

# BOOKS FROM GEORGIA 2017/2018

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MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND  
MONUMENT PROTECTION  
OF GEORGIA

'Morchiladze deserves to be read not merely as an example of a Georgian novelist but as a world-class novelist in his own right.' /T. I. Burton, critic/

# AKA

# MORCHILADZE

## MAID IN TIFLIS

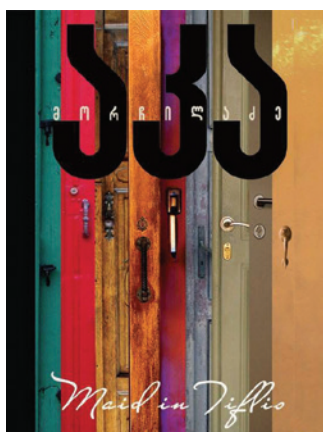
Both in its storytelling and the adventures it narrates, Aka Morchiladze's novel *Maid in Tiflis* is a heavily laden novel. The author gives us, simultaneously, the story of a Tbilisi friendship between two young men. The novel comprises thirteen books, in which stories of Tbilisi, Poland, Santa Esperanza and Leningrad are very smoothly combined into one continuum. Here you will read love stories, told in utterly different and very interesting ways: the stories start with Varsken the Pitiakhsh and Queen Shushanik and end with the adventures of Mogela of Plekhanov St and the Rose of Shiraz, of Leviko Barnoveli and five Soviet girls. Morchiladze tells this story in his own typical style, dividing the novel into 'substories'; these are called 'doors' which the reader has to 'open'. The main characters, Mogela and Leviko, are young unemployed men who somehow manage to get by. Mogela is a passionate smoker of hash; when Leviko dies, he appears to Mogela in his intoxicated state. Mogela is eventually forced to get out of town because unsavoury characters are trying to make him hand over the fortune supposedly left by his grandfather. He gives the key to the house to the 'Rose of Shiraz'. She and Mogela are in love but dare not make their love public. The letters and notes that the 'Rose of Shiraz' sends to Mogela are reminiscent of Zweig's *Brief einer Unbekannten* (Letter from an Unknown Woman). Mogela himself seems to live in a twilight world. In fantasy he is often visited by his friends and in particular by Leviko, for whom he searches almost throughout the story. Finally he resorts to crime: the last 'door' is about his selling a book from his grandfather's collection, making a fortune from it. He then decides to return home. Outside his house he sees Leviko sitting on the steps ...

The novel movingly reflects the difficult economic situation in Georgia and the plight of an entire generation of young people who try their luck abroad but in so doing lose what binds them together. In 2008 the novel was awarded the SABA Literary Award for the Best Novel of the Year.



PHOTO: Khatuna Khutsishvili

Born in 1966 in Tbilisi, Aka Morchiladze is arguably the most outstanding and widely recognised talented writer of contemporary Georgian literary fiction. He studied and later taught Georgian History at Tbilisi State University; he has worked as a sports journalist on a sports daily newspaper. Since 1998, the Sulakauri Publishing House has published Aka Morchiladze's twenty novels and three collections of short stories. In 2005-2006 he was an author and presenter of one of the most interesting TV programmes to date on literature. Several films and plays have been based on his works. Like Milorad Pavić, his favourite writer, Morchiladze believes that a novel needs not start at the beginning or proceed in a straight line to the end: he applies Umberto Eco's theory of the emancipated reader. Morchiladze has won numerous literary prizes in Georgia.



Number of pages: 477  
Published in: 2007 / Sulakauri Publishing House  
Rights: Sulakauri Publishing House  
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Aka Morchiladze in translation / Rights on Morchiladze's novels have been sold in several countries among them: Germany (Weidle Verlag, 2018; Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2017); Italy (Del Vecchio Editore, 2016); Serbia (Dereta, 2016); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); Bulgaria (Arka Publishing, 2015); Macedonia (Antolog Books Dooel, 2015); Egypt (Al Kotob Khan, 2015, 2017); Albania (Shkupi Publishing, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014, 2012); Sweden (Publishing House 2244, 2013); Azerbaijan (Alatoran, 2013); Switzerland (Pendo, 2006).

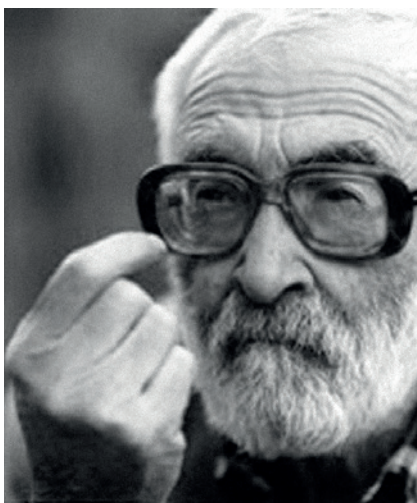


Unlike his Georgian post-modernist colleagues, Aka Morchiladze never aims for the ideal reader, the intellectual reader who intuits the writer's concept just by associations and hints. On the contrary, his reader can be anyone: a young person whose language is street slang, a girl who loves tear-jerking love stories, an aficionado of historical novels, people who prefer urban prose to anything else, fans of detective or mystery stories, and just ordinary readers who like literature that tastes good. /S. Tsulaia, critic/

# ERLOM AKHVLEDIANI

'Exhilarating and at the same time paradoxical.'  
/P. Handke, writer, political activist/

## MOSQUITO IN THE CITY



Erlom Akhvlediani (1933-2012) is a well-known Georgian writer and scriptwriter. He graduated from Tbilisi State University in the faculty of history in 1957 and passed higher educational courses at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. During 1962-1999 he wrote the scenarios for nineteen well-known films and starred in four movies. From 1965 to 1992 he was a member of the Scenario Committee of Georgian Film Studio. Akhvlediani played a major part in Georgian intellectual life as a writer of film scripts. But along with his extremely successful career in screenwriting he authored three novels and numerous short stories, which already are regarded as Georgian Classic. Erlom Akhvlediani received several literary prizes, the Literary Award SABA 2011 for the Best Novel among them.

*Mosquito in the City* encompasses a mega-period – with its deep and serious existential problems, with the integration of modern and post-modern conceptions and views, at the boundaries of genre in its new type of narration. The traces left by time are only too obvious in the work: streets from a past era, trolleybuses, cinemas, rooms...

Erlom Akhvlediani writes a great deal about writing, he often recalls the blank sheet of paper, he goes to the market where he buys punctuation marks, words, paragraphs, sentences.

In the course of the narrative he is not convinced of many things, he doesn't know if there are five or six people in the room, and then he is capable of chatting about this over several pages. Most of all, objects attract the narrator: in the book a great number of objects that have no function are listed: these are ornaments in the narrators or characters' rooms. In fact, these objects periodically appear in dreams, but they still remain dead objects, although living beings mingle with the dead objects, for example, insects. Such living creatures are the main heroes of the novel: a mosquito which originates from Colchis's lowlands and, like every true Colchian, has blue eyes.

The main hero of the novel is a writer. The writer sits, just like a child, by the window (or he lies stretched out on a divan, like someone telling fairy tales) and watches the world with wonderment. From time to time he notices certain things: a child in a human being, poetry in the world, micro-organism in the macro-world, a whole mega-world in a particle, eternity in an instant, and this joy of discovery runs through the book, right to the end.

Erlom Akhvlediani wants us to shrink in size, to feel our smallness, so that we can grow up. Because the insignificant bite of a mosquito can change the world, making it take a radical turn, turning it upside down, rousing it, putting it in motion, amazing it and making it sound. This mosquito, so unattractive and tiny, and yet so important, the persistence or the paradox of the world, the incarnation of its unknowable, super-logical truth, still has to be killed by the writer. Why? Because, infected by the virus of love, arisen from the dead, transformed and empowered by a new outlook, he has to continue writing the book of the world.

Number of pages: 236

Published in: 2010 / Publishing House Siesta

Rights: Publishing House Siesta

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Erlom Akhvlediani in translation / Akhvlediani's works are translated into English, German, Russian, Armenian, Czech, Hungarian and Arabic and have been published in several countries, among them: in France:

*Mosquito in the City* (Le Serpent à plumes, 2017);

Turkey: *Mosquito in the City* (Dedalus, 2014); USA:

*Vano and Niko* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014); Short

stories from *Vano and Niko* in Germany (Georgische Erzählungen des 20. Jahrhunderts, Suhrkamp, 2000;

Verschlossen mit silbernem Schlüssel: Literatur aus Armenien, Aserbaidschan, Georgien, Edition KAPPA, 2000); in Netherlands: *Man Who Lost His Self and Other Stories* (Uitgeverij Voetnoot, 2006); *Vano & Niko* (Voetnoot, 2003).



Sample translations available  
in German and French.

“

Ever since I have known Erlom, he has always had one idea revolving in his head. He had a character called Gigot Gogiteli, who had not been born, and the narrative was about him, but because he hadn't been born, the author could say nothing about him. Here too, in this book, the theme of the blank page is very important: of the pen that doesn't write, of the full stop that runs away... /Z. Kiknadze, philosopher, critic/

'How masterful and yet realistic everything is: the acute feeling for plot and composition, the interesting characters, the link to life today...'  
/D. Kuprava, critic/

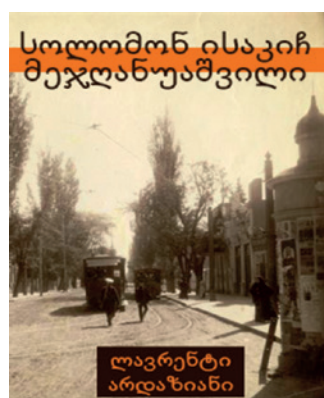
## SOLOMON ISAKICH MEJGHANUASHVILI

The main hero of the work is Solomon, a representative bourgeois merchant. In this social novel, the realistic lines of the plot develop extremely dynamically. The work describes an era when Tbilisi was the trading centre of Transcaucasia, and where Russians, Georgians, Armenians, Tatars, Germans, Frenchmen, Lezgins and other nationalities traded and were familiar, too, with the Russian market.

The bourgeois merchants were the force in Georgian reality which was later to transform the whole of economic and political life. Solomon came from the lower orders, and was born at a time when Georgia's economic and political independence had been consigned to history and Georgia had become subject to Russian conquest. The link with Russia accelerated the establishment of the bourgeois merchant class in Georgia.

After her husband's death Solomon's mother Gaiane was left destitute, and a young aristocrat Luarsab Raindidze and his mother gave the widow shelter with their family in their village. At sixteen Solomon left the village and made for Tbilisi's market, where he took up buying and selling reputations, as well as goods for trade. Soon Solomon became convinced that a career as a merchant required deviousness and evasiveness. Soon his debtors were not just peasants, but princes. Even Luarsab Raindidze, who had brought up his family, was in debt to Solomon. When Solomon was virtually a millionaire, he began aiming for a cultural life. He wants his wife and children to live a rich, cultured life, but as a representative of a newly established bourgeoisie, he turned out to be ill prepared for this. In the work Aleksandre Raindidze, the son of Luarsab Raindidze, as a representative of the aristocracy, is juxtaposed with Solomon Mejghanuashvili, a representative of the newly appeared merchant bourgeoisie. But Raindidze's artistic image, compared to Mejghanuashvili's, is lifeless. Raindidze has refused to marry Solomon's daughter, and instead has married a woman of his own rank and moved back to the country, where he 'gets down to improving agriculture.'

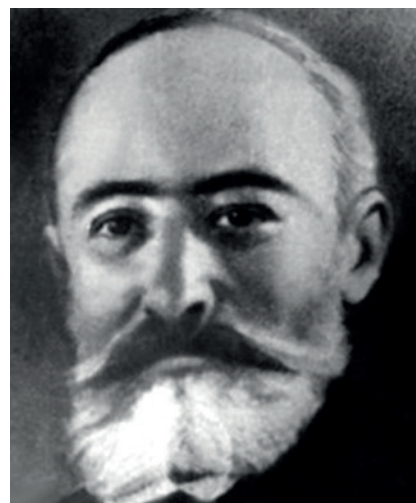
Lavrenti Ardaziani has depicted the inevitability of the new social way of life and of bourgeois relationships in Georgia. Against the author's own wishes, the novel persuades us that high rank is powerless when faces with the Mejghanuashvilis.



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Full translation available  
in Russian.

