

Title: Themes of Illness and Death in Aleksei Korin's Illustrations for *Anna Karenina*
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Illustrators offer much more than the visual equivalent of a literary text. Often they will invest an illustration with personal reflections and allusions to the visual art canon. Such is the case with Aleksei Korin, an artist who rose to moderate success in the late years of the *Itinerant* movement. In 1914 he accepted a commission to help illustrate an edition of *Anna Karenina* published in Moscow by Sytin & Co. His drawing of the death of Nikolai Dmitrievich Levin stands out above the rest because it establishes a clear link to Korin's earlier painting career and to other important Russian *Itinerant* painters. His most famous and successful painting, "The Sick Artist" (1892), reveals this fascination. His personal struggles with respiratory problems acquired as an art student partially inform his interest in illness. The tradition of painting the ill provided him with a rich visual canon as well: and, since Korin was an aspiring *Itinerant*, Ivan Kramskoi's painting of the ailing Nikolai Nekrasov (1877–8) held enormous importance. These works reveal the artist's continuous interest in portraying chronic illness and its interference with life. This means that Korin did not merely see it as his task to illustrate Nikolai Levin on his deathbed; he saw it as an opportunity to invest the image with his own visual and thematic priorities and to empathize with the dying character in intimate rather than universal terms.

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