

**BOOKS
FROM
GEORGIA
2016**



BOOKS FROM GEORGIA 2016

Prepared and published by the *Georgian National Book Center*.
The catalogue is distributed free of charge during the international Book Fairs to foreign publishers and editors.
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Established in 2014 by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia supports the process of translation of Georgian and foreign literature, enhancing intercultural dialogue through literature and presenting centuries-long Georgian intellectual heritage to the international literary and publishing arena.

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AKA MORCHILADZE

Flight to Madatov Island and Back



All three Madatov novels are full of allusions to world literature; history is blended with fiction. For example, Knut Hamsun, who wrote about Tbilisi, where he lived in at the end of the 19th century, appears among the fictional characters, as does Ilia Chavchavadze, the famous writer, founder of the first Georgian bank and father of the nation.

Flight to Madatov Island and Back was a literary sensation in Georgia. Critics called it the most important novel of the decade. 19th century multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Tbilisi has been divided into two parts: aristocrats dominate one part, while the rest of the city belongs to craftsmen. The novel's protagonist, an artist called Khapo, lives in a tower by the river with a deaf and dumb boy, whom he passes off as his own son, even though there are nasty rumours that the boy is his servant. Khapo is a well-known craftsman: he works in Tbilisi's hillside districts, in aristocrats' houses. Everyone knows him. One day, however, his corpse is found on the mysterious island of Madatov, which lies in the middle of the River Mtkvari, opposite the Hotel London, where the writer Knut Hamsun is staying. Every day Hamsun keeps watch from his window on the island. The island also has a factory and a rubbish dump, where all the city's rubbish is tipped; the other half of the island is covered with vineyards. The farmers live not far from the factory. Hamsun cannot understand why there is a stench coming from the centre of the city, or how, in a wine-producing country, a vineyard can flourish right next to a rubbish dump. The former owner of the island was a General Madatov, hence its name. Hamsun visits the island and meets two men there, who are obviously not pleased to see him. Bewildered, Hamsun goes back, but decides to visit the mysterious island again. Khapo, a homosexual, often used to visit Madatov for covert meetings. Qorghanov, a lieutenant in the gendarmerie, who has been searching for Khapo's murderer, has taken Khapo's boy into his own family and learnt sign language so as to make minimal communication possible. Thanks to the boy, some light is shed on details of Khapo's scandalous way of life, but the murderer can still not be identified.

In parallel with the detective story (and the work is only partly a detective novel by genre), various social layers, Tbilisi's multi-lingual community are portrayed in a vivid and authentic way, with Morchiladze's characteristic moderate irony, laced with humour and sarcasm. The work thus becomes an utterly unique narrative.

“Madatov itself, in its literal and metaphorical sense, was an island, but at the same time it was something more than one's native land. Aka Morchiladze has done something very strange in this book. Basically, what he has done for us is to make Madatov the story of an island, and at the same time, in some strange way, it is the story of our country and our people.”

/ D. Turashvili, writer / *Radio Liberty* /

“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 / *Tweed's Magazine of literature & art* /

Aka Morchiladze in translation / Rights on Morchiladze's novels have been sold in several countries among them: Germany (Weidle Verlag, 2017; 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 Doael, 2015); Egypt (Al Kotob Khan, 2015, 2017); Albania (Shkupi Publishing, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014, 2012); Sweden (2244, 2013); Azerbaijan (Alatoran, 2013); Switzerland (Pendo, 2006).

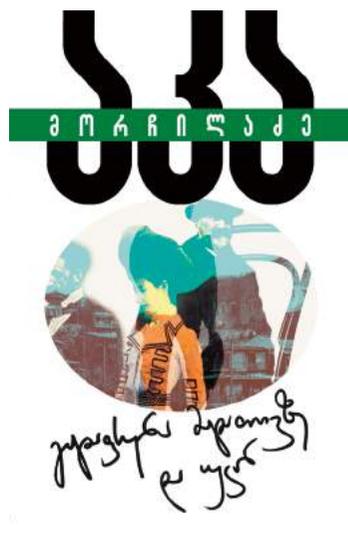
Born in 1966 in Tbilisi, Aka Morchiladze is arguably the most outstanding and widely recognised talented writer of contemporary Georgian literary fiction. He studied and later taught Georgian History at Tbilisi State University; he has worked as a sports journalist on a sports daily newspaper and in 2000 took part in the famous *Literature Express* around Europe. Since 1998, the Sulakauri Publishing House has published Aka Morchiladze's twenty novels and three books 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: 192

