



# 12 POETS FROM GEORGIA ~~2017/2018~~

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GEORGIAN  
NATIONAL  
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MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND  
MONUMENT PROTECTION  
OF GEORGIA

'This book is a provocative attempt to make sense of the poetic experiments of the ancient era and to use those experiments as a way of creating new, contemporary poetry.' /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

## HYMNS OF THE SACRED RESURRECTION

# SHALVA BAKURADZE

The poems of this collection arise from a reading and study of old Georgian poetry and hymnographic texts. Shalva Bakuradze is obsessed with his ideas about how old Georgian texts were read, pronounced and sung, where the accents were placed, what the intonation was, etc. He writes his own poems and then declaims them with this intonation. One instance is the narrative poem *The Decrees of all Flesh*, which claims to be a translation of five Sumerian tablets found in 2005.

### Shortest Adventure

This book, most excellent Theophilus, covers the story of my death.

From the Cross Monastery I was walking, shepherd grazed the flock, rain splattered, blackbird sang.

Dark song followed me as I've searched for right

pause, with my breath Held still between the lines, to fit in the final harangue.

(Never considered writing this book in any language but this. You see, Georgian alphabet

flawlessly writes down even the lowest of croons, Which means

that anyone unfamiliar with this tongue as are thee,

Could probably guess all the music of song from these runes).

Slow as a shadow I moved, here and there taking rest, breathing and

Looking to nebulous forest. For whom did I seek, who awaited

me there? Walking in till the pines, growing torpid, covering my face with my hands...

Then song would stop marching with me and was heard in the needles and air.

This sound, what was it like? Resting against the back of the pine long I reflected,

What was the secret it aimed to reveal, who did it come from and for whom was intended?

Then I remembered – akin to silence of dying men, taken for granted, This was their last word,

sinking without being said, ghostly it ended. Further it was like the sky turned to pond, starless and shallow.

Paddling pool sky, not even breeze did it made, it had no borders.

Sensing my borderless impotence were going quiet,

song and its cello, Only the inhales were heard amongst the lines, heavy as boulders.

This book, most excellent Theophilus, covers the story of me being no more.

Noticed? You're good with this alphabet – outlandish venture.

Now going up, I guess that he to whom I implore

Will be the dark tune, right from the earth telling us earthly

Shortest adventure.

/Translation by Koka Archvadze/



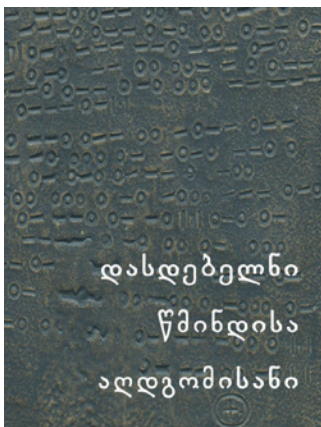
PHOTO: Beka Kokaia

Born in 1973 in Sokhumi, Abkhazia, Shalva Bakuradze graduated from Tbilisi State University's philology faculty, specialising in English language. He has been publishing since the 1990s. At the moment he is working as a geoscopic artist in a studio. He has published 3 books of poetry: *Hymns of the Sacred Resurrection* (2013); *A Letter to Nino* (2003); *Good People* (2000).



**It is a well-known fact that more can be said (sometimes too much) by intonation than by words (we can thank our structuralist theoreticians and practitioners for persuading us of this). But intonation has hitherto been subordinate to the words, all the same. Here (in the case of Shalva Bakuradze) things are the other way round: words are subordinated to intonation. Intonation is the main thing and doesn't depend on what words are used to offer us this intonation. Intonation is the dominant, words are the subsidiary means. /L. Bregadze, critic/**

**It might sound a bit loud, but I think that this is one of the most important collections of Georgian poetry of the last twenty years. Shalva Bakuradze's poetry is a path from Georgian hymnography to our own times, passing through Davit Guramishvili, who is for me the most loved of Georgian poets. What I like most about this poetry is that it has the mission or aim for which poetry was originally created, in the form of religious hymns and songs, and today, in twenty-first century poetry, we can read these same ancient, ritual poetics, which is what makes this author so very significant. /D. Anphimiadi, poet/**



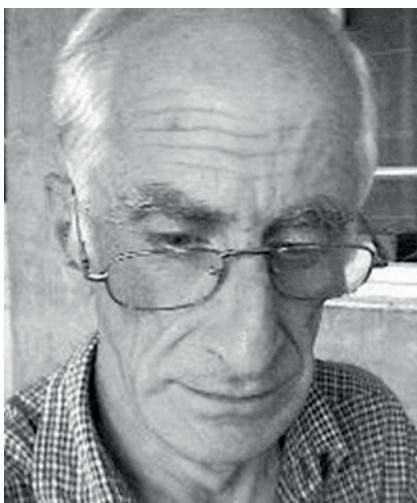
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Shalva Bakuradze in translation / Bakuradze's poems have been translated into German, English, Russian, Slovak and other languages and have been published in several anthologies and magazines among them: Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2015; Pop Verlag, 2015).

# TEMUR CHKHETIANI

'His poems are chronicles of 'low states', of loss and loneliness, and the poet often describes the process, too, of creating these 'chronicles'. /M. Kharbedia, writer, critic/

## WITHOUT ADDRESS



Born 1955 in Vachnadziani, Kakhetia, 1978 Temur Chkhetiani graduated from Tbilisi State University's economics faculty. In 1982 he published his first poems, in 1987 his first collected poems *Evening's Post*. He published five poetry collections: *Height of Grass* (2016); *Reversed Dream* (2014); *Light Breakfast* (2013); *Without Address* (2010); *Patience of Leaves* (2006); *Nest* (2003); *Alibi for Everyone* (1997); *Evening's Post* (1987). Temur Chkhetiani is one of the most interesting contemporary Georgian minimalist poets. He works systematically in this genre and in his poetry we find interesting examples of minimalist poetry. Temur Chkhetiani's hobby is composing chess puzzles. Since 1995 he has published 300 puzzles in chess magazines of various countries.