# LAVRENTI ARDAZIANI



Lavrenti Ardaziani (1815-1870) was born in Tbilisi; in 1837 he graduated from Tbilisi's theological college, and from 1846 on he was employed in what was then the Georgia and Imeretia Provincial Government, in the 'Transcaucasian Department', the governor-general's chancellery and Tbilisi District Court, and elsewhere. Ardaziani began his career as a writer with a prose translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (*Tsiskari*, 1858), and soon became a leading contributor to the magazine. From the start Ardaziani revealed an ability to understand deeply events in life (his poem *Money* in *Tsiskari*, 1859), and in his famous novel *Solomon Isakich Mejghanuashvili* (*Tsiskari*, 1861) he gave a convincing portrayal of the old social life and of the inevitability of the establishment of bourgeois relationships in Georgia. He is one of the founders of Georgian critical realism. Ardaziani's reportages and critical essays were at the time a notable phenomenon in Georgian journalism.

# ZAIRA ARSENISHVILI

'This book is the novel of Zaira Arsenishvili's life, a fine drinking cup full of the best Kakhetian wine, whose container is a work of art, with traditional ornamentation and patterns. But the content is even more important, its wine being comparable to the Saviour's blood.' /G. Lobjanidze, poet, critic, translator/

OH, WORLD!  
(KAKHETIAN CHRONICLES)

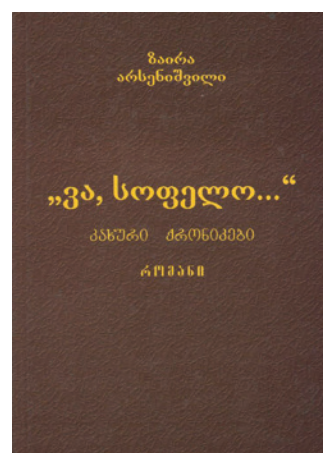


Zaira Arsenishvili (1933-2015) was born in Telavi. In 1954 she graduated from the philology faculty of Tbilisi State University and in 1956 from the violin class of Tbilisi's second Music Teaching College. She worked as a music teacher from 1957 to 1971, playing in Tbilisi's opera and ballet theatre orchestra. From 1972 she was a film drama writer in the writer's collective of the Georgian Film studio, and from 1975 she was an editor in a second creative collective. She was the author of scripts for the films *When the Almonds Blossomed* (1972), *A Brawl in a Town of Gourmets* (1975), *Several Interviews on Personal Questions* (1978), *Today it Was a Sleepless Night* (1983), *Mayhem* (1986), *A Waltz on the Pechora* (1992), as well as the script for the film version of Ilia Chavchavadze's novella *Is He Human?!* (1979). A film series *Happiness* (2009) was based on a story by her. Zaira Arsenishvili is an author of four books and won several literary prizes and awards among them: Georgian State Prize 1998, Georgian Council of Ministers' Prize 1984.

Zaira Arsenishvili's art is able to transcend a terrible reality and rise to a higher level of insight into the human soul and heart. A multitude of images and stories are set in different periods of time surge from normality into a Dostoyevskian psychological abyss, and then return to their starting point. In the interval, the human psyche has been explored thoroughly and deeply, and human suffering described in a breath-taking way. The background of the novel is the arrival of the Bolsheviks in Georgia and the repression which came with it. In 1921, after the exile of the Georgian government to France, the Red Army invaded the country which lost its independence, while the population was persecuted with the worst peaks in 1924, the early 1930s and 1937. These periods of persecution organized by the new Soviet power could be treated as a separate subject. But in this novel they are just background preparing the foreground where feelings and a heart-breaking story, are analysed with deep insight.

The novel is built mainly around Eva's story. She met her love Gio in dramatic circumstances. They got married. But, unfortunately, Gio was mysteriously murdered. The killing was done by Spiridon, young man passionately in love with Eva. After that, Eva tried several times to take her own life, but each time she was rescued. Still, Spiridon, more ever determined to marry her, forced her father to give his agreement to their marriage. But this so desired victory ended up in the disaster as Eva would not let him approach her and would refuse to be his wife. Hurt and humiliated to the depth to his soul Spiridon started entertaining relationship with other women. He had a son Gigla. As his mother died in childbirth, Spiridon took the enfant home for Eva to take care. Unfortunately, when Gigla was 11 he learned the truth about his birth. The link between Eva and Gigla was broken. This situation of 'a love-hatred' type becoming even more neurotic when Maro, mean, jealous and unforgiving woman became Gigla's wife. They became strangers to each other. As time passes, Eva is more and more resigned and Spiridon more and more resentful and bitter. He went as far as commit a murder for her and now she becomes his obsession. Finally, before committing suicide he lets Eva know the truth about Gio's death.

Number of pages: 534  
Published in: 2011 / Inovatsia Publishing  
Rights, contact: Maka Kasradze  
mkasradzefr@yahoo.fr



Sample translation available  
in French.

'Every line speaks of loss but also of a longing to find something new.' /N. Haratischwili, writer/

# ZAZA

# BURCHULADZE

## TOURIST'S BREAKFAST

An author has fled with his wife and child to Germany. His passport is his only possession, storytelling – his only means of identification.

'In today's world', the author writes, 'everybody's going somewhere. Some because they can, others because they have to.' *Tourist's Breakfast* is about both groups: refugees and tourists. Mixing autobiographical prose and documentary realism, Burchuladze walks the reader through his version of Berlin, a claustrophobic space that triggers memories of the narrator's past life in Georgia and the Soviet and post-Soviet history of his native land. Sometimes examining such phenomena as, for example, a Georgian funeral and requiem, sometimes telling us his own adventures, sometimes casually giving us simple line portraits of actual people. Real non-Georgian characters appear, so as to provide the author with certain associations, and then immediately disappear. For example, Zaza Burchuladze writes that he had a wild coffee-drinking time with the Russian writer Sorokin. This reminds him of a typical Soviet dinner and over several pages he gives us a detailed description, or he recalls how some photographer at the Frankfurt Book Fair got the Ukrainian writer Yurii Andrukhovych to be photographed and suddenly gave off the smell of the villager Granny Keto. Following this smell, he recalls Granny Keto, until the photographer calls out 'Enough!' These montage effects make the book dynamic. As a whole, just like a book which is full of details, a series of pictures. And also of characters. Zaza Burchuladze draws his surroundings, objects, people, sometimes with good humour, sometimes with sarcasm, but, which is important, there is always an unexpected effect, one always feels the forces of metaphor. On the one hand, this is a book of personal experience and reflections, but at the same time it offers us a text with is socially acute.

Observing the strange locals and battling the ghosts of the past, reader and narrator move step by step and word by word through the city, ultimately staking a powerful claim to belonging and identity.



Born in Tbilisi in 1973, Zaza Burchuladze is a contemporary writer, dramatist and translator. He graduated from the Georgian State Academy of Fine Arts and began writing at the age of 24. Over the last ten years he published a number of novels. He was awarded with the Tsinandali Prize for Literature, as well as a Literary Award by the Ilia State University.

His translations into Georgian include works by Fyodor Dostoyevski, Daniil Kharmis and Vladimir Sorokin. He has worked for Radio Free Europe and held lectures at Caucasus School of Media. He was a resident at the Literary Colloquium in Berlin in 2011 and 2013, as well as at the Heinrich Böll House. Zaza Burchuladze successfully starred in a Georgian feature movie *Jaqos Refugees* in 2008. Currently he is a writer in residence at PEN Germany. Today he lives and works in Berlin.



'I had long been afraid that Berlin could become too cosy. Zaza Burchuladze prevents this.' /B. Bjerg, critic/

'Zaza Burchuladze has not deviated from his custom of the last decade: once again, he has created a masterpiece. The text called *Tourist Breakfast* is, above all, a monument of so-called word-play literature, naturalistic and humanist, contemporary to naturalism – the most unusual things are naturalistically, naturally portrayed and the reader, too, has to adopt a nil admirari – be amazed by nothing.' /L. Berdzenishvili, critic/



Sample translation available in English.

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Zaza Burchuladze in translation / Germany (*Tourist's Breakfast*, Blumenbar, 2017; *Adibas*, Blumenbar, 2015); Macedonia (*Adibas*, Antolog Books Dooel, 2015); Italy (*Adibas*, Meridiano Zero, 2014); USA (*Phonogram*, in: Contemporary Georgian Fiction, Dalkey Archive Press, 2012; *Adibas*, Dalkey Archive Press, 2013); Poland (*Adibas*, Claroscuro, 2011); Moldova (*Instant Kafka*, Publishing House Cartier, 2011); Switzerland (*Inflatable Angel*, l'Age d'homme, 2013); Sweden (*Translator*, in: Georgian berättar: Goris fastning, Tranan, 2013); Russia (*Inflatable Angel*, Ad Marginem, 2015; *Adibas*, Ad Marginem, 2011; *Mineral Jazz*, Ad Marginem, 2008).

# DAVID CHIKHLADZE

'H should be read not with your face stuck in the book, as for the contemplation and consumption of a finished product, refusing any personality, but to support him who wrote this book, as if we were writing this book at the same time as the author himself.' /B. Chekurishvili, poet, critic/

FEMININE/FEMININE



Born 1962 in Tbilisi David Chikhladze is a poet and theatre artist. His poems and critical articles have been published since 1981 in periodicals. He has also translated numerous works by American poets and theoreticians. Since the mid-1980s he has taken part in various exhibitions, installations and theatrical projects in Georgia and abroad. Since 1989 he has been published in foreign journals. In 1989 he founded Tbilisi's first independent gallery *Alternative Art Gallery*, about which a wide-ranging survey was published that year in America (Kim Levin, *Connoisseur*, 1989). Since 1994 he directed Tbilisi's Margo Korableva's Performance Theatre. From 2002 to 2004 he collaborated with the New York theatre *Repetti Chocolate Factory*. In 2002 he took part in the *American Living Room* festival in New York. His productions as a videographer were: *Audit*, *Drowning Man and Fundamental*, and they evoked a good response from New York's theatrical press. In 2006, in City University of New York, he staged in English and in Russian a method for an electronic dictionary of writing processual poems: this method he then used to create two new poems: *Mausoleum* and *Orgasm*.

Take note of the vocabulary: his texts are crowded with words: life, friendship, love, infatuation, freedom, death, flower, light, fire, etc. Or this is a tight-rope crossing. How many books we know that are full of the word 'pain', which, even if we read them from beginning to end, never once make us feel any 'pain'? I am convinced that there are lots. Because writing with key words is the shortest path to falling into banality. David Chikhladze also falls into banality, but of his own volition, sentimentally, ritually... he falls into a banality which is pure, poetic, eye-opening and vertiginous: and how could he not do so? 'Banality is, after all, his favourite word.' /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

The novel *Feminine/Feminine*, is a sort of continuation of the Roman author Apuleius's *Golden Ass*. It tells us the story of a man who sets off to find a goddess and spends quite a lot of time in that search. After all, the goddess has been waiting for a long time, and that is why the golden ass goes on living. On the other hand, the novel is, in part, a documentary: the prototype goes looking for his own self and his own real identity. After the kaleidoscopic adventures the search is exhausted and the book ends with a solemn and completely unmelancholic poem dedicated to the goddess.

One can clearly see that the author has written it at various periods. *Feminine/Feminine* has a rather eclectic structure: it is made up of fragments of a novel, of reviews written by Karlo Kacharava about these fragments, of interviews given by the author to the journalist Nana Akobidze, of theoretical discussions about theatre, which remind us strongly of Plato's dialogues. The characters in Moscow, Berlin, Tbilisi or New York are real ones, but this is not a collection of memoirs or traveller's impressions. The author manages to cross the boundary between the work of art and the documentary in such a way that he never slips up, he manages to interest us in the character who is David Chikhladze. He manages to create a plot (which any novel requires), to blend it with carefully measured humour and, by stressing the hero's bewilderment and infantilism, he chooses phrases which leave us astonished. But, naturally, the novel is about the search for the element of the eternal feminine.

It should also be noted that this novel has been given graphic illustration by the poet, artist and art critic, David Chikhladze's very close friend, Karlo Kacharava.

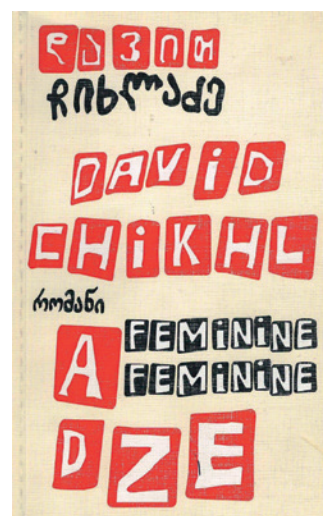
Number of pages: 148

Published in: 2007 / Siesta Publishing House

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margodekorableva@gmail.com

David Chikhladze in translation / Chikhladze's works have appeared in many anthologies of several countries among them in: USA [*Sanzona Girls*, Eratio Editions, 2015; *Three Green Tea*, dbqp, Schenectady, 2004; *Second Wave* in: *Anthology An American Avant Garde*, 2002]; *Poems from Tbilisi*, Cloud Mountain Press, 1991]; Russia [*Anthology of Single-point Poetry*, Gumanitarni Fond, 1991]; Germany [An Extract from *Feminine/Feminine*, in: *Georgian short stories from 20<sup>th</sup> century*, Suhrkamp taschenbuch, 2000].



