

Dear Alla

I did think about writing a long time this since it's years back you know. Since I don't know when you sent me all those Chekhovs and I never wrote thanks back, or again. Twenty maybe. I can't complain. Thirty-seven nearly so you're more forty now I'd say. Chernobyl I remember was the way, it was, was the how we met. Didn't quite but you know what I mean. For the writing of, the starting of it. Up to seventeen I'm pretty sure from five years more before. I snuck a letter into These are schoolbooks for the children of.¹ And were you one? You weren't I'm fairly sure. Unpacker though. Decoder from importuning Irish girl after penpals from Russia. Alighted on it I'd say inside the Buntús Cainte² and who'd have read that anyway out the back of the Soviet gone? But we're giving them we're sending them we're doing what we can. Could. Stuck it in between Book One and Two. Saying Hi and all that yap. Would you like to write whoever finds this and. You months more answering Hello, nice to meet and practise England with the English. And never stooped we either from. Never either said – beneath next door's leylandiied gloom – here's not England here's the Ukraine. Not your granny's leak in an Odessa flat or my dog squashed under some Galwegian's Fiat. There was no boo to that goose. Then one day I went there. Then and never wrote one more. Sucked into their garden. Leapt over the wall. Now I think of it too, you went to Moscow. And now that I'm thinking of all those things, was it Anna maybe after all?

Yours and was, possibly

Eimear³

I did think about writing a long time this since it's years since I don't know when you sent me all those Chekhovs never wrote blanks back, or again. Twenty maybe, I can't thirty-seven nearly so you're more like no I'd say. A I remember was the way, it was, was the how, he not. quite but you know what I mean. For the writing of it, the of it. Up to seventeen I'm pretty sure from five years now I snuck a letter into These are schoolbooks for the child. I remember it? You weren't I'm fairly sure. Unpacker the

¹ The writer notes that she recalls, at her school, sending old schoolbooks to charities working abroad; in this case on behalf of a charity known as 'Children of Chernobyl'.

² Buntús Cainte (*Basic Speaking*) was an Irish television and radio programme created in 1967 which aimed at teaching the Irish language to young viewers. The material in the programme was published in three books of the same name, containing cartoons and English and Irish text.

³ Eimear McBride left Ireland at the age of seventeen, and now lives in Norwich. Her debut novel, *A Girl Is A Half-formed Thing* (Galley Beggar Press, 2013), was recently awarded the inaugural Goldsmiths Prize, established to celebrate books which 'embody the spirit of invention which characterises the genre at its best.' She is currently working on her second novel.