**In my opinion, the main thing in his poetry is an unusual fusion of the hermetic and the open of release. On one hand, the atmosphere seems to be a closed book, to be bounded, introverted; on the other hand, he is totally open to everything, to life, to the world. The confessional style comes from the hermetic side, but this is not the typical confessional tone found in poetry. The fusion of practically contrasting and differentiated discourses creates a special and unusual style. /N. Zazanashvili, poet, critic/**

Temur Chkhetiani is a compiler of chess puzzles at a very high level. And if someone can devise chess puzzles in such a way that there is only one correct way to win, then he will have no difficulty in creating poetic compositions either. It is from this aspect that Temur Chkhetiani's poetry is interesting: it assembles what it has to say by composition. It does so laconically and conducts things precisely towards what needs to be expressed, to where the poem needs to be. /Sh. Iatashvili, poet, critic/

Temur Chkhetiani's poems always have a sort of calm mood, the mood of a person who is free of everyday turmoil, who is firmly based in his own solitude, from where he contemplates events taking place in the world. He not only contemplates, but is himself contemplated in some poems. As in his earlier collections, there is often an autobiographical element in this collection, too, and this creates the poem's narrative, creates its mood and then, if one can say so, manipulates these moods, so as to give birth to the poetic message, the phrase, the metaphor in a dynamic way. What is important is that this is not done by external effects, nor that it is autobiographical in a seething, everyday way: this is an existence in which what is close and what are important changes occur only rarely, or do not, in fact, occur at all. But precisely because every new nuance, which enters the monotonous flow of life externally, takes on a colouring and a sharpness and is transformed into poetic material, is 'reworked'. Temur Chkhetiani's poetic experiments are never sentimental in a moving or a tiresome way. Nowhere will you come across any excitement which is decorative or self-centred, nor any 'flirtation' or worn-out metaphors. Temur Chkhetiani's poetic personae are unexpected to the point of paradoxical and full of sparks; they depend on their own artistic function and affect us as an organic part of a whole artistic tissue.

### Woman at the Table

Step away from the window,  
Turn around,  
Look around...

...  
Pick up dead butterflies  
From the floor,  
From the table -  
Collect them in the ashtray, watch some-  
time,  
Watch, till you come to your senses.

Then take the ashtray out  
And empty it into the dust bin.  
The bin will stay on the garbage disposal  
of course  
And finally, when comes along,

The garbage truck will take everything  
away.  
Everything,  
Including that evening.

You two were sitting at the table  
Under the candlelight  
Smiling at each other  
With sparkle in your eyes,  
While butterflies,  
Excited,  
Flying over you,  
Could not feel  
Getting their wings  
Singed.

/Translation by Dalila Gogia/

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Temur Chkhetiani in translation / Chkhetiani's poems have been translated into English, German, Spanish, French and Russian and published in several anthologies, among them: Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2017).



'His poems are free of any inner narcissism and depict simply and calmly the author's life. This is presumably a sort of poetic ethics, his set of values as a writer. He hasn't understood anything in life and depicts it naively. And this is his own depiction, turned into verse form, as a convention, which helps the author to perceive things.' /L. Kodalashvili, critic/

## 100 POEMS

Batu Danelia is one of the 'bridge poets'. A bridge poet can not help having the attention from literature-lovers of both retrograde and modern world outlooks. One category reproaches him for ignoring traditions, the other category for sticking to the old ways, both categories accept and at the same time reject him as one of their own. His language is simultaneously acceptable and unacceptable, as a compound of the everyday and the literary, as a sort of anachronistic oxymoron.

### If Everything Were to Come Back

If everything used up and everything spent  
Were one day to come back,  
Where could one put it?!

Where would you put the flowers  
Taken to the graveside of the dead,  
Or sent to your beloved,  
And the letters, even if still unanswered,  
Or the blood shed by bullets and swords:  
Where could you put them,  
If one day they were all to come back?!

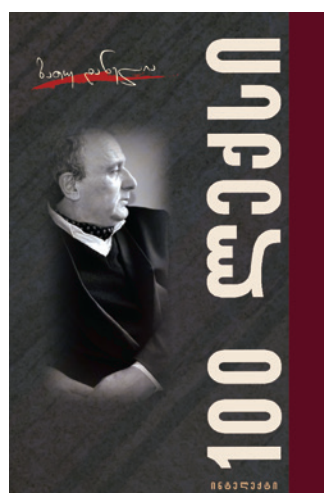
Where can you put the strength you drained from horses,  
The bellowing that came from the ox in the slaughterhouse,  
The yells that we heard all last night,  
The slanders we spread about the innocent,  
Where could you put them

If one day they were all to come back?!  
Where could you put the wasted passion,  
The snakes whose heads you crushed underfoot,  
The fruits of enmity and of treachery,  
The sins that involved the shedding of blood –  
Where could you put them?  
If one day they were all to come back?!

But why the 'If...'? –  
After all, we shall arise and come back!  
So they too will arise in order to come back!

And, one day, when everything comes back,  
Without taking revenge on us,  
Where and how can you fit them in here?! –  
They will abolish us, expend us, and vaporise us.

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/



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Batu Danelia in translation / Danelia's poems have been published in Armenia (Sovetakan Grog, 1988); Czech Republic (Větrné Mlýny 2017).

