tell the story of her life. There are photographs from her youth – her wedding, her husband and children, a postcard from her grown-up daughter in Kyiv. The cupboard is filled with jars of jams and pickles. In the corner of the room stands a large sack of dried bread crusts, which Grandma never eats but keeps "just in case."



# GRANDMA'S HOUSE reference



# THE ROAD ACROSS THE FIELD

The wind drives the grass in waves, the air shimmers with heat. Overhead, the power lines hum, and in the girl's imagination they turn into fantastical giant metal creatures lazily grazing on the endless pasture that resembles a green sea.



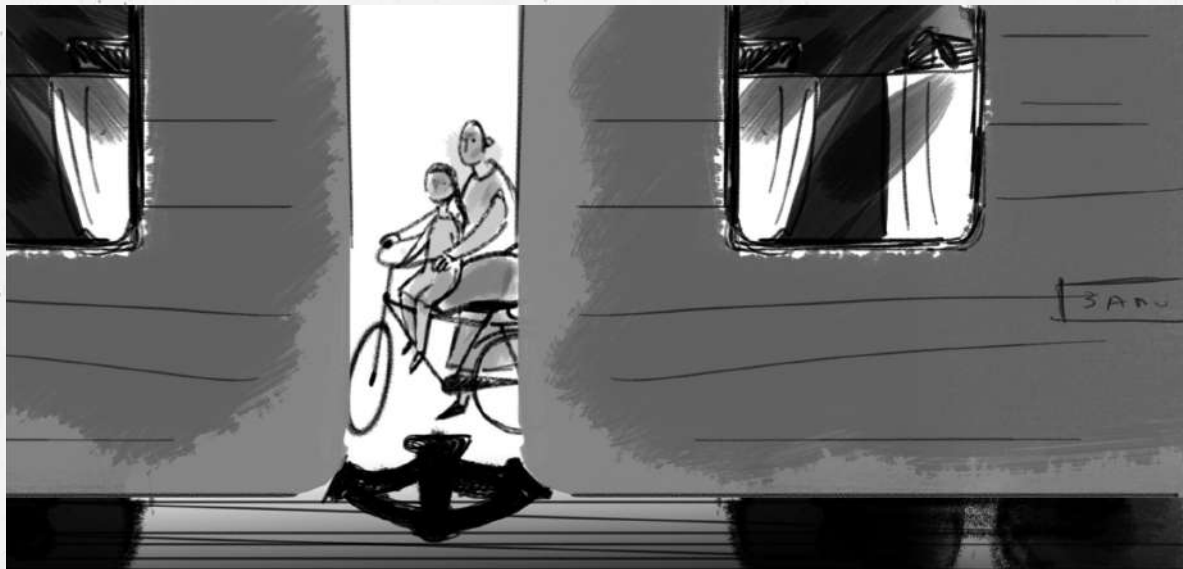
## THE MEADOW BY THE RIVER

In spring, the river overflows its banks. When the water recedes, the floodplain gardens yield generously. The meadow is nature in its most fertile form: countless shades of green, the tangible texture of leaves and damp black soil. Everything grows here — grass, willows, reeds. Swallows fill the air; dragonflies, grasshoppers, butterflies, and ladybugs rest on the blades. In the garden plots grow cherries, tomatoes, cucumbers, apples, dill, onions. The river glitters, and the reeds stand quiet. This abundance is a reminder: no matter what happens, life pushes through. When you feel yourself as part of this force, you become stronger.



## THE RAILWAY TRACK

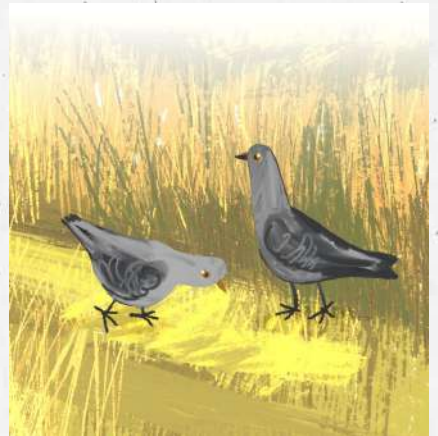
The sun leans toward the horizon, its rays turning the sky yellow and the clouds orange. The loudspeaker echoes over the railway line — a train is approaching. The rails ring. In the windows flicker unfamiliar faces — a split-second chronicle of other lives. The noise fades. What remains is the evening, and the warm glow of Grandma's window.



# SOUND

The sound design immerses the viewer in the atmosphere of rural summer holidays: the rustle of gravel, the creak of a bicycle, the cooing of pigeons, crickets, the hum of power lines, a passing train, and so on.

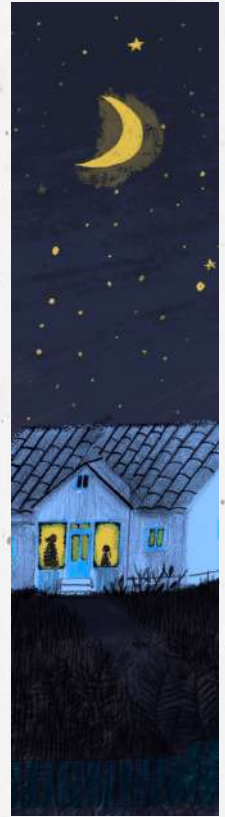
The characters' dialogue will be presented without lip-sync or visible mouth movement; we hear their voices as if from within, like inner speech. This creates the effect of the event and the reflection on that event occurring at the same time, a kind of authorial commentary and reappraisal of these dialogues many years later.