Sample translation available  
in German.



'The novel is captivating in its unusual mixture of myth and reality, more precisely in the psychological expression of the characters, its philosophical depth and great metaphors, recalling the magical realism of Latin American authors.' /Ch. Links, critic/

## A MAN WAS GOING DOWN THE ROAD

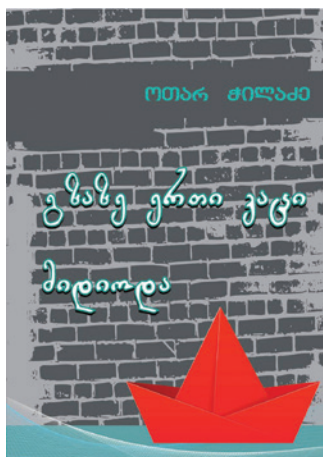
The novel begins with the Greek legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece and the consequences for the obscure kingdom of Colchis after the Greek Jason comes and abducts Medea. But it is also an allegory of the treachery and destruction that ensued when Russia, and then the Soviets, annexed Georgia, as well as Chiladze's interpretation of life as a version of the ancient Anatolian story of Gilgamesh, and a study of Georgian life, domestic and political, in which women and children pay the price for the hero's quests, obsessions and doubts.

In Chiladze's work it is necessary to read the myth from a Colchis perspective, not for pseudo patriotic reasons but because it is important to answer all the questions that remain.

The reader needs to explain the myth, and Otar Chiladze takes this mission seriously to explain the myth of the Argonauts and the author does it successfully. He is interested in describing mythical Colchis.

The author shows that the Kingdom of Colchis cannot be directly challenged, only with a properly designed plan, where the time is chosen wisely to defeat Aeëtes. As soon as it becomes clear who could challenge Aeëtes everything begins to unravel. It becomes clear that the Aries does not have fairy wings, it is just common Aries; it is clear that Phrixus's mission is to arrive in Colchis but he does not know about it at least until the end of the mission, however, he turns out to be a good performer. It is clear that there is no oak for the fleece, and nor are those eternally vigilant dragons around it to protect the golden fleece. There is only politics, an enormous desire to complete for dominance in the country, there are good players and there are strong players, who were deceived because the required actions could not be relied upon or they may not want to believe it.

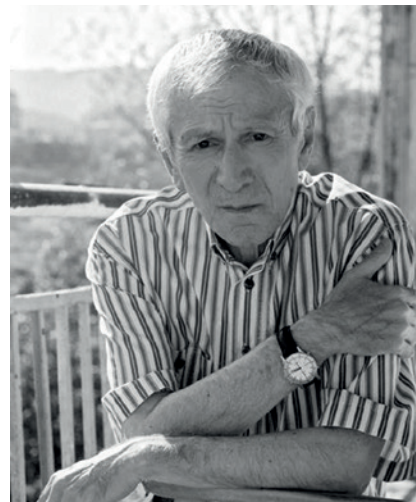
According to BBC World Service's Writer in Residence Blog, the novel is written as a series of streams of consciousness from different characters, but at the same time could be read as a series of confessionals. It gives a multidimensional view of modern Georgia with all its problems, labyrinths and cul-de-sacs... 'It's a bitter and honest novel which is relevant to all post-Soviet states searching for a new identity.'



**Number of pages:** 590  
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**Rights:** Tamar Chiladze, Zaza Chiladze  
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Otar Chiladze in translation / Rights on Chiladze's books have been sold to several countries among them: Russia [Kulturnaia Revolucia, 2016; Azbuka, 2003, 2000; Hudojestvennaia literatura, 1988, Radouga, 1987, 1986; Moscow, 1987; Sovetski Pisatel', 1988, 1985, 1984, 1981, 1978]; Azerbaijan [Alatoran, 2016]; Macedonia [Ikona, 2015]; Turkey [Aylak Adam Kultur Sanat Yayincilik, 2015]; Armenia [Antares, two novels, 2015]; Germany [Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2013; Volk und Welt, 1998, 1988, 1983]; UK [Garnett Press, 2013, 2012]; France [Albin Michel, 1994]; Estonia [Eesti Raamat, 1992, 1986, 1984]; Lithuania [Vaga, 1986]; Hungary [Magveto, 1983]; Czechoslovakia [Odeon, 1984]; Slovakia [Tatran, 1984; Sloven. spisovatel, 1980]; Ukraine [Jovten, 1977; Radianskii pismenik, 1968]; Uzbekistan [Adabiet na Saniat Nashrieti, 1973]; Luxembourg [Luxemburger Wort, 1973].

# OTAR CHILADZE



Otar Chiladze (1933-2009) was a Georgian writer who played a prominent role in the resurrection of the Georgian prose in the post-Stalin era. His novels characteristically fuse Sumerian and Hellenic mythology with the predicaments of a modern Georgian intellectual. Otar Chiladze was born in Sighnaghi, a small town in Kakheti, the easternmost province of Georgia. He graduated from Tbilisi State University with a degree in journalism in 1956. His works, primarily poetry, first appeared in the 1950s. At the same time, Chiladze engaged in literary journalism, working for leading literary magazines in Tbilisi. He gained popularity with his series of lengthy, atmospheric novels, such as *A Man Was Going Down the Road*, *Everyone That Findeth Me*, *Avelum* and others. Otar Chiladze who became a Georgian classic author during his lifetime was awarded some Highest State Prizes of Georgia and in 1998 was nominated for the Nobel Prize along with five other writers. Otar Chiladze received Literary Award SABA 2003 in category the Best Novel for *The Basket*, Ilia Chavchavadze State Prize 1997 for Artistic Work, The State Prize of Georgia 1993 for his Contribution to the Georgian Literature and Shota Rustaveli State Prize 1983 for *The Iron Theatre*.

“**Not a single character in this novel, written with a stern, thorough-going, uncompromising psychological realism, is spared. Parnaoz, the main hero himself, has his uncompromising attitude to himself emphasized, as the novel's Leitmotif. Correspondingly, the key idea of the work is arousing generosity, for those who don't trust what is easily accessible in life and literature. /G. Asatiani, critic/**

# GURAM DOCHANASHVILI

'It is lucky for Georgian literature that after such a long time a person has appeared who has been able to joke like Cervantes about his pains. Guram Dochanashvili, with Cervantes' allegory in the distant 1970s, defines the sense of human existence.' /Z. Chkheidze, critic, translator/

## WATER(PO)LOO OR RESTORATIVE WORK



Born in Tbilisi in 1939, Guram Dochanashvili is a Georgian prose writer, a historian by profession, whose literary works have been popular since the 1970s. He was an active participant in archaeological excavations and played in the university orchestra. From 1962 to 1975, Guram Dochanashvili worked in the Archaeological Department of History at the I. Javakishvili Archaeology and Ethnography Institute. He was head of the prose department of the journal *Mnatobi* and headed the prose section of the Academy of Sciences. Since 1985 he has been the main editor at the Georgian Film studio. Today, Guram Dochanashvili is one of the most popular writers in Georgia and his novels and short stories have become modern Georgian classic.

*Water(po)loo, or Restorative Work (A Fantastic Story)* is a work of magical allegory about the extraordinary spiritual transformation of Besamé.

The story is told by the writer Afrederik Me, the action takes place in Andalusia in the nineteenth century. Besamé Caro is an orphaned boy who makes his living as a shepherd. One day a carriage rolls up in front of him, and an elder man gets out and takes Besamé to the city and offers to teach him to play the flute. In the city he gets to know Ramona, whom he falls in love with at first sight. Besamé is taught to play the flute by the maestro Cristobaldo de Rojas. At school the history teacher Cartuso is passionate about Napoleon Bonaparte and demands that his pupils feel inspired, too. When asked who was the greatest person in the world, Besamé answers 'Beethoven', and Cartuso gets angry and falls out with Besamé and goes with a complaint to the mayor, saying that musicians should be poisoned so that in future their names do not overshadow great political figures. Meanwhile, time passes. Besamé begins a friendship with Ramona and intends that, when he grows up, he will marry her. But Cartuso entrusts him with restorative work (this being playing in a water-polo team), to teach him some sense. The team trainer, the stern and odd Recachi, instils his pupils with a ruthless hostility towards their opponents and does not shy away from physical punishment. Here too, Besamé distinguishes himself and joins the core team. In one set of matches he dominates the play. Afterwards he changes and becomes a proud ball water-polo player, forgets music and begins to squander his money on loose women. One day Ramona, now a grown young woman, meets him. Besamé tries to rape her, but the old man who brought him to the city intervenes. The old man scolds Besamé and reminds him of the time when Besamé was as poor 'as Jesus'. After that he takes Besamé to an old cattle shed and makes him remember old times, which turns out to be a way for Besamé to find salvation for his soul.

As N. Gelashvili, writer and critic, has pointed out, *Water(po)loo* gives one the impression of being entirely a musical work: by the colourful variety of its moods and thematic lines, by the rapid changes in the modulation of the experiences, by the emotional logic and the structural principles, which are typical of musical works. The author persuades us that no unmarked graves exist, but the final impression he leaves us in this story, so imbued with joy and sadness, is still melancholy.

Number of pages: 139  
Published in: 2002 / Sani Publishing  
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Guram Dochanashvili in translation / Rights on Dochanashvilis novel *First Robe* has been sold to Carl Hanser Verlag, 2018; Dochanashvili's short stories have been published in many countries among them: Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012, 2014); Sweden (Tranan, 2013); Germany (Friedrich-Schiller Univ., Jena, 2001, 2000; Suhrkamp, 2000; Volk und Welt, 1984); Russia (Moscow, 1987; Izvestia, 1987; Sovetski pisatel', 1984); *Water(po)loo* in: Estonia (Periodika, 1986).



“**Readers (I mean the plural) are attracted to and entertained by the 'game', the highly aesthetic, artistic, so-called intellectual game, of a work in creation, or in the process of invention, and we, following the rules of 'children's' games, feel both belief and pain for Besamé Caro. The whole story is imbued with unbridled mischief and naughty joys, which spurts like a fountain, now here, now there, from the layers of Afrederik, Carmen or Ramona, and then immediately changes into an elegiac flow.** /N. Gelashvili, writer, critic/

'Konstantine Gamsakhurdia is the author of four great Georgian novels. With these books he stands face to face with eternity.' /S. Sigua, writer/

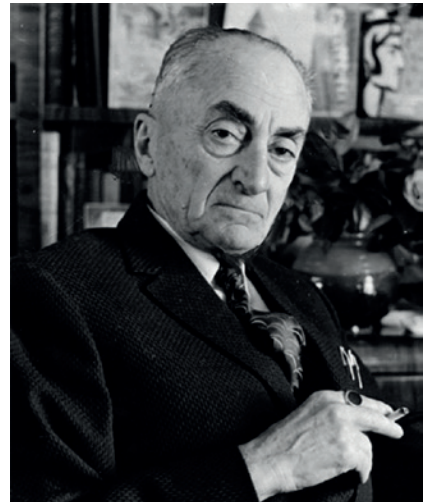
# KONSTANTINE GAMSAKHURDIA

## STEALING THE MOON

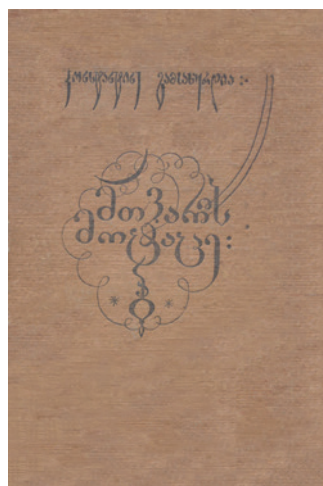
*Stealing the Moon* is a trilogy showing life in Soviet Georgia in the 1930s. The novel encountered great resistance and fell victim to the censorship. The novel shows the repressive epoch of the time, the destruction of the old and the painful process of installing the new. In 1933-35, when the novel was being written, nobody knew after all what form the revolution would take, but the savage bacchanalia, the fanaticism, the smashing of the old, the mania for renewal and the blood-soaked experiments could, on the one hand, arouse heroism, but on the other hand they gave birth to fear and depression. That is why *Stealing the Moon* is a chronicle of a tragic era. The novel has two main characters, Tarash Emkhvari, an Abkhaz intellectual, son of an émigré general and educated in Europe, and his foster-brother Abkhaz Arzaqan Zvambaia, who is the antipode to Tarash, being a collective farmer and a secret policeman, an enthusiastic Stalinist. They still have respect for one another, but at heart they are enemies, a fact which comes out in their attitude to women. The foster brothers are alienated from one another by a heroine, first by Tamar Sharvashidze, then by Lamaria Lapariani. A mass, coarse Barbarossa-like spirit, Bolshevism, destroys culture and national feeling. This is the novel's main idea, the book's basic pathos. New times, a blood-soaked period, have failed to accept Tarash Emkhvari, who comes from old Georgia and from European culture, but they have aroused the instinct of the parricidal Arzaqan Zvambaia, who uses his Mauser pistol to enforce Russian rule and whose god is Stalin.