Published in: 1998, 2004 / Sulakauri Publishing House

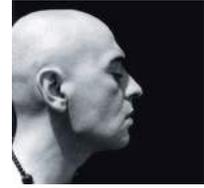
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IRAKLI CHARKVIANI

A Calm Swim



Irakli Charkviani's autobiographical novel is, on one hand, 'the story of a king' – the real story of how a Georgian rock star was born the 'king' at the age of 43, on the other hand, it is the story of a terrorist from Kabul, Rumi's final experiences in the passenger cabin of an aeroplane before he presses the button that will blow it up.

In modern world literature, *A Calm Swim* can be compared to Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Beach* in which the odd chapters give us the story of one character, and the even chapters – that of another character, but where the fates of these two persons is intertwined and, eventually, merged. The lives of the 'king' and of Rumi evolve in parallel, their fates seem to shackle them together and they represent one human being's two natures. One element is constructive, the other destructive. We know that one of these persons is Irakli Charkviani, who chose the pseudonym of the 'king' in his last years, while the other is an incarnation of the mediaeval Sufi philosopher and legendary poet Rumi. The action takes place in two separate spaces – material and metaphysical dimensions. Although, the novel's historical and biographical part occupies the material space, evil forces, plotting against the universe, are present in the other dimension.

A reader of the novel will be most enthralled by the author's extremely frank monologue about himself and the complex epoch in which his life ran its course. The generation born in the 1960s to 1980s period is called Generation X. It was a generation for which personal freedom and human rights were the most important values and which decided to change the injustices of the world.

A Calm Swim is a novel written on the principle of flow of consciousness: reality periodically rises to the surface like a torpedo.

'The Aeroplane Boys' is about the events of 1983, when seven young Georgians hijacked an Aeroflot passenger aircraft. The hijackers had intended to flee the Soviet Union. Some of them were the offsprings of well-known families. The Soviet government sentenced the surviving hijackers to death. This tragic story, to which more than one literary work has been devoted recently, has probably left the deepest mark on Irakli Charkviani's life and consciousness. 'The closer I get to myself, the closer I get to death,' is perhaps the fate and the tragedy of Generation X, something that can be sensed in every line of the book.

Irakli Charkviani's chief metaphors – *A Calm Swim* and *The Paper Ship* – imply escape from that enchanted circle, Soviet and post-Soviet space.

“Irakli Charkviani's novel *A Calm Swim* is a generous, unshamed and, I'd say, a fearless exposition by a writer who has shown his ability for the fantastic.”

/ L. Berdzenishvili, writer / Radio books programme /

Irakli Charkviani in translation / Charkviani's poems have been published in: UK (Arc Publications, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

Sample translation available in English.

*Irakli Charkviani (1961-2006) was a Georgian poet, prose writer and musician, later known by his pen name 'Mepe' ('The King'). He graduated from the Department of Western European and American Literature of Tbilisi State University. Fame came at the beginning of 90s with his music, when the young performer captured Georgian audiences with utterly new ideas in music and poetry. He became one of the founders of an art union 'Reactive Club', later named 'The Poets' Order', confronting all the common norms and clichés and thus becoming a brand-new, revolutionary event in Georgia. His eccentric image and poetry, mixed with alternative rock, electronic music and hip-hop, proved to have a significant influence on Georgian alternative music in the 1990s. Irakli Charkviani was found dead 2006. After the musician's death, interest in his literary legacy is increasing daily. *A Calm Swim* became winner of BBC literary marathon's competition 'Our Book' 2014 (Georgian version). He also received Shota Rustaveli Prize 2013 (posthumously) for a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Georgian culture.*