# BATU DANELIA



Born in 1950 in the village of Zanati (in Abasha district) Batu Danelia is a Georgian poet and translator. In 1987 he graduated from the Moscow Gorky Literary Institute. From 1983 onwards he was a member of the Union of Writers. His first publication of poetry was in 1973-74. He is the author of the following poetry collections: *City under Wings* (1982), *A Quiet Street* (1986), *Partition* (1987), *A Winter of Loneliness* (1997), *The Moon's Jubilee* (2003), *Crazy Stars* (2006), *The Eighth Sound* (2008), *Mirabilis Vita* (2008), *Love is Ballast* (2013). He has published translations of works by the Nobel-prize-winning Russian poets, Joseph Brodsky (*Greetings from Nowhere*, 1993; *The Island of Crystal*, 2010), *The Next Century* (2012) and Boris Pasternak (*Yuri Zhivago's Poems*, 2009). At various times he has also translated and published poetry by Pushkin, Lermontov, Blok, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Frost, Benn, Apollinaire, Queneaux, Staff, Hofmannsthal, Schaukal, Braun, Wildhagen, Werfel and others. He won the SABA Literary Award 2009, The Galaktion Tabidze Prize, Tbilisi Municipality Assembly Literature and Art Competition for Year's Best Work of Poetry 2016. In 2001, for his Contribution to the Development of Georgian Literature, he was awarded with the Order of Merit.



**He is a kind of grand master both in conventional poems and in blank verse. It is worth noting that he has devised his own convention poetic form and has written whole cycles in it. He himself has called such poems 'sack cloth'. The 'sack cloth' has two seven-line stanzas, each line of thirteen syllables, and in each one the rhyme follows the scheme *aaabbab*. This collection contains 21 of his 'sack cloths'. / Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/**

# ELA GOCHIASHVILI

'Ela Gochiashvili is the grande dame of Georgian poetry.' /N. Hummelt, poet, translator/

LIFE-PROOF



Born in 1959, Ela Gochiashvili graduated from Tbilisi State University's faculty of journalism. She has published several collections of poetry. Her poems have been translated into Russian, Lithuanian, French, Italian, Azeri, Dutch, German, Persian and Armenian, and have been included in anthologies of translated verse and other types of literary publication. Ela Gochiashvili has participated in various literary events, including Poetry Festival in Lithuania 2010, in France 2011.



**Ela Gochiashvili's poetry seems to me as a miraculous revelation of spirituality. I don't know of any other poet in Georgian whose poems have such expressively powerful pain. After taking in Ela Gochiashvili's every phrase, every poetic image, it is no longer possible to live as one has hitherto in our sinful world. /V. Kotetishvili, poet, translator/**

**This voice, which seems to be the voice of a feeble, despairing person, has struck me with its amazing energy and has in various ways changed the way I see things and think about things. On first reading the poem *Blue Vitriol* the impression was one of astonishment as well as joy. The astonishment came because it was unexpected, and the joy because poetry had recalled something that Ela Gochiashvili has written her remarkable poems in the present about her own past, and has thus created her future, which time will be unable to diminish. /T. Chkhetiani, poet/**

In this collection Ela Gochiashvili has clearly expanded the boundaries and resources of the modern Georgian lyrical genre: she has offered us poetic stories that lie on the boundary of the lyrical and the epic. Among these are the cycle *For me and for my Two Sisters*, which is interesting in form and volume and should probably be considered as a narrative poem, and a great elegy for a mother, or hymns on motherhood. In general, many of her poems repeat the image of mother and grandmother as one and the same poetic paradigm, where one or the other, or both can be considered as the author of the poems. This is a triple possibility for womanhood, which can be realised in a variety of forms (as grandmother, as mother and as the poem's author). Ela Gochiashvili's poetic pathos is imbued with a sympathy for invisible, at first sight, simple human beings, objects or events, which are singled out in their everyday, mundane brilliant light, but which prefer silence and isolation. The collection also contains poems with a tense social intonation.

## The Wall

Nobody wants to be an imperceptible wall,	And they will be the only ones
And everybody wants to be ornamentation.	To have a memory of such beauty
Someone has to lie down to be a path	Being erected on their chests...
On the way to the summit, on the way to heaven...	Why are we not enough for ourselves,
Someone, after all, must end up in silence,	Why don't we know real sacrifice?
Nameless and bereft of pomp and ceremony;	Why do we have such a taste for deference,
Someone has to stand as a tree stump,	So false and blind and insatiable
On whom there will never ever shine	That everyone wants to be loudly ornamental
The light of a pair of delighted eyes,	And nobody wants to be just a wall?

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/

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Ela Gochiashvili in translation / Gochiashvili's poems have been translated into Russian, Lithuanian, French, Italian, Azerbaijani, Dutch, German, Persian and Armenian and have been included in anthologies of translated verse and other types of literary publication among them: Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2015).



'Here the words don't just float on the surface of the lines: they sink to depths too deep for ignorance to dive into.' /V. Kotetishvili, poet, translator/

# NIKA JORJANELI

## MEXICAN STANDOFF

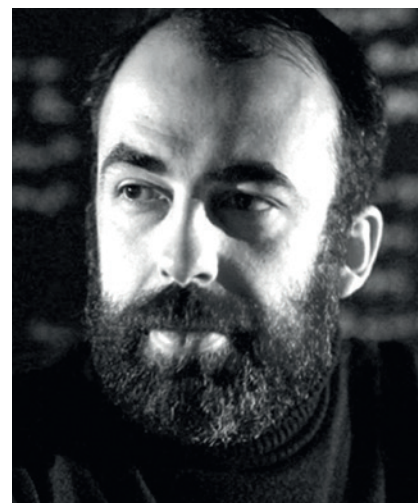
Nika Jorjaneli is fully devoted to poetry. According to critics, he leads a life of a real classical poet, but the verses he presents to public are extremely modern and innovative. Submergence into own inner world in search for an exit out of the continuous stalemate an individual finds himself in; overcoming loneliness by means of creative thought, which helps not only to withstand suffering but almost enjoy it in a way; realizing sense of terminality, thus gradually reaching another level – that of hope and unshakable faith, with clear understanding of illusiveness of human existence, generated by unknown to the individual but essential reasons – those are global themes that the poet unfolds and masterly interweaves with his poetic syntaxes in his brand new collection of poems *Mexican Standoff*.