The writer shows us how the aristocracy, the clergy, the peasantry are totally suppressed, how an atmosphere of great catastrophe is looming up.

It so happened that official opinion and the reading public showed more interest in Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's other novels, but since the 1970s the attitude to *Stealing the Moon* has changed. Essays have been written and research has been done, a theatre version has been staged, a two-part film has been made, even an opera. So, when *The Right Hand of the Grand Master* was being translated, the writer offered *Stealing the Moon* for translation. The novel has not been published abroad, because over the last decades it is *Stealing the Moon* that was banned from the international market by VAAP, the Soviet authors' rights association.



Konstantine Gamsakhurdia (1893-1975) born in a noble family in Abasha, was Georgian writer and public figure. He spent most of the World War I years in Germany, France and Switzerland, taking his doctorate at the Berlin University in 1918. While in Germany, he regularly wrote for German press on Georgia and the Caucasus, and was involved in organizing a Georgian Liberation Committee. After Georgia's declaration of independence in 1918, he became an attaché on Georgia's embassy in Berlin, responsible for repatriation of Georgian World War I prisoners and placing Georgian students in German universities. Gamsakhurdia met the 1921 Bolshevik takeover of Georgia with hostility. After the suppression of the 1924 anti-Soviet uprising in Georgia, Gamsakhurdia was excluded from the Tbilisi State University where he taught German literature. Soon was arrested and deported to the Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea where he was to spend a few years. Educated and first published in Germany, he married Western European influences to purely Georgian thematic to produce his best works. Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's son, Zviad Gamsakhurdia became a notable Soviet-era dissident who was subsequently elected the first President of Independent Georgia in 1991.



Full translation available in Russian.

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**Sakartvelos Matsne**  
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Konstantine Gamsakhurdia in translation / Netherlands (Eburon Uitgeverij B.V., 2006); Ukraine, Fakt, 2005; Radianskii Pismenik, 1982); Latvia (Liesma, 1981); Estonia (Eesti Raamat, 1971); Lithuania (Vaga, 1967); Russia (*The Right Hand of the Grand Master*; Izvestia, 1961, Goslitizdat, 1956; *Flowering of Wine*, Sovetski Pisatel' 1960); Switzerland (Short stories in: *Georgischer Erzähler*, Manesse Verlag, 1970); Germany (*The Right Hand of the Grand Master*, Kultur und Fortschritt, 1969; *Chogais Mindia* in: *Der ferne weisse Gipfel*, Volk und Welt, 1984).



**For Soviet critics who were in the process of being organized and very soon would be turned into a remorseless punitive machine, the theme of collectivisation at the time was taken up by the author with great mastery in the authentic context which, taken synchronically, shows us modernism, and diachronically a mythological-religious way of thinking and representation. /N. Kupreishvili, critic/**

# NAIRA GELASHVILI

'The union of documents and the author's views and pain makes us relive a new our country's confused adventures. This book is an attempt, in fact, to make sense of the confusion and to penetrate to its essence.' /M. Kharbedia, writer, critic/

## THE FIRST TWO CIRCLES AND ALL THE OTHERS



Born in 1947, Naira Gelashvili is a Georgian writer, germanist, literary critic and civil society activist. She began her literary activities with translations of German philosophy and poetry and gained popularity among readers for non-conformist prose, which eventually provoked a negative reaction from the Soviet authorities. Despite this, Naira Gelashvili has written a number of novels and short stories and has won several literary awards, including Literary Award SABA 2013 in category the Best Novel for *I am That One* and 2010 for *The First Two Circles and All the Others*; the Ilia Chavchavadze Prize for Artistic Work (2008); Literary Prize GALA 2007 in category the Best Literary Project for Rainer Maria Rilke (works in five volumes with commentaries); Prize of Austrian Ministry of Culture 1999 for translations of R. M. Rilke's works.

The range of Naira Gelashvili's literary writings encompasses novels, stories, essays, poetry and children's prose, as well as children's songs and musical tales. 1994 the author founded and still heads the cultural-educational NGO Caucasian House Centre for Cultural Relations, which plays a significant role in the peaceful cooperation of different cultures and religions among the people of Caucasus.



**Every book by Naira Gelashvili is different, but what makes them so very similar is the thoughts of a person saddened by the country's fate, searching for a way out, and trying to work out what is happening, what is wrong with us, what has happened to us that we haven't been able to get out of this endless crisis. /L. Bregadze, literary critic/**

In 1992-4 Naira Gelashvili wrote *The First Two Circles and All the Others*, but she revised the final version and in 2008 added a few passages. The novel is a successful attempt to make an artistic interpretation and profound evaluation of the most important events in Georgia's recent history. The writer uses many different artistic devices to show us almost every aspect of modern Georgian everyday life, and she gives an answer to a great number of questions, something that is essential for the nation's future perspectives.

The novel's action takes place in a specific organisation, a translator's collegium. This used to be a real institution, but the author has added to it her own inventions; despite its short existence, it achieved quite a lot and, thanks to it, many new authors appeared. Of all the republics of the USSR, only Georgia had such an institution, where Georgian literature was translated into the languages of the world and *vice versa*. Here a professional school of translation evolved and foreign visitors on study leave were invited from all over the world to learn the Georgian language and study Georgian literature.

The novel's characters are busy translating texts of various cultures, while all around them a new country is being born and new leaders are appearing, who are battling with this 'otherness'. The persecution and intimidation of the 'translating collegium' begins, and this develops into expulsion, resulting in actual victims. Georgia's historical facts are linked to the real or invented role played by this cultural centre, something we learn at times from the letters the characters in the novel write to one another, and sometimes we hear in the street, where you constantly hear voices chanting, and see the tops of flags being waved, as the slogans follow one another: 'In actual fact, this was the organisation which, if it hadn't existed, a democratic state ought itself to have created if it was taking a European direction, or it should have opened up a window for intellects and souls,' says Naira Gelashvili in one of her interviews. She was the head of the translator's collegium. The novel is full of biographies, of translators' biographies, which one of the employees of the collegium compiles for 'the organs'. We could call these biographies novellas and some of them deal with Shakespearean passions. The work shows very well how the events taking place in the country shape a specific person's fate. The novel has solid historical foundations: in one episode of the novel, which deals with the security services of the past, the author tells us that the past 'sometimes has to be remembered and sometimes forgotten. We should know of the past only what we can make sense of, other things we must reject, so that they don't become a burden.'

Number of pages: 778  
Published in: 2009 /Aloni Publishing  
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Naira Gelashvili in translation / Rights of Gelashvili's novels have been sold in many countries among them: Germany (*I am That One*, Verbrecher Verlag, 2017); Short Stories: (Edition Braus, 2008; Suhrkamp, 2000); Turkey (Benceajans Basin Yayin Dağıtım Eğitim Bilişim, 2017); Czechoslovakia (Lidove Nakladatelstvi, 1986).



'The story *The Formalists* is closer to post-modernism than to any other trend in its epistolary unreliability, irony, self-reflection, essay-like nature and its non-linear form... yet, unlike classic post-modernism, deep in it we come across elements typical of the modernist artist, and which develop the fundamental tendencies of post-postmodern literature.' /S. Tsulia, critic/

## GRAVITATION

*Gravitation* is a selection of Shota Iatashvili's stories. It includes the best stories from the collection *Backlighting* (1998), *The Flower of Flowers and The Engineer* (2000), *Photo Fathers* (2005) and texts written afterwards. The book opens with an extensive story *The Sick City* written in 1992: in this story describes, as a parable, Tbilisi's civil war events of 1991-2, which ended in the overthrow of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The author wrote this text in the nightmarish period of unaccountability: there was actually no distancing involved to allow for analysis and evaluation of events. That is why the work is distinguished by its extremely tense emotions, by its quantity of ghostly, cruel figures and, at the same time, by an idiosyncratic lyricism. This book contains several stories which are autobiographical. Among them is *Memento Vitae*, which the author makes very effective by montage effects: he sticks together with great craft short clips of various periods and various moods. *How We Chased Death out of The House* and *My Chess Novella* are also autobiographical. From a formalistic point of view, the story *Close Readers of the Text* is especially interesting. It is written without punctuation, which may seem to us something rather futuristic, because the strange procedure for reading the non-text, which reminds us of solving a differential equation, and is perceived as a clear challenge from the author. The story *On the Table* is a reworking of Latin American prose, where the whole action takes place around an enormous table in the house. The book includes nine stories from the cycle *Once Again Stories about Males and Females*. In these stories the author creates various hermetic spaces where he places two main characters of the cycle, Rezo and Nana, and in these closed surroundings investigates extreme situations of a woman's and a man's interrelations. Among the texts of Iatashvili's latest period, the story *The Formalists* attracts particular attention: here writers who are friends use various strange methods to create cardinal new literary works: by inventing new syntax or new verse forms, by an algorithmic cyber-novel, where the main characters are constantly changing and at the same time the topographical names also change, as well as the time of the action, the genre of the text, and so on.

On the whole, the book, which contains more than twenty stories written over the space of twenty years, is distinguished by its stylistic variety, by its broad range of moods, from the tragic to the ironic and to light humour, but the forms of narration are sometimes constructed according to classical structural rules, and sometimes strive for destructuralisation and the non-linear.



Number of pages: 320  
Published in: 2012 / Palitra L Publishing  
Rights: Shota Iatashvili  
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Shota Iatashvili in translation / Iatashvili's works have been translated into English, German, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Romanian, Chinese, Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Estonian, Latvian, Turkish, Albanian and Azerbaijani languages. His poems have been published in several countries among them: Ukraine (Poetry collection *Pencil in the Ground*, Krok, 2016); UK (Arc Publications, 2016); Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2015; Pop Verlag, 2015); Russia (OGI, 2014); Netherlands (Poëzie Centrum, 2010); Azerbaijan (Mütercim, 2009).

# SHOTA IATASHVILI



PHOTO: Dirk Skiba

Born in 1966 in Tbilisi, Shota Iatashvili is a famous poet, fiction writer, translator and art critic. He made his debut as a poet in 1993 with *The Wings of Death*, since then has published significant number of poetry collections, four works of prose and a book of literary criticism, which won the Literary Award SABA as the Best Criticism of the Year. Simultaneously Iatashvili has worked on literary translations and introduced to Georgian readers *Styles of Radical Will* by Susan Sontag and an anthology of American poets into Georgian. Shota Iatashvili worked as an editor at the Republic Centre of Literary Critics (on the literary newspapers *Rubikoni* and *Mesame Gza*). He was an editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Alternative* issued by the Cultural Center – Caucasian House and later became the editor of the publishing house *Caucasian House*. Currently, he is an editor-in-chief of the journal *Akhali Saunje* and leads the rubric *Library* at Radio Liberty. Shota Iatashvili is a recipient of several poetry awards and is participant of numerous international literary festivals.



'I live in a sick city', the hero of the story begins his narrative. The sick city is the narrative's basic image. Here, the everyday evolves imperceptibly into the fantastic: tanks on the streets and burst of machine-gun fire, endless changes of government; tinned mouse meat and cockroach jam, churches, turned into porno-temples, a constant flow of corpses which the hero and narrator loads into the crematorium oven. A general viciousness and feralness becomes the norm in life. It is only the hero, while his eyes are still not completely dimmed, sees the city in its true shape: '...a monster with burnt out, windowless houses, one-armed and one-legged men, raped women, human brains mixed with blood...' /S. Kostyrko, critic/

# OTAR JIRKVALISHVILI

'Baudrillard says that a man who is playing the part of a madman to perfection is himself mad. I think that Otar Jirkvalishvili, who produces ideally perfect parodies of intellectual prose, is at the same time a parody writer and an intellectual writer.' /L. Doreuli, critic/

LAZARUS



Born in 1981 in the town of Oni until the 1990s Otar Jirkvalishvili lived with his parents and his sister in Tskhinvali, and then, because of the war, was forced to move to Tbilisi. He is a licensed lawyer, specialising in criminal justice. He is a national and international chess master. In 1998 he won the third prize in the world Olympiad for young players. In 2000 he became Tbilisi chess champion. He began writing in 2006. Ever since 2009 his stories, poems and critical essays have appeared in various literary publications. He has published three books: *Lazarus* (2017); *The Bed* (Poems, 2015); *A Candy* (Stories, 2014). In 2010 his first story *The Scorpion* won the Nikoloz Baratashvili Museum Competition's Minor Prize. Jirkvalishvili was shortlisted for SABA Literary Award 2015 for the collection of short stories *A Candy* in the category of Best Debut and in 2016 won Saba Literary Award for the Best E-book of the Year for his collection of short stories *Lazarus*.



