

Zoriana – December 17, 2017

Oksana has asked me to keep a log of Zoriana's first months. That seems to me to be a good idea. Since her birth I have not been very active reviewing books. I have been spending my time with Eddie, even more than before, a fair amount with Zoriana, and working on Toastmasters speeches.

What can I report about Zoriana? She is growing about 1 kg per month. From 3 kg 700 g at birth, she is up to something over 6 ½. There are several other things that I am sure that I had noticed before with a newborn, but never wrote down.

A newborn baby has kind of a weak cry, like a kitten. The newborn is only vaguely aware of the environment around and seems to cry quite a bit. At three months Zoriana is very alert. She knows who everybody is. She started to smile in recognition of a friendly face, especially a smile, at right around one month. Now she smiles anytime she's interested. And it seems that when she isn't smiling, it's rather purposeful. She is looking away, board. She reacts quite differently to every different caretaker.

She knows that only mother can feed her. When she's hungry, mother has to quiet her cries. Mother is also most attuned to her other needs, such as changing a diaper.

Anna has endless patience carrying Zoriana around, rocking her and cooing to her. It doesn't bother Anna if Zoriana's crying. Or, rather, it does not bother Anna, but she is sensitive to the fact that it does bother Oksana. Everybody does their utmost to keep the baby from crying.

Grandmother Nadia also does everything in her power to keep the baby from crying. She bounces and shushes the baby. Zoriana can be placated, but she occasionally gets bored.

Daddy gets to hold the baby when mommy has other things to do. When I hold her, I am more likely to give her my full attention, bouncing her more on my knee, lifting her up to test your grip, encouraging her to stand and to set. She likes all the attention. Nonetheless, after half an hour she usually starts to get a little bit restless which is when she goes back to mommy.

Her vocalizations are starting to be distinct. She does not get utter syllables like "mama", but she does make different noises under different circumstances.

Oksana is concerned that Zoriana regurgitates some fraction of the milk that she takes in. Shakespeare wrote that newborns mewl and puke in their mother's arms. That's what babies do. We should not cry over the spilt milk – obviously she is getting adequate nutrition.

That's another memory that comes back. Baby puke doesn't stain anything, and neither really does baby poop. It is not terribly offensive smelling or messy. That is a very good thing, because you need to change diapers every couple of hours. We are using paper diapers. We still have the cloth ones we bought when Eddie was a baby, which I would rather use, but this is Oksana's call and she thinks that the cloth ones give a diaper rash. I certainly hope they are biodegradable because we send several pounds of them to the landfill every week.

Eddie is a good big brother. He likes to talk to Zoriana and rock her in her various contraptions and keep her entertained. Last night Oksana set Zoriana down next to the two of us as we play dominoes. We didn't go out of our way to entertain her – this was my time with Eddie – but Zoriana was fascinated for 15 minutes or so, which is not a bad stretch. Most important, dominoes will occupy Eddie

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for an hour at a time. Even more important, he's pretty good. Last night he beat me rather soundly, and I'm doing my best.

This week we have Oksana's mother Nadia staying with us. Though she hates to take time away from her own mother, Melania, she was in serious need of a cataract operation and decided to come. Grandfather Sasha can take care of his mother in law for the week. We took advantage of this time to get Zoriana baptized. The priest was a delightful young man, and the chapel is a small affair that we walk by every day on our way to kindergarten. The major surprise was that the Orthodox church, rather like the traditional Catholic Church, requires the child be named after a saint. Zoriana doesn't qualify. Thank goodness we had given her middle name, Melania, which does.

We are getting ready to celebrate my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. The custom here is for the birthday boy to throw his own party. I have not done it since coming to Ukraine, but three quarters of a century is a fairly significant milestone. We are going to have about 15 people. I am making a huge lasagna, green salad, garlic bread, tabbouleh, pumpkin and mince pies. I'm laying in the stock of good wines. I stopped drinking on Oksana's birthday, August 28, but I am happy to note that my friends continue to enjoy it. I would to accept my stomach finally rebelled. If I'm going to be around to see some grandchildren, I need to take it easy with my body.

That's the child news from Kyiv as of December 17, 2017.