### Blood

You wanted it, you've got it! –  
says the age of social networks, –  
the same blank look everywhere,  
each in his own darkness  
with a face like the dark side of the  
moon,  
fuck your faces,  
which you don't need anyway, –  
it says, and you can't say it's mistaken,  
the more so since it prefers reality  
and like a drunken Inquisitor hangs  
around  
those places of the Oikoumene  
where faces still share the flickering of  
features,  
the way the desperately ill  
share news of wonder-working herbs;  
it drags itself around like some shaggy  
sage,  
walks into a bar, sucks down a beer,  
and to follow  
has to make do sucking its own thumb.

But when you see,  
that nothing has the strength to stop the  
bleeding of the world,  
then the less it seems  
that the age or even people are to blame;  
you think something else:  
you think that blood might be a lubricant,  
needed for life and death to get together,  
and by bullet-riddled walls, by opened  
veins,  
by efficient scalpels and butcher knives,  
alongside bullets pulled from bodies,  
in laboratories with test tubes filled with  
blood,  
everywhere where blood is on the out-  
side,  
life and death have made their bed of  
love  
and have come together, like divine vam-  
pires.

*/Translation by Peter Scotto/*



Born 1978 in Tbilisi, Nika Jorjaneli is a Georgian poet and translator. 2003 he received his Master's degree from Tbilisi State University, majoring in German Language and Literature. Nika Jorjaneli worked as a teacher of German language and literature for several years at high school in Tbilisi. He delivered classes in Georgian language at the Moscow State University of Linguistics in 2008. He has authored four compilations of poems. His various verses are included in anthologies of modern Georgian poetry. He participated in the International Biennale of Poets BIPVAL (Paris, France 2008). He regularly takes part in the annual International Poetry Festival 'Kievskye Lavry' (Kiev, Ukraine). He won the Commonwealth of Debuts International Poetry Prize in Moscow 2008. He was nominated for Saba Literary Award 2015 for the poetry collection *Mexican Standoff*.



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Nika Jorjaneli in translation / Jorjaneli's poems have been translated into English, German, French, Russian, Italian and Dutch and published in several anthologies among them: Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2017; Pop Verlag, 2015).



Alien syntax suddenly appears before one and straightens out in the blink of an eye and results in impressive images with a deep content. /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

The first thing to strike me as far as these poems were concerned was the innovation. These poems really do make their author stand out in their extreme expressiveness, depth of poetic thinking and originality, not only among her contemporaries, but, in general, in Georgian poetry. /V. Kotetishvili, poet, translator/

# RUSUDAN KAISHAURI

'She has created a totally new sector, her own niche in Georgian poetry, by portraying the image of a woman triumphing over the everyday.' /M. Tsiklauri, poet/

## FROM THE DONKEY TO MERANI (PEGASUS)



Born in 1957, Rusudan Kaishauri graduated from the Department of Philology of Tbilisi State University. She has worked at cultural-educational NGO Caucasian House Centre for Cultural Relations, since 2001. She has published three poetry collections: *Poems* (2002); *Flying of the Brooms* (2004); *From the Donkey to Merani* (2013). She has five children.

In Kaishauri's poems the main problem is women's routine. Her heroine describes a woman's activity: washing clothes, cleaning, cooking: she describes it in an aggressive way, but this attitude to everything has two sides to it, and the aggression periodically endows Kaishauri's poems with positive energy. Routine is transformed emotionally and ideologically. Kaishauri's poems have a world which becomes magical. Her poetry is characterized by an unexpected images. She often uses simple rhythms, but her precise, sharp tone, together with this simplicity, results in new poetic language formation. What we are seeing is a conflict between the real and the unreal, between the comic and the tragic subtext, between utopia and naturalism. From the point of view of depth, this book sets out one of the most pondered and considered problems of womanhood. She tries to look at the relationship from two different angles and in both cases she presents an extreme and ruthless picture. This two-sided aggression – of mother towards child, and of child towards mother – is shocking and paradoxical, but it is easily understood. We can say quite freely that this poetic interpretation of everyday objects is, in general, what happens when the everyday is refracted in a poetic prism, something we see in Rusudan Kaishauri's poems, and which is very rare in the work of Georgian poets. From the concrete Kaishauri moves to the general, from personal experience to empirical truth, instead of the other way round, as is usual in poetry.

### Woman as a Table

That was time when the woman was a writing table.	she wound up her heart using a key. She was so tired
She bustled about with knives next to the stove.	that she stayed up all night writing poems.
When she used the clothes line to tie up the wind,	This woman once Bent her back,
she wrung out the dreams cherished by the family.	remained like that and never took of flying.
She kept her children sitting in all the drawers,	The brazen chair held itself out for her without even enquiring whether this was actually a woman or a table.

/Translation by Natalia Bukia-Peters and Victoria Field/



**For a woman to have five children, and to be a single mother as well, widowed at an early age, and living in this country, which is designed so that many a living creature can disappear without trace, is something that really never occurred to me... /N. Gelashvili, writer, critic/**

**The path from pack-animal to noble steed sometimes passes through the kitchen. The main thing is who is busy in the kitchen, because the usual crockery, spoons, forks, knives and plates can bang about with the most divine music: someone tormented in everyday life may start speaking the language of truth and tell us countless things about women who are actually completely peculiar, even though at first sight ordinary. Rusudan Kaishauri is just such a woman and just such a poet. /G. Lobzhanidze, poet, critic/**

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'Eka has brought up an entire generation not just of poets but of human beings. She teaches, she teaches how to live, teaches a modern woman, or even a man, to overcome, if they harbour a deep desire for freedom, the thick fences in life and to summon up the feelings and thoughts in their own hearts and minds, in order to defeat our hideous way of life.' /Sh. Bakuradze, poet/

## EVACUATION PLAN

Eka Kevanishvili writes precise and very artistic social poetry. At first sight these poems are about the sort of stories that have happened to everyone, but which have gone unreported. Who hasn't been embittered by politicians, but has tried to avoid criticising them; who hasn't been a victim of violence and felt themselves useless, because they have aged, and have preferred to stay silent? Despite the unmistakable social themes, pastoral colours and aromas constantly emanate from Eka Kevanishvili's poems, while in the latest book there is more tension and melancholy in this mood.