**Does the serious work of an intellectual, his persistent and sometimes obsessive repetition of the same work put intellectuals off, or not, from this prose? Fortunately, the outcome is that Otar Jirkvalishvili's 'intellectualism' distracts you, thanks to the self-destructive reproductions of elite pathos, and what we are left with is pure language, undiluted and sometimes indomitable.' /P. Shamugia, poet, critic/**

**Otar Jirkvalishvili doesn't write literature, nor should he, that can be 'read in one sittings'. To read his texts, metaphorically speaking, you need to have several sittings.' /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/**

Otar Jirkvalishvili's collection of stories *Lazarus* is a book based on parodies of intellectual prose, on linguistic games and on a system of post-modern quotations. The stories are characterized by a powerful linguistic dynamism and expressiveness. In some stories the language's technical balance is disrupted, to make room for an organized aesthetic space in which linguistic games can take place. Mostly, these are extremely politically incorrect, a deliberate attack on those areas of consciousness which seem to us to be best protected (and, as it turns out, not all that well protected in any case).

The collection's first story *Lazarus* tells us about Lazarus who, as the Gospel says, Jesus Christ raised from the dead. The author describes Lazarus's life and his second death after his resurrection. The main thread of the text is that Lazarus has doubts about whether he had really died. The surrealist story *A Candy* is a bitter satire on fanaticism and, at the same time, an elaborately constructed text whose reflexions, in which philosophical, religious, medical or journalistic styles of language follow each other, consequently with ironic rhetoric and with an absence of any sharply defined plot line, and so on. The main character has lost any feeling for reality, because he has appeared miraculously from nowhere (his parents couldn't have a child and were praying for one); later, the Georgian patriarch Ilia II baptised him and, when he was five years old, he asked a granddad outside a shop to buy him a sweet: the granddad told him, 'Son, if I buy you a sweet you will forget a few hours after you've eaten it, but if I don't buy you one, you'll remember for the rest of your life.' After that the character's life is wholly shaped by this incident: it is in chaos and he cannot understand where the limit between the real and the unreal lies.

There are five other stories in the collection, and they completely complement or continue one another stylistically. The characters sometimes are conventions of each other, more significant allusions, reminiscences and interpolations, which determine the flow and semantics of the narrative. The amplitude of the extreme feelings is unexpected and always changeable, which sends us on a journey into the author's conscious and unconscious mind, something fragmentary and eclectic. What is relevant to this collection is the metaphor of a double angel.

Number of pages: 184  
Published in: 2017 / Palitra L Publishing  
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Sample translation available  
in English.

'For a society tired of politics and politicians, Qvarqvare Tutaberi recalls contemporary times or the very recent past and, above all, makes us think about our still ill-defined future.' /G. Makhobeshvili, critic/

## QVARQVARE TUTABERI

*Qvarqvare Tutaberi* is considered to be the finest example of Georgian comic writing. Even today the play has not lost its relevance and is again being performed on the Georgian stage. In his lifetime Kakabadze enjoyed great recognition from contemporary critics and society, above all as the author of *Qvarqvare Tutaberi*. *Qvarqvare*, a film based on Kakabadze's play, was made in 1978, directed by D. Abashidze.

At the beginning of the play Qvarqvare is a harmless dreamer, sitting by the fire and 'weaving' plans for the future in the ashes: he may be digging a tunnel through the mountains, or building palaces for his bride to be, laying out gardens and putting up marble staircases. Ever since childhood people have called this deceitful idler an 'ash-raker' (a popular character in Georgian fairy tales, a lazy, but clever and ingenious young man who uses deceit to drive demons out of their own house and take possession of their property).

Qvarqvare survives solely through his insuperable gift of the gab and by telling lies, which exceeds what anyone else can do. For him his tongue is all he needs to rely on for him ingeniously to get his own way in everything.

Qvarqvare's two-faced, Pharisaic nature is particularly helped by his finding morality too difficult a burden. For him the real secret of similar people's victories and successes is in having no principles or morality, and therefore he has the appropriate philosophy of life: 'I've never understood why some men are bowed to the ground with shame, if a man has something to be ashamed of, if you're any good, then you have to hold your head higher.' He is the incarnation of unbridled dreaming, of idleness, of bluster, of ingratitude, of cowardice and deviousness. But, despite all this, there is a time in the country's history when 'heroes' like him wear the mantle of saviour and leader, and that is why *Qvarqvare Tutaberi's* essence remains relevant to society at any time.

Finally Qvarqvare becomes the victim of an unfortunate woman whose husband has been imprisoned by the regime's new governor.

The typical nature of its character is undoubtedly the reason for the play's popularity: Qvarqvare is characteristic for his times, an unworthy person whom objective circumstances can cause to surface anywhere, at any epoch.



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Published in: 2003 / Publishing House Literas  
Rights: Public domain  
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Translation available  
in Russian.

# POLIKARPE KAKABADZE



Polikarpe Kakabadze was born in 1893 in the village of Kukhi (in Khoni district). He graduated from Batumi Boy's Grammar School in 1911. His first novella, *The Wise Sculptor*, was printed in 1915 in the magazine *Theatre and Life*. Kakabadze's first important dramatic work is the play *At the Crossroads* about revolutionary struggles; it was successfully staged in Baku in 1918. In 1919 Kakabadze's plays *Blood Before the Light* and *Three Daughters* were published in *Seven Luminaries*, a magazine he himself had founded. In 1925 his drama *The Prisoners of Lisbon* was staged at the Rustaveli theatre. Kakabadze's comedy *Qvarqvare Tutaberi*, written in 1928, enjoyed great popularity. The play was first staged by Marjanishvili in 1929, and it was revived by Robert Sturua in 1974. In 1938 the Marjanishvili theatre staged Kakabadze's comedy *The Collective Farmer's Wedding*. His historical play, *Kakhaber's Sword* (Davit VIII) of 1954 was first staged in Kutaisi in 1957 and in Tbilisi in 1965. In the last ten years of his life Kakabadze was absorbed in work on historical and tragic plays. This is the period when he published the dramatic poems *King Vakhtang I Gorgasali* (1966), *King Bagrat VII* (1967), the tragedy *King Dimitri the Self-Sacrificing*.



Because of ignorance, incompetence, mercantilism, careerism, illusions or fear, the people have temporarily been forced to express loyalty to 'truths' and to bend their necks to the surface of life before the careerists who have happened to surface. Polikarpe Kakabadze shows us very specifically that Qvarqvareism hasn't come from nowhere and, if the world is as it is, then the rise of Qvarqvares must be logical, because it is not the times which are the reason for Qvarqvareism to be born, but the Pharisaic nature of society, its passivity and its defiled spiritual values. /G. Kakabadze, writer, critic/

# ARCHIL KIKODZE

'Southern Elephant is a novel which the city has long been waiting for. Just as Marcel Proust was earned by the Champs Elysée, so Tbilisi has earned Archil Kikodze, who has in his very first novel managed to put into words the whole sense and uniqueness of the capital city.' /L. Berdzenishvili, writer, critic/

## SOUTHERN ELEPHANT



PHOTO: Levan Kherkheulidze

Born in 1972 Archil Kikodze started writing at the age of 21. He works for several literary and non-literary magazines. His essays and novels are regularly published in popular magazines *Literaturuli Palitra* and *Hot Chocolate*. Kikodze won LITERA 2017 prize by Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the Writer's House of Georgia and IliaUni Literary Prize 2017 in the category of Best Novel of the Year for *Southern Elephant*. He also won Literary Prize GALA for a book of short stories *Calmly*. His collected Essays (2012) and short stories *The Story of a Bird and a Man* (2013) also received SABA Award as the Best Prose Collection of the Year. Kikodze is also a professional photographer. He has taken part in national and international photo exhibitions and has won many awards. Furthermore, he has published articles on environmental, ethnographic and social issues. He is the author of three guidebooks on science tourism. Archil Kikodze is co-author of the documentary film *Spring in Javakheti* (winner of the Niamori Festival Prize in 2004). He wrote the script for the film *Tbilisi, I Love You*. Archil Kikodze plays a leading role in the film *Blind Dates* (2013), which has won several prizes at international film festivals.



***Southern Elephant* is probably by now the latest thing in recent Georgian literature, it manages to capture the invisible spirit of the times, the Zeitgeist. The novel's reader can expect a novel à clé which blends nostalgia and melancholy and (to quote Roland Barthes) pleasure derived from a text. /Z. Andronikashvili, writer/**

*Southern Elephant* is an urban novel whose action takes place in a single day. A film director who has stopped shooting films lets a friend have his apartment to meet a girlfriend, while he himself passes the time wandering the Tbilisi streets. This is a day for looking in the mirror of the past and reappraising his own life, a day in which his childhood, his love, passion, mishaps and tragedies flash past like frames from a film. Against the background of the main hero's memories recent Georgian history is replayed: it constantly pursues the narrator like a shadow and makes him accept responsibility for what is happening around him. The novel has one other important character, Tbilisi, with its complex relationships, its social obligations, sometimes heavy, sometimes light, sometimes happy and sometimes tragic, but more often than not grotesque. The narrator knows his city only too well, it has brought him a great deal of pain. The novel has one other theme: cinematography. This is a book about two young men who dreamed of becoming film directors and making films in a destroyed country, where cinematography had ceased to exist. One of them (the more talented Tazo) has never managed to fulfil his dream. The other (the narrator) has in fact become a director and made one successful film, but a tragic event happened when shooting the second film and made him permanently hate his art, so that now he films advertisements. This is a novel about moral dilemmas, about how to stay human. Thanks to the narrator's memories a story takes shape of how Tazo was made to deliberately isolate himself. Years earlier stood aside from a conflict between little boys which resulted in the death of one of them. Feelings of remorse have taken away all his vital energy and turned a young lad into an old man. The aggression and 'bullying' of young people, the path which two friends took at an early age, is another theme of the novel.

The novel has a dramatic love story running through it. At one point the narrator lacked the courage to change his way of life and keep hold of a person whom he loved. He failed to understand that this was not just another adventure – 'Sometimes we spend a whole life learning how to let go. Sometimes letting go becomes a habit and then we let go of the most important thing, unable to grasp that it was the most important...'

Number of pages: 273

Published in: 2017 / Sulakauri Publishing House

Rights: Sulakauri Publishing House

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Archil Kikodze in translation / Rights on Kikodze's *The Story of a Bird and a Man* have been sold in: Germany (Ullstein Buchverlage, 2018); Poland (Pogranicze, 2015); *Southern Elephant* in: Germany (Ullstein Buchverlage, 2018); Bulgaria (AGATA – A – Petrovi, 2018); *Drunkgards* in: USA (Datkey Archive Press, 2012).



Sample translation of *Southern Elephant* available in German.



'The Children of Nightfall' is an urban novel. The city is one of the main heroes, the main action takes place in Tbilisi's 'unprincipled nights'. When reading it you will laugh out heartily several times, but the novel's basic strength is still light and full of zest, with some sort of joyfully minded misanthropy about it.' /M. Kharbedia, writer, critic/

## THE CHILDREN OF NIGHTFALL

*The Children of Nightfall* is a love story – not a romantic one but a story about existential loneliness and the fear of never finding love at all. The protagonists are bohemians who have never abandoned their dreams. They may have stopped believing in love, but they still love and are still searching.

The novel juxtaposes everyday's prosaic scenes in a poetic narrative, about the unconditional love of two friends. Martha – the black sheep of her family and an abandoned child raised by aristocrats; Niko – a man who left his country to chase his childish dreams and Tamar – who still has a tiny wish for a great love.

Martha and Niko are bound by a special love, even if – because Niko has been living abroad for eight years – they only see each other occasionally. Both are now middle-aged, and both have wounded souls. Martha has a penchant for excess; she tends to exaggerate and talks long and loudly, not only in her sleep. She and Niko engage in verbal sparring matches when he is there and the two of them go out walking with Martha's dog Almasa, who also has his say from time to time in the book. Niko, sarcastic and quarrelsome, is looking for amorous new adventures in the West. Martha, at home, wants only Niko. Now, in July, the two are together again and are walking in the beloved Khada Gorge on the Georgian Military Highway. This gorge, like the paradisiacal but no longer accessible Third Gorge in Abkhazia, is a refuge of longing.

With everyday get-togethers and the constant presence of alcohol, their lives seem like a continuous pursuit of pleasure. But ultimately, they are all very unhappy.