## PALETTE AND TEMPO (4 “chapters”)

The story is divided into four notional chapters – morning, day, noon, evening – with color and rhythm subordinated to this structure. Morning is transparent and cool; the pace is slow, with longer pauses. Day is bright and high-contrast; the rhythm is livelier, with many short actions. Noon is sun-bleached; movement is drawn-out, the shots are longer, and the intensity of observation grows. Evening is warm and muted; the rhythm quiets, shots hold longer, and the pause does the work.

Transitions are gradual: color temperature and saturation change; the line alternately hardens and softens. Color serves a functional role: it signals states, regulates tempo, and provides transitions between chapters.



# ENDING

The finale leads to a simple conclusion: what we remember most are not words but examples. Grandma does not explain how the world works; she shows how to survive. Misfortune cannot be forgotten, but it can be lived through; time dulls the pain. We learn to live with it and, by remembering and reinterpreting the experience of previous generations, we grow stronger.





## OLHA HAVRYLOVA DIRECTOR

- 15+ years in visual storytelling
- From book illustration to animation
- Experience in backgrounds, concept art, animation, and directing
- Two short films as a director
- Broad expertise across the animation process



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



When I need support, I look within. Remembering the carefree days of my childhood with my grandmother, I still feel the warmth of those moments. Now I see what I could not understand as a child. My grandmother's fate is typical of the women of her generation, who raised harvests, brought up children, lived with integrity, and remained resilient, even though poverty and hunger were etched into their memory. She went through all these trials without losing her humanity or dignity. Her gentle way of raising me and her quiet counsel still help me face today's difficulties. My aim is to create an animated film as a tool of art therapy. To remind us that love is not an ornament to peace but a way to survive and move forward. It is about life continuing even through the hardest trials; about a love that outlasts time and heals wounds. We live in a time when major events press so closely against private life that it is hard to discern the contours. In such a reality one wants to speak not in slogans, but with humanity.

A story about one summer day seen through a child's eyes – the carefree life in the home of a loving grandmother who lives outside the city – will be understandable to almost any child in the world. Yet images of peace and plenty are hard to reconcile with the grandmother's account of hard times. How could famine come to people living on such fertile land? The question remains open, inviting the viewer to reflect. But ultimately, my story is not only about that. Now, against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, despite the daily fear for my life and the lives of my loved ones, I feel the need to speak about peace and love. The dramatic experience of older generations of Ukrainians who endured severe trials – repression, war, the Holodomor – their fear and pain resonate in my heart. How did they find the strength to overcome despair and trust in the wisdom of life? Now I see it as something I can appreciate through my own experience.



## CONTEXT

The Holodomor in Ukraine in 1932–1933 was a man-made famine, a crime of the Soviet authorities directed against Ukrainians. According to various estimates, the catastrophe killed between 3 and 7 million people, and today it is officially recognized by the European Union as an act of genocide. The greatest tragedy lies in the fact that Ukrainian land is among the most fertile in Europe, so the very occurrence of famine here seems impossible and absurd. This trauma touched almost every family and became ingrained in cultural habits: leaving food on the plate is an insult to the one who cooked; throwing away bread is a sin; “to feed” often means “to love.” It is one of the painful pages of history that requires understanding and reflection.

## MYKYTA MOISEIEV PRODUCER

- 20 years of experience as a film composer
- Cherry Pierogi marks my first attempt as a producer





**Cherry Pierogi** marks my first venture as a producer, a natural evolution of my years as a film composer. I have written music for numerous animated films, including both of Olha's previous shorts. The themes and visual storytelling in Olha's work deeply resonate with me, and continuing our creative partnership felt like the only right step. The theme Olha explores in this film matters to me not only on a personal level. On one hand, my own family suffered from repressions and the Holodomor: my grandmother's family was dispossessed by the Soviet authorities and deported to Siberia, where my great-grandfather perished. On the other hand, the theme of rethinking, acceptance, and reflection goes far beyond my own story; it is a universal human need to have effective tools for overcoming personal or collective trauma. I believe art can be such a tool. Beyond this, it is important to me that the world in general, and Europe in particular, gain a broader and deeper understanding of Ukrainians and of Ukraine – of our achievements and our wounds, of our past and of our future, which I hope will be tied more closely to the family of European nations through connections at every level, and above all through culture.

**Cherry Pierogi** already has a visible development track: it was selected for the UK/UA Animation Lab, pitched at the LINOLEUM Contemporary Animation and Media Art Festival and the Manchester Animation Festival, was selected for the CEE Animation Workshop, participated in Black Sea Animation Workshop (2025), and also won the opportunity to pitch at the MIFA Partners Pitch 2026.

We aim to structure the film as a Ukraine-majority short, plus a minority EU co-producer. Potential minority territories include Ireland (shared historical memory of famine), the Netherlands (WWII hunger remembrance), and the Western Balkans (recent post-conflict context), each aligning thematically and offering active short-film funds, studio resources, and regional festival-distribution routes. This follows naturally from its EU-pipeline development and a theme that resonates across European audiences; a potential EU partner brings access to national short-film funds, studio resources and distribution corridors while we keep creative control and cultural authenticity.



## OLHA'S WORKS / ANIMATED MOVIES



Topsy Turvy - 2018



"Deportation 44 - 46" -2020



How War Changed Rondo -2019



Ninna nanna di pace -2023

# ILLUSTRATIONS



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



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