### Eka's Gods

Hello God.

A friend of mine gave me your address,  
but I barely found the way.

What's more, I'm an hour and a half late.

As it turns out you really live far from  
downtown.

Were you told that I was dropping by?

I have something to say.

It's better to say it – to speak out.

I'm lying already – I want to wait.

Didn't you make my nose grow larger  
for lying?

And when you made my chest grow, do  
you remember how I protested?

By slouching my shoulders – since then I  
have remained that way.

However,

still you bring yourself to dish out such  
dull punishments to me.

My father told me once,

God is in your eyes when you smile.

Did you know, since that day I've been  
keeping an eye on you in the mirror,  
since that very day I've been washing you  
with tears

when I want to make you disappear.

And now it's the same.

Today I've taken this walk to your place  
just to ask you

if perhaps you'd go away,

if you won't help me.

This is reckless,

but you should let me know today.

If you like, slip it under my pillow,

and I will dig with my hands and words

shall fasten like leeches.

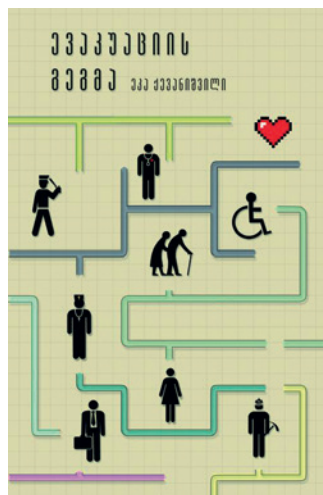
And even if I repeat these words flaw-  
lessly in a dream

I'll be sure

to learn the prayer.

A prayer for your returning.

/Translation by Eka Kevanishvili and Timothy Kercher/



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Eka Kevanishvili in translation / Kevanishvili's poems have been translated into English, German, Lithuanian and Russian languages. Her poems are included in the anthologies in: UK (Francis Boutle Publishers, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

# EKA KEVANISHVILI



Born in 1979, Eka Kevanishvili is a poet and journalist. She has a Master's Degree in International Journalism from Tbilisi State University. She has worked for various Georgian newspapers, for 'Green Wave' radio station and, for the last eight years, as a reporter for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Eka Kevanishvili has worked as investigative journalist as well. She works on the topics of Women's rights, feminism, minorities, LGBTI community, socially marginalized groups, internal politics, healthcare, education, internally displaced people and literature. She has already published 5 books. Three of them were nominated for the Literary Award SABA and received the prize for The Best Poetry Collection for *Selling the House*. She is the winner of several journalism and poetry competitions.



There are many stories which have prompted Eka to write the poems in this collection; you can in fact have aged in appearance, but the pain that emerges from these stories has not aged in any way; unfortunately, it won't age soon, either, and that is why these poems can age only as good wine does, the sort of wine an elderly man of the house persists in using in his village and whose aroma emerges, together with the aroma of aggression, from this book, as one tries to neutralise the other. /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

# LIA LIKOKELI

'Originally texts simultaneously with daily and daring topics.'  
/St. Estby, critic/

## LAUGHTER OF DEVI'S WIFE



Born in 1986, in a remote village of Khevsureti in high mountainous region of Georgia, with only 50 inhabitants, after graduating secondary school Lia Likokeli moved to capital city and entered Georgia State University of Theatre and Film, majoring in movie directing. For a short period of time she worked at Public Theatre in Dusheti. Currently Lia Likokeli works as an editor for Karchkhadze Publishing. Young poetess with an absolutely novel vision and style was suggesting a new trend, not framed in any well established clichés. 2013 Publishing house Saunje brought together all her poems and published her debut book under the title *Laughter of Devi's Wife*. Likokeli's debut book was highly anticipated by Georgian audience and the following year brought to the author Literary Award SABA for Best Debut. 2014 and 2015 she won the TSERO award for Best Short Story. Her second poetry collection *Law of Being Girl* was published 2016 by Karchkhadze Publishing.



It was not by accident that one of our significant poets, Temur Chkhetiani called Lia Likokeli 'Spontaneous Happiness'; her verse strikes the reader like nature and traps in the forest of visions and images. While reading it again and again you ask a question: where this life experience comes from, this sense of genuine style, this perception of her own language structure, that needs years of working to reach. /G. Lobzhanidze, poet, critic/

The verses of Lia Likokeli, saturated with forgotten mythical images, invites her reader to magical world, telling the stories of mountains that are far away from cities, of remote villages and roads. The stories heard in deep childhood, from memories of grandfathers and grandmothers, told by the midfire, while carding the wool, or spinning thread, come up to surface and are so masterfully twisted with deep emotional background of the author and wide range of feelings that touches everyone who approaches her poems. The content of verses is enhanced with original style of the language, and structures.

### One Day, My Dad Bought me Shoes

One day, my dad bought me shoes.

[...]

For the whole of that winter and the winter after that and a third winter,

my mum and dad were happy I had warm feet.

For the whole of that winter and the winter after that and a third winter,

I came home from school with warm feet and an idea in my head

that it was because of my shoes I was ugly and unworthy of love.

My cheeks burned, especially when I passed a certain house

where smoke snaked out lazily and a curtain twitched as if it couldn't care less,

and for some reason my feet didn't grow fast enough

for me to create a torrent in the spring

to demolish the shoes that encased me like a brown river bed

to wash away my ugliness and this lovely coming home

with warm feet, cold hands,

and my bank burning from the indifferent gaze from behind the curtain.

Eventually, my feet grew and my eyes became smaller.

Several avalanches and mudslides hung directly over me,

I thought I'd no longer sense a gaze burning my back,

no one would make me wear something I didn't like,

but really nothing has changed:

I still wear my ugly life,

as if someone poured earth into my brown shoes and buried me there.