The wonderfully amusing narrative is interrupted by the final verdict of the author. Justified by the lovely legend of Nightfall who 'gave birth' to souls and let them wander forever through the bumpy roads of Tbilisi, their souls are easy to abandon, but very difficult to forget. This is a bittersweet story full of nostalgia and melancholy, brash and tender at the same time.



**Number of pages:** 120  
**Published in:** 2011 / Sulakauri Publishing House  
**Rights:** Sulakauri Publishing House  
**Contact:** Mikheil Tsikhelashvili  
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Ana Kordzaia-Samadashvili in translation / Novels and short stories by Ana Kordzaia-Samadashvili have been published in: Germany: *Who killed Chaika?*; *Me, Margarita* (Verlag Hans Schiler, 2016; 2014); *Historical Memory* in: *Techno der Jaguare – Neue Erzählerinnen aus Georgien* (Frankfurter Verlaganstalt, 2013); Italy: *Children of Nightfall* (Clandestine, 2015); Mexico: *Rain* in: *Literatura Georgiana* (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA: *Me, Margarita* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014); *Rain* in: *Contemporary Georgian Fiction* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012); Sweden: *Nina* in *Georgien berättar: Goris fastning* (Tranan, 2013); Netherlands: *A long letter to a sister far away* (Flemish-Dutch House deBuren, 2011). Rights on *Who Killed Chaika?* have been sold to Egypt (Al Kotob Khan for Publishing, 2018).

# ANA KORDZAIA- SAMADASHVILI



Born 1968 in Tbilisi, Ana Kordzaia-Samadashvili is writer, translator and cultural journalist. She also teaches literature and creative writing at Ilia State University in Tbilisi. She translates from German into Georgian and has in particular translated the work of Cornelia Funke and Elfriede Jelinek. She was awarded a prize by the Goethe Institut Tbilissi for her translation of Elfriede Jelinek's novel *Die Liebhaberinnen* (Women as Lovers). She already wrote 4 novels: *Who Killed Chaika?* (2013); *Marieta's Way* (2012); *The Children of Nightfall* (2011); *Berikaoba* (2003) and collection of short stories *Me, Margarita* (2005). Ana Kordzaia-Samadashvili has won various Georgian literary prizes among them: the Literary Award SABA 2003 in the category the Best Debut for the *Berikaoba* (as Sophio Kirvalidze) and IliaUni Literary Prize 2013 in the category the Best Novel for *Who Killed Chaika*. New York Public Library listed *Me, Margarita* in 365 Books by Woman Authors in 2017.

“  
**The heroes of this novel are Shushanik's children. This Shushanik is a beautiful girl, with golden hair, who begets souls and releases them in Tbilisi's rough streets. Shushanik's children are easily recognizable, they are easily abandoned, but hard to forget. Nobody notices when they are born or when they die. Shushanik's children are a joy, a senseless one, but still a joy. When you think, 'I wish I was that happy,' you should know that Shushanik's child has just passed by you. /Newspaper 24 Saati / Weekend/**

# BEKA KURKHULI

'Both the story and the narrative are in themselves full of a great conception, an idea, of content.' /N. Sadghobelashvili, writer, critic/

## RUNAWAYS FROM PARADISE



Born 1974 in Tbilisi, Beka Kurkhuli studied theater art at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Institute in Tbilisi. He published his first novellas in the newspaper *Mamuli* in 1991 and since then his stories appeared regularly in literary magazines. He worked as a war reporter visiting different parts of Georgia and conflict regions in the Caucasus, including Abkhazia, South and North Ossetia. Also Ingushetia, Azerbaijan, the Pankisi Gorge and Afghanistan. His first book, entitled *Full Stop ... Lost People from Lost Territories* was published in 2004 by The Caucasian House Publishing. He won Literary Award SABA 2016 in category the Best Novel for *Runaways from Paradise* and Revaz Inanishvili Literary Award *One Story* 2014 for *Previous Day*. His stories *Adamo*, *An Empty Ashtray*, *A Short Summer Night*, and *10,000 Words* were included in 39 Selected Short Stories (Palitra L Publishing). Beka Kurkhuli is a PhD holder since 2006 from the Institute of Georgian Literature. He already published 10 books.



**About the book's thickness I will say that the author himself is opposed to his pompous conception, he breaks it down throughout the novel, by the irony of the characters' behaviour, by the grotesquery, sometimes by not caring, sometimes by being over-familiar. His heroes show that he himself is a sworn enemy of any falsity or exaggeration, because he has no need at all to exaggerate.' /N. Sadghobelashvili, writer, critic/**

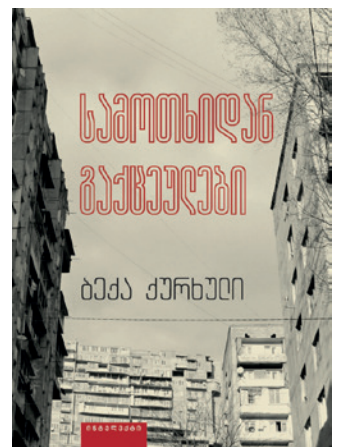
Beka Kurkhuli's *Runaways from Paradise* is an artistic retrospective look at our Georgia's past. The Odyssey of three friends in a deeply moving story, with a sad, sometimes tragic content, takes place against the background of this epoch, which Georgian society has still not read through or thought through to the end. The main hero is not a specific person, but the epoch, and this book is an attempt at an artistic reading of the fate of the epoch. And the main hero is the language, too: the narrative language of these passionate, blood-stained and joyful stories, a language which perceives the epoch and the people in a natural and vivid way. This language is a protest: against all systems, against all sorts of violence and suppression.

This book is an epic, which keeps to all the rules of the epic genre: a long and tense adventure, countless characters, a play consisting of mathematically exact accounts of their stories, from the 1980s on, from the last days of the Soviet epoch to the most recent events, to be precise, history that has been seen and is then narrated, because the main thing in this novel is seeing, looking, these are observation points from which the author watches his times and existence and begins his narrative.

The expressiveness and dynamism of the narrative is well suited to his 'warrior' tempo and rhythm. This extreme atmosphere has an effect on the reader and quite naturally forces him to be aware that no war of any kind has ever finished and that it is impossible for a war to end in the most confused and ill-defined points, that it is impossible for one to consider it over, when you have lost so much. Against the background of the three friends and those close to, or known to them, we get a picture of Georgia, a country which has made mistakes, sometimes irreparable and fatal ones. The parents of these lads were peaceful children of the Soviet empire, some of them had ranks, or were permanently connected to the great empire by their fate and their lives: they were subordinate to and directed by that empire. Others, on the contrary, had forefathers who had been killed in the battle with the empire, and were silent rebels, but above all silent... And one day, the children of these parents became the most alien avengers; history reversed itself so sharply that it could leave nobody around indifferent: everyone was minced up by the mincing machine and new types were born to society, new people: old warriors became drug addicts, old secret policemen became archbishops, everyone found a place somewhere, some an important distinguished place, some shot off into non-existence...

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Published in: 2015 / Intelekti Publishing  
Rights: Intelekti Publishing  
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Beka Kurkhuli in translation / Rights on Kurkhuli's *City in the Snow* have been sold to Italy (Stilo Editrice, 2017).



Sample translation available  
in German.

'Daur Nachkebia has set himself the most complex creative task: to work out who in this world is actually alive, and who is dead. Without any mysticism. Actually, aren't our deeds often similar to tricks played by the dead?.. In the sense that many of our actions have not a drop of sense or conscience underlying them. As if everything has died off.' /A. Iakovlev, critic/

## THE SHORE OF NIGHT (WRITTEN IN RUSSIAN)

The Abkhaz writer's Russian-language novel *The Shore of Night* is about the Georgian-Abkhaz armed conflict. The novel has two main heroes. One of them, Adgur A., if we explain the metaphor, is in the night, in war; the other, Adgur's old friend Beslan B., is on the shore, living in a post-war period and looking from there at the darkness of war. Beslan is helped by Adgur's diaries, which have by chance come into his hands. These two lines – Beslan in the post-war period and Adgur in the war – continue throughout the novel. Each line has its own particular voice, because Adgur is a writer, while Beslan is a physicist: the familiar dilemma of being either a physicist or a lyrical poet is made even more acute by that of war and peace. The novel's main question or task lies in Adgur's unsatisfactory, impulsive actions: during a battle, he suddenly climbs a hill, takes his helmet off and fires into the air and points the gun at a sniper's head in order to shoot him. His existential state emerges gradually in the diary, his stream of consciousness is that of a man at a time of war or peace, ready for sacrifice, for a change, or an absence of change, in the essence of life Daur Nachkebia creates an interesting gallery of characters around Beslan. Apart from bringing out his nature, these characters give an insight into the 'Sukhumi man' phenomenon in all its mental colourfulness. The novel ends with a few short stories found in Adgur's exercise book. The novel's main theme, man in war, seeks to become parabolic, something on which the text plays, while on the other hand it explains and tries to shed more light.



Full Translation available  
in Russian.

Number of pages: 300  
Published in: 2012 / OGI Publishing House  
Moscow  
Rights: Daur Nachkebia  
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# DAUR NACHKEBIA



Born in 1960 in the village of Pakuash in Ochamchira district, Abkhazia Daur Nachkebia matriculated from boarding school No. 1 in Sukhumi in 1977. In 1982 Daur Nachkebia graduated from Tbilisi State University's physics faculty. In 1983 and 1984 he worked as a junior research in the chair of general physics at Abkhazia's State University. During the Abkhaz armed conflict of 1992-93 he was the chief editor of Abkhazia's Russian radio service. From 1985 to 1996 he was a literary consultant to the Abkhaz Writers' Union. Since 1997 he has been the chief secretary of the commission for the D. I. Gulia State Award for Literature, Art and Architecture. As a member of the Abkhaz Writers' Union and Union of Journalists, he has written several books of prose, journalism and a novel. His works have been translated into English, Serbian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian. From 2001 to 2004 he was the editor in chief of Aitaira (Resurrection), an opposition movement journal. In 2007-08 he took Advanced Literary Courses at the Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow. In April 2010 he was appointed director of the Abkhaz State Publishing House. From October 2011 to October 2014 he was the Republic of Abkhazia's Minister of Education.

Clearly Nachkebia's ways of writing a novel are in *The Shore of Night* close to modern European writers, rather than Russian ones, even closer to Latin-American prose that is usually classified as 'magical realism'. Moreover, one can say without hesitation that this is an essay-novel which makes one recall not just certain works by Thomas Mann, but recent novels by Milan Kundera, written in French. /Zh. Milenić / Excerpt from the foreword to the Serbian translation of the novel/

# TAKO POLADASHVILI

'We can see the spiritual energy put into the process of writing, and that is why we must think that we now have another author in contemporary Georgian prose who has extraordinary vision and an already rather high professional mastery.' /Sh. latashvili, writer, critic/

## INTERPRETING DEATH



Born 1990 in Tbilisi, Tako Poladashvili graduated from Tbilisi State University (Social and Political Sciences Faculty). She specialised in journalism but later did a Master's in Audio-Visual art at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Cinema University. In 2010 she won the main prize in the student-literary competition 'Autumn Legend' for her story *Me and My Brother Anik*. In 2013 she was a finalist in the TSERO Literary Competition. In 2013 and 2015 she took part in the Insomnia Literary Festival. At various times she has worked as a journalist, as a manager in public relations and as a scriptwriter. At the moment she is working as a copy-writer. She is employed by an advertising company.

*Interpreting Death* is Tako Poladashvili's first novel: it gives a clear sense of the author's writing style, which should be familiar to those who know the short stories of this writer at the start of her career. This time Tako Poladashvili appears as an author of genre literature and offers us a modern dystopia full of magic and mystery, in which every character is simultaneously a criminal and a victim, good and bad. The boundary between the possible and impossible, right and wrong, has been abolished.

Tako Poladashvili's prose is always distinguished by its magical realism. Every story is simultaneously very naturalistic and unimaginably magical. The author has a habit of taking the plot lines down a blind alley, of tangling them up, putting characters in situations with no exit, and then unexpectedly taking decisions which are absolutely unpredictable for the reader. Consequently, we find in her works elements of the detective story, classical mystery and dynamics typical of modern dystopias.

*Interpreting Death* tells us about a territory isolated from civilisation, about a population and reservation in which forgotten, rescued and specially marked human beings are forced to live. Each one of them has their own past, their own history and each one thinks about how to escape from this prison of a city. Only one cable-way connects the city to the outer world, cable cars occasionally bring provisions for the forgotten, sometimes various groceries, sometimes – death. Here nobody can be calm, even though nobody shows signs of anxiety. People exist as best they can, they have all forgotten about their existence outside the city. In the novel, death is sometimes a punishment, sometimes a way out, sometimes a means of threatening people, sometimes even a path to freedom. The dystopian environment is all the more acutely felt when nature and cold air add to the sense of being locked in the city. The novel gives an acute sense of atmosphere and of a cold, both in the air and between people, that freezes the blood. *Interpreting Death* is not a novel about death, it is more a story of the monotony of death, about the way that many things exist.