Sometimes someone waters me too so I won't dry out completely,

but even if I begin to bloom,

I never bear fruit, the flowers fade first.

Those long laces of loneliness

are tied right up to the full height of my body,

firmly knotted near the neck, under the chin.

They are securely tied through winter and spring,

summer and autumn,

because my coming back

to the house where smoke no longer rises from the chimney and the curtain doesn't twitch,

is ugly but comfortable,

familiar and reliable

like the cheap brown shoes my dad bought me

compared to the lives of all the girls of the whole world.

/Translation by Natalia Bukia-Peters and Victoria Field/

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Published in: 2013 / Saunje Publishing

Rights: Lia Likokeli

Contact: Vazha Tsotskolauri  
saungeo@gmail.com

Lia Likokeli in translation / Likokeli's several selected verses from the collection are included in anthologies among them: UK (Francis Boutle Publishers, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015); Sweden (Poetry collection *Laughter of Devi's Wife*, Smockadoll Förlag, 2015).



'David Robakidze's poetry confirms the paradoxical nature of our existence, specifically, of our everyday life, and gives the appropriate response to fill that 'empty space.' /A. Buachidze, poet, critic/

# DAVID

# ROBAKIDZE

## WHAT IS A MAN

Robakidze is a completely unpredictable poet. His comic metaphors are full of positive energy and show us that primary pure humour, devoid of any admixture of anecdotes, vulgarity, indecency, is as poetic as an other serious phenomena in human existence. The impression which Robakidze's poetry makes, has a resemblance to the impression made by Hans Arp's equally pure humour. David Robakidze creates associative lines, which have long been tried and tested in the 20th century. He has poems in which an extended metaphor merges into a display of wit, and he is invariably motivated by astute ideas. This really is a particular form of mastery. The difference between him and every other poet of his generation is that he relies utterly on his own inner voice and, trusting it accordingly, follows its current.

### What is a Man

A man is:  
when you sculpt a piggy bank of clay giving it the shape of a man,  
notching a slot where a rib should be.

to return home barely wrapped after failing to sell.

A man is:  
when you sculpt a piggy bank of clay giving it the shape of a man  
to bring to the market to sell.

A man is:  
when you sculpt a piggy bank of clay giving it the shape of a man  
to bequeath to your children to break its belly when  
coins reach the throat.

A man is:  
when you sculpt a piggy bank of clay giving it the shape of a man  
to turn the heads of children carried in their parent's arms.

A man is:  
when you sculpt a piggy bank of clay giving it the shape of a man  
without being able to explain how.

A man is:  
when you sculpt a piggy bank of clay giving it the shape of a man

/Translation by Timothy Kercher/



PHOTO: Vldas Braziunas

Born 1975 David Robakidze is poet and art stonecutter. He graduated Tbilisi State Institute of Culture, faculty of becoming skillful literature master. Since 2003 he is being published in different Georgian literary magazines. Since 2010 he is the member of Georgian Pen-center. David Robakidze has published several poetry collections: *Georgian Alphabets*, *English Alphabets*, Electronic Publishing House Saba, 2015; *Once in a Zoo*, David Robakidze Publishing, 2008; *What is a Man*, Publishing House Siesta, 2007.



Number of pages: 60  
Published in: 2007 / Publishing House Siesta  
Rights, contact: David Robakidze  
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David Robakidze in translation / Robakidze's poems have been translated into English, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and Russian languages. His poems have been published in: Ukraine (Pidruchnyky i Posibnyky, 2017).



**The more powerful the metaphor, the more it finds what is common between utterly different, at first sight, and widely separated objects and phenomena. And if this profound metaphoric nature exists, what is the effect it should produce on a reader, who focuses his eyes on the existing world and finds such unbelievable similarities? Anxiety, astonishment, the experience of contact with true reality? All that is really inevitable; in fact, these emotions basically dominate, but there are poets who arouse smiles or even laughter in the reader with their penetrating metaphorical way of seeing things. One such poet is David Robakidze. /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/**

# ZURAB RTVELIASHVILI

'On stage, he reads poems with a demonic intensity that makes me feel transported to an avant-garde scene in the beginning of the century, or even in a novel by Bulgakov. A Dadaist dissident injection may be just what the Swedish poetry scene needs.' /J. Engborg, critic/

## THE DICTATORSHIP OF POETRY



PHOTO: Cato Lein

Born 1967 in Karaganda, Zurab Rtveliashvili is a Georgian poet, performance artist and human rights activist. He took a degree in jurisprudence at Tbilisi State University. In his early youth he was actively involved in the anti-Soviet dissident movement and participated in the National Liberation movement of Georgia. His civil disobedience texts acted in 2003 both the starting point and leader of the pacifist 'Rose Revolution' in Georgia. In the following years he was continuously arrested for his performances as well as serving a shorter prison sentence as a prisoner of conscience. 2012 he became Winner of Voloshin's International Creative Symposium. He already published 5 poetry collections.

Zurab Rtveliashvili belongs to the generation of post-soviet artists that have radically changed the vector of Georgian literature. He introduced a new vision with both the linguistic and conceptual experiments in his poetry. David Chikhladze, Shota Iatashvili, Irakli Charkviani, Badri Gugushvili and Karlo Kacharava are some of the poets with whom he created the new artistic reality. *The Dictatorship of Poetry* includes poems both from the times before Rtveliashvili's emigration and the newer samples that he has written while already being in Sweden. *The Dictatorship of Poetry* proves that despite the fact that Rtveliashvili's poetry is packed with avant-gardist aesthetic alongside the linguistic and sound-poetic experiments, he still manages to highlight and reflect on key socio-political problems without disrupting his poetic dynamic. With his poetic process the author tries to break free from these shackles and show his reader that the language goes far beyond simple alphabetical notations and grammatical norms.

### Cherub

1.	I lay like a defenceless infant
I am forever ready,	in your white lap.
Scheherazade,	I couldn't find a way out
to measure your body with my adulterous gaze	from this fairy tale.
like a teenager ...	I am a villain, Scheherazade,
Can you see how my muse	and
is shining even without a helmet?	I know for sure
I've turned the poetry mausoleum	that not even Zarathustra could bear
into ashes.	your treacherous gaze
This month,	and
I want to be more	there's no end to the fierce list
like honey rather than a gun.	of reasons
Out of a thousand tales, I remember the tale	for me
of only one night -	to try your body on for size
	as protection on my hot helmet ...(...)

/Translation by Natalia Bukia-Peters and Victoria Field/

Number of pages: 125

Published in: 2017 / Intelekti Publishing

Rights, contact: Zurab Rtveliashvili

zurabrtveliashvili@yahoo.com

Zurab Rtveliashvili in translation / Rtveliashvili's works have been translated into English, German, Swedish, French, Dutch, Ukrainian, Russian, Iranian, Azerbaijani and Bengali languages. His poetry collections have been published in UK (Francis Boutle Publishers, 2017); Sweden (Two poetry collections by Smockadoll Förlag, 2015, 2016); His poems have been published in many anthologies among them: Ukraine (Pidruchnyky i Posibnyky, 2017); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015); Russia (OGI, 2014); Netherlands (Poëzie Centrum, 2010).



**His poetic performances are always energetic, creating a mesmerising atmosphere. Rtveliashvili was the first poet I have come across in Georgia whose poetry has a new vocabulary to offer to people.' Millions of people watch him on the screen when he reads his poems, they understand or at least get some impulse from them and when they get the results of that, we can consider that something has been achieved. /D. Chikhladze, writer, critic/**

'Lela Samniashvili's poems are an international poetic language, a sort of poetic Esperanto, in which we are able to speak the poetry of absolutely every country, and understand from start to finish what we're saying.' /D. Anphimiadi, poet/

## AN ABSTRACT PRAYER

# LELA SAMNIASHVILI

Lela Samniashvili can be very sharp and very refined, her poems often take a well-defined position, and quite often deal with social and political topics of our times. In some poems Lela seems to have placed a delayed-action bomb, and she quietly and convincingly arranges for it to explode.

The structure and graphics of her poems are peculiar. Tiny little bridges of dashes might remind you of Dickinson or Tsvetaeva. Lela very often chooses a difficult path, walking a tight-rope so as to avoid banalities in rhythm and rhyme. There is a high degree of concentration everywhere: the poet's syntax doesn't allow a single superfluous word in the text and extracts the meaning to the last drop.

### On the Last Photo

On the last photo I look like my mom.  
Of course, she is still twenty years older  
than me,  
But there is certain age at which a child  
imprints the face of a dear one  
And no matter how many years are added  
or taken from it –  
Even in the deeper past, the older recol-  
lections,  
This image covers all sorts of variations of  
eye-shades and lines of wrinkles.  
Mother, now I am similar to you  
And will be like this in all kinds of futures,  
Because there is in front of me the whole  
view, which my eye could reach  
And whatever effort it may take now in ex-  
amining it from all the sides,  
Using microscopes or telescopes,  
Sitting in the aircrafts of the highest speed,  
All feelings and amazements will be the  
copies of the copies.  
I multiply these feelings very fast,  
Already almost automatically; the neurons  
are imprinting them  
And cleaning, cleaning from the ships in  
fire,  
From wars, from murders  
And what remains is still one big confu-  
sion –

for the world in front of our noses, which  
we cannot touch.  
Mom, it is something like your fuss in a  
house –  
Routine filled up with strange love.  
In whatever way displaced,  
The objects find their place.  
How boring did it use to seem.  
This year even the see gave indifferent  
look.  
As if there was no pebble unknown to me  
inside it  
And the only way it got alive  
was through the square of a hotel window.  
At night the sea sang within the wooden  
frame in a sweetest voice  
And it was not needed to look at it at all.  
Maybe the truth is this –  
One should not fix one's eyes on herself  
from every side.  
Maybe I am covering the main view myself.  
Still, I am doing the same.  
Mother, now I am similar to you  
And will stay like this through the future of  
my child.

/Translation by the author/



Born in 1977, Lela Samniashvili graduated from Ilia Chavchavadze University of Foreign Languages and in 2001 took the Simultaneous Translation courses. In 2007 she completed her Master's Degree in Oslo University. Her poetry work includes: *Photo-Pills* (2000); *The Snake Year* (2004); *A Permanent Tattoo* (2006); *Fractals* (2010); *An Abstract Prayer* (2014). She has translated: Sylvia Plath's *Poems* (World Poetry Series, Merani, 1999); Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Taso Foundation, 2007); Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (Taso Foundation, 2009; Diogene, 2014).



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**Contact:** Gvantsa Jobava  
intelektipublishingrights@gmail.com

Lela Samniashvili in translation / Samniashvili's poems are translated into English, Dutch, Italian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages and have been published in several anthologies among them: UK (Arc Publications, 2016); Francis Boutle Publishers, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).



Lela Samniashvili is an author in filigree, even though the filigree nature is rather rare at first. But she still has a tendency to formalism, the poems of this collection remain natural throughout but obviously, at times what each one of them has to say is set out at a conceptual level. /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

# ZAZA TVARADZE

'He is a complex author. This complexity is to be found everywhere: in his themes, in his range, in his vocabulary. These are collapses, which you can't call grotesque, nor provocative vocabulary: it's very dramatic.' /Z. Ratiani, poet/

## TAN-TSI IN THE CHILL



Zaza Tvaradze (1957-2007), writer and poet. He studied psychology at Tbilisi State University. From 1980 he worked as editorial director of a number of literary magazines and was a member of the Georgian Pen Club. His verses and short stories have been translated into English, French, German and Russian.