In this world, what is harder than death, is what overcomes the cruelty of death. In the novel the plot develops in constant tension and what is called 'suspense'. Crime is constantly there, and it is followed by punishment, while the most peaceful and calm periods lead to greater miseries.

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Published in: 2016 / Books in Batumi  
Rights: Books in Batumi  
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*Interpreting Death* can be classified as an anti-Utopia and in many of its characteristics it resembles such work, although it doesn't fit the classical framework of the genre. The novel shows the writer's potential and it is clear that the author is in no way trying to follow the easy path. /Sh. latashvili, writer, critic/

Sample translation available  
in English.

'Contrasts and contradictions are the most obvious features of Irakli Samsonadze's prose: these develop a gradation principle, roughly as follows: comedy – the absurd – tragedy. *A Funeral Wake in the Wind* is carried out on the same principle.' /I. Amirkhanashvili, critic/

## A FUNERAL WAKE IN THE WIND

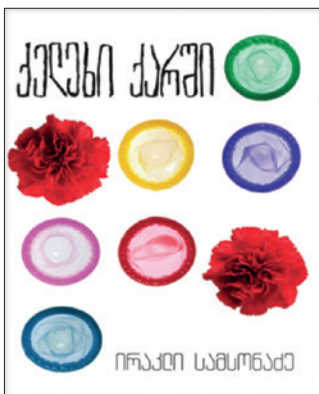
# IRAKLI SAMSONADZE

'A Georgian Story' is the subtitle of a story. If we want to be more specific, we could call it 'A Kutaisi Story', or 'A Story from Perestroika Times', or 'A Freudian Story'. In a word, there are many layers here and each one of them, taken separately, is rather risky for a writer to make something artistically straightforward out of. This feeling of risk is something the reader feels from the very beginning of the story: the illegal businessman Dimitri K-dze, known as Trulaila, has got his cronies round him in a Kutaisi restaurant, to hold a wake for his phallus, which has lost its erection. So Irakli Samsonadze's this story is rather sensational. He deliberately makes his text conform to a simple Freudian scheme and, to some extent, he even makes fun of such straightforward texts.

At the wake feast the author creates a grotesque mood, but this mood is radically changed by the introduction of a certain character, namely Larmarie, who was a tiny little girl, homeless and silly, when every participant at the feast, except for one, an artist, had become 'a real man'. So the 'chief mourner' Trulaila decides to make the chairman of the feast the person who was the first for his 'deceased' sexual organ. Larmarie, who is called upon mockingly, changes everything, the vulnerable little girl presents herself utterly transformed to this gang of cronies. Somehow a great power has emerged in her, so that she can dictate her own terms to these people who used to bring shame on her. She brings a biting chill into the feast, she yells, she prophesies, she replaces the mockery with ritual and puts everyone in the mood for weeping. She replaces the dead phallus with the gold pen belonging to the Party official sitting at the dinner table, she uses her own fan as a shroud... All through Soviet times Party officials' pens were to everybody a weapon of terror. They decided men's fates, they signed orders for executions or deportations. But Larmarie has appeared at the time of *perestroika* and declares that the ink in those pens has dried up, that it is now symbolically Lenin's corpse, that he is now impotent. This is the main message which Larmarie is bringing to the mourners at the wake for dying Soviet reality. Soviet cruelty acquires a caricatured appearance at the feast, to the sound of the whole Larmarie's recitative the wake for a black-marketer's sexual organ is transformed into the wake for an empire.



Born in 1961, Irakli Samsonadze is a Georgian writer and playwright. In 1983 he graduated from the Journalism Department of Tbilisi State University. Irakli Samsonadze was an assistant editor of the almanac *Dramaturgy* from 1992 to 1996 and later was appointed as its editor-in-chief. In the late 1980s he worked at the Georgian Film studio. Fifteen of his plays have been staged in theatres across Georgia. The author has received various awards for his prose and drama among them: Literary Award SABA 2013 in the category The Best Short Story Collection for *A Frightened Street* and Literary Award SABA 2005 in the category The Best Play for *Grandmother Mariam, or The Traditional Georgian Banquet*; Georgian State Prize 2001 in the Field of Literature for *Triptych*.



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Rights: Intelekti Publishing  
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Irakli Samsonadze in translation / Samsonadze's novel *The Cushion* has been translated and published in: Italy (Palombi Editore, 2015); Armenia (Antares, 2014).



**Irakli Samsonadze is not, in fact, a Kutaisi writer: he's a Tbilisi one. Kutaisi's (West Georgia) environment and humour can't be organic for him, consequently the game of 'somebody else's square' is risky for him and demands particular mastery, but he has taken that risk and chosen that environment, probably because he felt that in this case these toposes, or rather chronotopes, were needed for his theme, for what he had to say. – Kutaisi at the end of the Soviet period. /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/**

# ALEKO SHUGLADZE

'He attracts the reader with his distinctly free and easy way of writing, in which carefree humour, paradoxical points of view and existential difficulties are organically combined.' /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

## HIDING



Born 1965 in Tbilisi, Aleko Shugladze graduated from Georgian Technical University. He also studied art at Tbilisi State University, specialising in cinema direction. From 1989 to 1993 he worked in the Georgian Film Studio as an assistant director. From 1994 to 1997 he was an artist at Margo Korabliova's Performance Theatre. From 1998 to 2001 he worked as a film director for Caucasian House, where he made up to ten documentary films against violence. From 2001 to 2003 he worked as a director and scriptwriter for the NGO Studiobile – the Accent on Mobility. He began writing in 1989 and published four books: *Hiding* (2016); *The Man of Books* (2015); *Samsara* (2002); *Attempting to Escape* (2001). He won Mayor's Special Prize 2001 for story *Answers for a Magazine with a Small Print Run*. 2015 his story *The Man of Books* was shortlisted in the TSERO Literary Competition. His novel *Hiding* was shortlisted for LITERA 2017 Prize by Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the Writer's House of Georgia in the category of Best Novel of the Year.



**In this novel Aleko Shugladze uses acrobatic skill in his masterly transitions from one plot thread to another, one style to another, one mood to another: he is helped by a natural artistry... This is his writer's ingenuity, to present you with what looks like a drama as a comedy, and a comedy as an absurdity, and an absurdity as a phantasmagoria, and a phantasmagoria as a drama once more. I am compelled to note that it is rare for anyone to hit on a text with such exhaustive cinematic dynamics. It requires only a little technical adjustment to make what one could call a ready-made film script, for an absurd film comedy, if you like, or for a drama, or a cognitive film. /L. Kodalashvili, literary critic/**

The novel is autobiographical by nature. Every character is, in fact, a real person. The main protagonist, Aleko Shugladze's mother, has an incurable illness. She becomes aware of this later, after she breaks a leg while praying and, when being examined in a clinic, a cancer specialist discovers that she is ill and informs Aleko. It turns out that a lot of people knew of her illness, but for some reason kept it hidden as long as they could from her son. Aleko also has a sister who has suffered from oligophrenic schizophrenia since she was a child. After their mother becomes bed-ridden, Aleko takes over the care of his sister and his life enters a difficult stage. This is a major ordeal in his life: he has to have patience and not lose his humanity. He should not grudge love to someone who is doomed to die. At the same time, the main protagonist recalls his life. Events from Soviet times intersect organically with today's events. Together with all the difficulties of the Communist era, national traditions and rituals enter his mind, and he has to face up to this. What begins is a destruction of so-called sacral clichés, in the manner of the protagonist's unconventional life, now with irony, now with sarcasm, concealed pain and a desire to escape from everything. Autobiographical space gradually loses track of the world shown in the novel. Another main character in the novel is an inspector who represents the side of Aleko's relatives and is investigating a case which concerns the mysteriously obscured relationship of the son and his mother. The relatives, who are fans of ritual, try to blame Aleko for breaking with their ancestral traditions. In fact, the inspector has managed to study the protagonist's life and, in the course of his investigation, the story of Aleko and his late father's past surfaces. Aleko works as a book distributor, and his everyday relationships with various people is another aspect of the novel. One relationship is with a girl much younger than him, whom he is in love with. Very few people stand by him to the end, and one of these is a friend who is a mountain climber, who helps Aleko realise his extraordinary decision. With the friend's help, Aleko hides his mother away in a remote village and announces that she has died. He goes through with a fake funeral in great and plausible detail, thus doing his duty by his relatives. After the 'funeral' he hides his mother even further away, in India, where he settles down with her at the foot of a holy mountain. The inspector and Aleko manage to meet only once, at the end of the novel. This happens when Aleko returns home in order to try to hide his sister, too.

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Rights: Diogene Publishing

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Sample translation available  
in English, German and Russian.

'Rezo Tabukashvili's *13 Days* is a memorable book, written about a generation and an epoch, with heroes who have been modelled on life and yet, at the same time are symbolic figures and complement one another.' /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

## 13 DAYS

# REZO TABUKASHVILI

Rezo Tabukashvili tells us about a generation which was 18-19 years old in the 1990s and now is somewhere in its forties. The narrative moves about over this interval of twenty or twenty-five years. The novel begins with Tina, suffering from depression, going to see Sandro the psychotherapist, but she prefers to inform the doctor by letter about the events which caused her a deep trauma. Sandro agrees to have this sort of relationship with his patient and so the text's main feature is its epistolary form, in which the story of Tina's and Gege's love is told. As Tina herself says, this is an 'old' story, but they are not children or innocents and the circumstances in which their relationship developed are more up-to-date than 'old-time'. The author is very cunning in the way he moves his characters between the 1990s and modern times, changing ages and circumstances so as to keep the realism on track and, in an imperceptible way, confuses the spaces where the action takes place and finally makes them mutate.

The doctor Sandro, however, reading Tina's narrative, makes for a second thread. He is brought a woman who needs treatment for alcoholism: he recognizes her as Verochka, his first love. As thirteen-year-old adolescents, their first feelings were aroused. The village of Old Likani, where they got to know one another, has been replaced by New Likani, and here two periods intersect, the old irrupts on the new...

These two parallel lines finally meet and create space for a detective story, although, in the end, we get a pseudo-detective story, because the laws of the genre are here overridden and nothing fits logical analysis. It breaks even Chekhov's rule, that if a firearm (which is presented to Sandro) is visible to everybody, it must be fired. Quite the contrary: the lad whom Gege stares at very aggressively in Vake park does not kill Gege. Buñuel was very fond of putting such dead-end symbols into his films. People who have no influence at all, as one might normally understand it, on the plot's main lines, quite frequently appear, and then instantly vanish in the main heroes' sphere of action: there are Kicha the fisherman, Gege's father, a drug addict in Aramiants hospital, and others. Either the author sees no need to involve them in the detective-story plot, but just makes them a singularity in the fatality of the main fates: they are not what actually impacts on anybody.



PHOTO: Eka Nijaradze

Born in 1971 in Tbilisi, Rezo Tabukashvili studied at Tbilisi State University (Philology Faculty) and took a course in world literature at Bologna University. Several films have been made to his scripts: *Queen Ketevan*, *Where Is the Caravan Going*, *Kolau Nadi-radze*. Over the years he has worked in literary periodicals – as deputy editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Twentieth Century*, as editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *New Century*. He has published collections of stories: *Autobiography in Profile* (1999); *Mount Dhaulagiri. ABC* (2005); *No-fly Days* (2005); *Sun, Do Not Rise* (2009); *In the Shadow of Boats* (2010); *The Third Eye* (2016). His texts have been translated into English, German, Croatian, Latvian, Russian, Armenian and published in literary periodicals.



Sample translation available  
in English.

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Rezo Tabukashvili in translation / Tabukashvili's  
novel *13 Days* has been published in Turkey  
(Gece Kitapligi Publishing, 2017)



'As Rezo himself writes, the novel's heroes are 'shattered souls' with 'wrecked relationships'. The women's features are very interesting. The women, Tina and Lika, take us into unknown territory. Verochka, too, is a particular story-line, and a very interesting one. As you read, you feel that tragedy is inevitable, given such relationships.' /G. Nakhutsrishvili, poet/

# TEA TOPURIA

'Two Rooms in Cairo struck me as a book that makes you smile as you read it, but when you put it down a somehow unbearable sadness comes over you, like a thick fog falling.' /E. Kevanishvili, poet, critic/

## TWO ROOMS IN CAIRO



Born in 1977 in Sukhumi, writer and poet Tea Topuria graduated in 1998 from the faculty of Journalism at Tbilisi State University. Since 1998 Tea Topuria has been working as a journalist in the field of Human Rights and Environmental Protection. Currently she works as a journalist for radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Tbilisi bureau. Tea has written a collection of prose and poetry *The Mint Threshing Floor* (2007), a poetry collection *Ecocide* (2011) and a number of highly acclaimed books of short stories for children, including *The Holidays of Paradea* (2011), *Tales Too Good to Sleep Through* (2011) and *One Long Day on Another Planet* (2014), a collection of stories *Two Rooms in Cairo* (2016). Nowadays Tea Topuria is regarded as one of the notable authors in Georgia.