**Zaza Tvaradze is not easy to take in, neither for a reader who is trained on and attuned to customary motifs, nor for a reader who is a writer. This is how it was for me, personally: there was a boundary, after which I could accept, more and more, and truly, Zaza's work.** /Z. Ratiani, poet/

**In his poems Zaza often loses his temper. In Zaza's poems there are frequent yells and outbursts. In Zaza's poems shouts come not just from people, but from flies, birds... He knows versification better than anyone, but often breaks the measure and rhythm when he wants to raise his voice in the poem. And then comes his personal amazing melancholy... And then comes a burst of abuse... And then we get yelling again and then melancholy once more.** /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

Zaza Tvaradze is one of the most idiosyncratic authors in recent Georgian literature. He doesn't dance in the warm, he does his tantsy (*meaning 'dances'*) in the cold in order to stay alive. This is the mood and attitude which runs through all his poetry. Cold lines of spiritual loneliness, of despair, of homelessness are constantly kneaded in clown's intonations. It is like the actions of a madman, and that is how it should be: Zaza Tvaradze's entire nature is to be the lunatic of Georgian poetry. Despite the deep tragic essence, he has not been able to say what he wants using just melancholy forms. He has had to act in a challenging way, he has had to irritate the reader with his buffoonery, inappropriate at first sight; possibly he has even angered the reader and then made the reader, once sobered and disillusioned, turn and face the universe's reality.

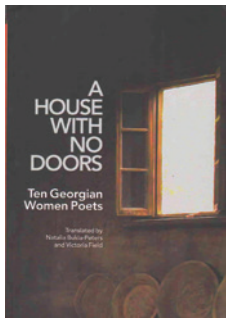
### Sun in the Dirt

Buses mutilate the city views,	Wine-red seas.
The yard men hold their brooms like lances	The sun of coming up,
And sweep the streets and the pavements too,	The sun of going down,
They sweep the flagstones	The sun of coming in.
And creep like worms away from my street.	The yard men put on wings and form a circle –
They sweep the balconies, the amulets,	I don't know how or whence they take refuge with me,
They sweep the suitcases,	And they riddle my entire past like a sieve...
The rail tracks and the filthy freight wagons,	Buses
Trampled by feet;	Mutilate the city streets.
At night the wind comes in	The yard men hold their brooms like lances.
Through the holes in the carriages	What they have piled around me is dirt.
And the light of those distant,	What quivers so miserably is my sun.

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/

Number of pages: 92  
Published in: 2003 / Caucasian House Publishing  
Rights, contact: Manana Jikia  
manana.jikia@yahoo.com





**TEN GEORGIAN WOMEN POETS**  
**A House With No Doors**

*Lia Sturua, Rusudan Kaishauri, Maya Sarishvili, Nato Ingorokva, Lela Samniashvili, Tea Topuria, Eka Kevanishvili, Diana Anphimiadi, Lia Likokeli, Salome Benidze*  
 Translated into English by Natalia Bukia-Peters, Victoria Field  
 Francis Boutle Publishers, 2016  
 The UK

'Verses that physically hurt'  
 /Matrix/



**BADRI GUGUSHVILI**  
**The Day of Man**

Translated into German by Maja Lisowski  
 Pop Verlag, 2016  
 Germany

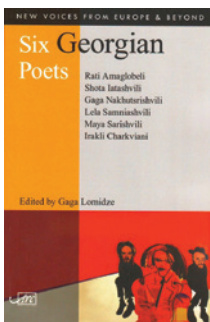
'Electrically charged poems'  
 /fixpoetry.com/feuilleton/kritiken/



**BELA CHEKURISHVILI**  
**We Apple Trees**

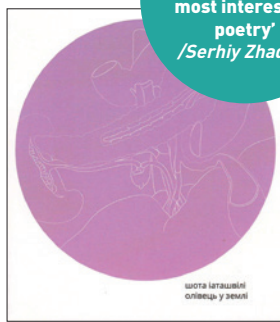
Translated into German by N. Hummelt, T. Khachapuridze, L. Kevlishvili  
 Wunderhorn Verlag, 2016  
 Germany

'Elect simplest deepest sense – and this is the most interesting poetry'  
 /Serhiy Zhadan/



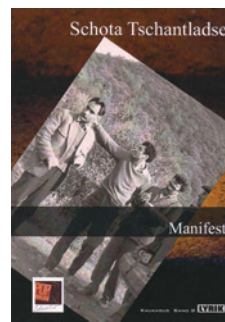
**SIX GEORGIAN POETS**  
 Rati Amaglobeli, Shota Iatashvili, Gaga Nakhutsrishvili, Lela Samniashvili, Maya Sarishvili, Irakli Charkviani

Translated into English by A. Büchler, N. Davies, D. Rayfield, A. Smart, S. Watts, D. Gabunia  
 Arc Publications, 2016  
 The UK



**SHOTA IATASHVILI**  
**Pencil in the Earth**

Translated into Ukrainian by M. Kiyanovska, S. Lazo, O. Mordovina  
 Krok, 2016  
 Ukraine



**SHOTA CHANTLADZE**  
**Manifest**

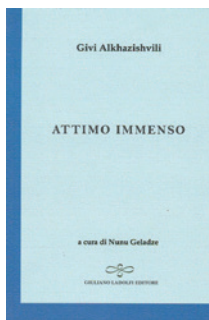
Translated into German by Maja Lisowski  
 Pop Verlag, 2016  
 Germany

'The very letters in his texts send out sparks and crackle'  
 /Sydsvenskan/



**ZURAB RTVELIASHVILI**  
**150 000 Megahertz**

Translated into Swedish by Kristian Carlsson, Manana Kobaidze  
 Smockadoll Förlag, 2016  
 Sweden



**GIVI ALKHAZISHVILI**  
**Immediate Moment**

Translated into Italian by Nunu Geladze, Rusudan Koinashvili  
 Giuliano Ladolfi Editore, 2016  
 Italy



**LIA STURUA**  
**Wolf's Hour**

Translated into Italian by Nunu Geladze  
 Giuliano Ladolfi Editore, 2017  
 Italy

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