Tea Topuria's book *Two Rooms in Cairo* consists of twelve stories from recent years. It could be said that the author goes in for her own form of 'magical realism'. For example, in the story *Sheep*, the sheep change colour and this happens because the shepherd is being cheated on by his wife, who has been left somewhere far away, and the moment she cheats on him the sheep turn black. They not only turn black, but their blood is poisoned and, when the shepherd leaves the sheep and wolves devour them, the wolves themselves are killed.

It could be said that Tea Topuria is also a conceptual writer. She often creates her own models and brings them to life, using these models makes people live, act and think. Take, for example, *Two Rooms in Cairo*. Here is a model for the short story: 'When you think what the world resembles, you come to the conclusion that the world is most like an abandoned Cairo. Or imagine this city of seventeen million with its houses, its infrastructure, its squares, but without its seventeen million inhabitants. Imagine that only ten men are alive in the whole of Cairo and all of them are in a two-room flat in an apartment block, while everywhere else is desolate.' The story tells about these ten men who each have their own functions and, locked in those two rooms, conscientiously carry out their duties. The main hero, together with a lad called Riki, has the most 'élite' duty: he has to think about the window. The apartment has five windows and they have to work out whether or not there is a sixth window and, if so, where it is. Thinking and exchanging opinions about this sixth window gives birth to a series of interesting conception in Riki's mind. The story has a parallel line, a realistic one in which a journalist called Tea sets off for Greece to a seminar on journalism. The models appear in this real space. For example, in the hotel where Tea is staying, there are problems with the electricity switches and the current comes on in the bathroom only after eight minutes. This is precisely the time needed for a ray of light to reach the moon. So when Tea goes into the bathroom to take a shower, she feels she is on the moon.

The book also has an important layer based on the author's work and experiences as a journalist. One example is the story about the disappeared (*Disappearance*) and also the story called *The Room* in which there is a search for gold in the locked room that belonged to a dead grandfather, and in which the journalist appears as a character.

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Tea Topuria in translation / Topuria's poems have been published in: UK (Francis Boutle Publishers, 2016).



Sample translation available in English.

“ Her mysticism, her melancholy humour, her dead and living people coexist in one space, so that you can no longer understand who is dead and who is alive and not even whether these characters inhabit a mysterious world, or perhaps it is you who are mysterious, while they are real. Those who die alone in a deserted village. Those who search for old age. Those for whom dead husbands pack their suitcases. Those whom the neighbours abandon their dead to. Those who look for gold in the locked room belonging to their dead grandfather. Those who live in two rooms in Cairo. /N. Tarknishvili, writer/



'Tshotne Tskhvediani is a distinguished author because he always tries to deal with themes which Georgian literature avoids. Such, for example, is the social theme, or even the social marginals whose problems are usually ignored by minds of the mainstream.' /L. Bughadze, writer/

## MAYAKOVSKY'S THEATRE

The novel's main hero Tuta comes from a small town where the famous Futurist Vladimir Mayakovsky was born. The Soviet regime renamed the town after him as a mark of respect. Economic inequality turned the town into a ghetto. Time seemed to have stopped here and nothing new happens. The existence of Tuta and those around him is so unbearable that he constantly runs away from home and disappears for months, but then returns home. Probably his younger brother is right when he says that the only thing Tuta is capable of is heroism. Tuta himself has decided to cross the occupation boundary and to open fire on the soldiers on guard. This would be a beautiful death. But Tuta knows that he is far too reckless and abnormal to act the hero and die a beautiful death. He stops running away and fights to change reality: he takes an interest in political ideology and looks for the source of problems in social and economic relations. At one stage he takes on the part of an 'enlightener' and tries to make his fellow citizens see their real situation.

Every attempt he makes ends in failure. Armed, Tuta attacks an oligarch with political ambitions and the professionals who support him. In this impetuous rebellion Tuta's father is killed. Tuta's brother tries to help him kill himself and together they compose a script for the death. Meanwhile Apollon comes to Tuta's rescue: Apollon is the local theatre director. Together they try to resurrect the theatre. Unfortunately for them, in Soviet times the theatre was built from a demolished church. The church tries to recover its property. Members of the clergy ask everyone to boycott the theatre shows.

Tuta and Apollon finally put on Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Bouffe-Mystery*. Nobody wants to come and see it. Tuta's brother collects whores, drunks, gypsies to fill the hall. Just one act of *Bouffe-Mystery* is played on stage. The oligarch's bodyguards throw the audience of paupers out of the theatre. What is important this time is that it's not religious, but economic interests that are opposed to the theatre.

Finally Tuta takes the most deprived people, tramps and madman, hostage: he says that this is a symbolic act defending the freedom which a democratic country supposedly guarantees for all its people. At the same time he tries to bring back these people into political life, because the state cannot shut its eyes on an act which amounts to an illegal infringement of freedom. But, on the contrary, nobody takes an interest in such people when they die, unprotected, in the street.



Sample translation available in English.

Number of pages: 140  
Published in: 2017 / Sulakauri Publishing House  
Rights: Sulakauri Publishing House  
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Tshotne Tskhvediani in translation / USA: *Golden Town* in: *Best European Fiction* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2016).

# TSOTNE TSKHVEDIANI



Born 1993 in Kutaisi, Tshotne Tskhvediani entered Tbilisi State University and studied Humanities at department of History. Main subject of his researches is the anarchist movements of the 20th century Caucasus region. 2012 Tskhvediani joined the eco-anarchist movement and took part in several strikes which were the expression of solidarity for the people who live and work in Georgia's industrial towns. He often visited these places and had personally interviewed the local population. His debut short story *Underground* describes lives and hopes of miners working in Tkibuli, a small town in West Georgia. His first short story collection *The Town and the Saints* by Sulakauri Publishing House is a compilation of the stories that narrates about lives and problems of the people living in the abandoned and forgotten areas. His story *The Golden Town* was selected for the annual Georgian Prose Anthology *15 Best Short Stories*, announced as the best short story of 2014 and received the BSP (Bakur Sulakauri Publishing) Award.



This book makes others, like me, think about a world which is hidden from us, despite the fact that it exists and also because we are very frightened when it is revealed again. /D. Turashvili, writer/

# JABA ZARKUA

'From the very first page I realised that we are dealing not with science fiction, but with a highly intelligent anti-Utopia, and that he is continuing in the tradition of Huxley, Orwell, Bradbury, Burgess, even Chuck Palahniuk.' /M. Kharbedia, writer, critic/

## THE READER MUST DIE



Born in 1988, Jaba Zarkua is a contemporary prose writer. He studied medicine and is currently working as a junior doctor in a clinical research centre for Aids, Infectious Diseases and Immunology. Along with his medical career, Zarkua is very productive young writer. He began writing at the age of 17, has entered a number of literary competitions and won several prizes. His stories have appeared in a number of anthologies, including the annual anthology published by Bakur Sulakauri 15 Best Short Stories in 2012 and 2014. His first book *The Paradox of Warmstadt* was published in 2011. Jaba Zarkua has also hosted and written scripts for a number of TV shows. At present he is working simultaneously as a doctor and a writer. He won several prizes and awards among them IliaUni Literary Prize 2013 in the category The Best Novel for *The Reader Must Die*; Literary Award TSERO 2014 II Prize for the short story *Syndrome of Closed Factories*; Literary Award of Literary Contest for Youth Alubloba 2009 and Literary Award of Contest Literature Names – Metro 2010.

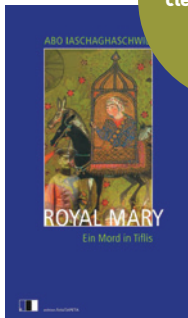
The author Jaba Zarkua has a master's degree in medical studies, a fact evident in his debut sci-fi novel *The Reader Must Die*. The author presents a dystopian, sullen world and questions the absolute eternities. Readers of this novel will find that nothing is unequivocal or unshakable in this world. Everything is defined by its context. Have you ever thought what would happen if Ray Bradbury's world turned upside down? Have you ever thought that a literate man can be transformed into a zombie and the book itself can become the main weapon of dehumanisation? Have you ever thought that burning books could be a heroic act and a gesture of liberation? At the start of the year 2200 the world is split in two: it consists of a large Fascist empire and various tiny states, including Warmstadt ('warm town', which is the literal meaning of Tbilisi). In both the great empire and in post-revolutionary Warmstadt people are fed nationalist propaganda. The regimes are also similar in nature, but they differ in one feature: the government of Warmstadt is unique among the world's dictatorial regimes, in that it uses books to attempt to make people comply and has in fact succeeded in turning its subjects into educated slaves and servants of the state. Everything seems to be going well, and the empire is in no hurry to annex Warmstadt. But it is the calm before the storm, because one of the empire's best scientists is working on a perfidious plan – his theory of a controlled revolution, which is due to be put into practice in Warmstadt. If the experiment succeeds, the concept of the 'free, rebellious man' will be consigned to history.

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**You can read the book at one sitting. There's nothing superfluous in the novel, its subtitles are very specific and business-like, the author has a precise sense of the reader's rhythm, too, the movements backwards and forwards in time, the portraits and retrospective narratives all have a functional load, and the writing is very well directed.**  
/M. Kharbedia, writer, critic/

'Brilliant researched and cleverly staged by the author'  
/FAZ/



**ABO IASHAGISHVILI**  
Royal Mary. A Murder in Tiflis

Translated into German  
by Lia Wittek  
edition.fotoTAPETA, 2017  
Germany

'Exhilarating pearls, out of the patterns'  
/Il Fatto Quotidiano/



**ERLOM AKHVEDIANI**  
Vano and Niko and Other Stories

Translated into Italian  
by Ketevan Charkviani  
Atmosphere Libri, 2016  
Italy

'Exceptionally sensual and exotic'  
/Weltbild.de/



**DIANA ANPHIMIADI**  
Personal Culinary Sonntag der beleuchteten Fenster

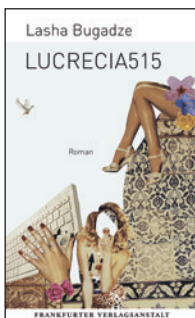
Translated into German  
by Lunona Guruli  
Wieser Verlag, 2016  
Austria



**SHOTA DVALISHVILI**  
Georgian Cuisine. 90 Recipes

Translated into German  
by Maia Panjikidze  
Leopold Stocker Verlag, 2017  
Germany

'A pulsating portrait study'  
/WDR1/



**LASHA BUGADZE**  
Lucrecia515

Translated into German  
by Nino Haratischvili  
Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 2017  
Germany



**MIKHEIL JAVAKHISHVILI**  
Kvachi Kvachantiradze Das fürstliche Leben des Kwatschi K.

Translated into German  
by Kristiane Lichtenfeld  
NORA Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2016  
Germany



**NAIRA GELASHVILI**  
I am that One

Translated into German  
by Lia Wittek  
Verbrecher Verlag Jörg Sundermeier, 2016  
Germany



**MIKHEIL JAVAKHISHVILI**  
He was to Late

Translated into German  
by Ruth Neukomm  
Passanten Verlag, 2016  
Germany

'So you learn something from this book and you will be surprised'  
/FAZ/



**TATIA NADAREISHVILI**  
Sweet Dreams

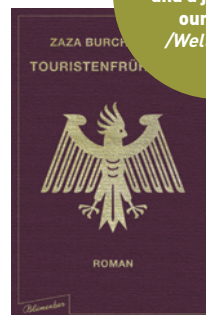
Translated into German  
by Rachel Gratzfeld  
Baobab Books, 2017  
Switzerland



**NESTAN NENE KVINIKADZE**  
Nightingales of Isphahan

Translated into German  
by Tamar Muskhelishvili  
Orlanda Verlag, 2017  
Germany

'At the same time the oldest history and a journal of our days'  
/Weltbild.de/



**ZAZA BURCHULADZE**  
Tourist's Breakfast

Translated into German  
by Natia Mikeladze-Bakhsoliani  
Blumenbar / Aufbau, 2017  
Germany



**ZURAB KARUMIDZE**  
Dagny or a Love Feast

Translated into German  
by Stefan Weidle  
Weidle Verlag, 2017  
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