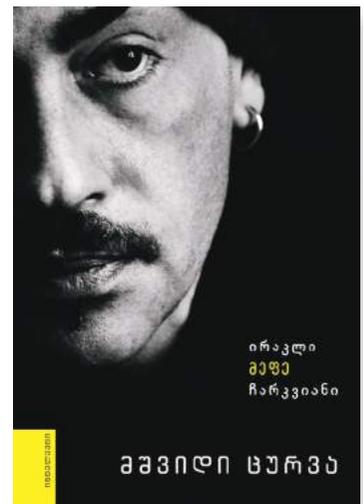
Number of pages: 200

Published in: 2014 / Intelekti Publishers

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REZO CHEISHVILI

Blue Mountains



Rezo Cheishvili's novel came out in the *Cinema Library* series, which published works which have resulted in world-acclaimed films. An unequivocally anti-Soviet work which was a mirror of the bureaucracy of the time and showed us, with subtle humor, the life of Soviet officials, miraculously 'got through' the merciless Soviet censorship (apparently the Soviet censors couldn't grasp the work's main idea). The novel was turned into a film script, the basis for the 1981 film *The Blue Mountains, or An Unbelievable Story*, which was somehow allowed to be shot (directed by Eldar Shengelaia). At the Cannes festival in 2014 *The Blue Mountains, or An Unbelievable Story* (IMDB 8.9) was deservedly accepted in the world film classic section. The film is an allegorical comedy.

The work tells us about the story of the young author Soso (in the novel the hero's profession is not specified, he may be a young scientist). The organization where the action takes place is either an editorial office or a scientific research institution. This is deliberately left undefined, because similar situations in Soviet times could be found in any institution. In a word, in what is supposedly an editorial office, Soso, the chief hero of the work returns from leave and brings his writings or work *The Blue Mountains, or Tian Shan* to the director for evaluation. Autumn passes while he waits for his manuscript to be examined, then winter and spring pass... Not only has nobody read his work, every existing copy of it disappears without trace. Everyone in this institution is busy with their own affairs: the director is always running about, from conference to bank, from bank to meeting, from meeting to banquet, and so on without end; some of the editors are learning French, some are sewing, some are having lunch, some are on leave, some are on business trips, others are playing chess: the impression we get is that they do anything except work. The only person who reads manuscripts is a painter (a workman who is doing repairs)... People in the office work, within the bounds of the framework of their narrow personal interests; the futility of this system ends up with the destruction, in the literal sense, of the institution, and in the figurative sense, culminates in the approaching destruction of the Soviet system.

“The unbearable irony of our life prevents us from being indifferent to the problems raised in *The Blue Mountains*. We recognise ourselves yet again in the characters' empty conversations or chaotic behaviour; despite the fact that the danger of suffering a collapse still hangs over us, we cannot say no to the defects in our flesh and bones or to our illusions. *The Blue Mountains* is relevant even today.”

/ M. Ldokonen, literary critic, writer / literary magazine *Arili* /

“Rezo Cheishvili's typical quality is a very deep commitment to the truth. I would say that this commitment is stubborn, unshakable, which, given the laughable aspects of this reality, of certain false situations, regrettable misunderstandings, comes across as a precise manifestation of an absurd situation.”

/ G. Asatiani, literary critic /

Rezo Cheishvili in translation / Cheishvili's short stories have been published in several countries among them: Sweden (Tranan, 2013); Germany (Suhkamp, 2000); Russia (Sovetski Pisatel, 1983).

Sample translation available in German.

*Rezo Cheishvili (1933-2015), the late Georgian writer and screenwriter, was born and grew up in Kutaisi. He moved to the capital of Georgia to continue his studies, and in 1958 graduated from Tbilisi State University with a degree in Georgian language and literature. Rezo Cheishvili worked from 1961 to 1992 at the 'Georgian Film' studio as an editor and member of the Film Script Administrative Board, as a member of the Creative Association and as one of its leaders. At the same time, he edited various Georgian literary journals and newspapers. Additionally, he continued to publish short stories and novels, and to write film scripts. Among several extremely popular short and full length films based on Rezo Cheishvili's work are *My Friend Nodari* and the widely famed *The Blue Mountains*. He won several prizes and awards, one of which the writer returned to the Kremlin.*

Number of pages: 150

Published in: 2014 / Sulakauri Publishing House

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რეზო ჭეიშვილი



ცისფერი
მთები

TAMAZ CHILADZE

The Bruegel Moon



The Bruegel Moon is one of Tamaz Chiladze's most acclaimed novels, presenting work that blends the genres of post-modernism, magical realism, and science fiction. The novel is about an individual's solitude, which is particularly acutely felt in the modern world of unprecedented technological advancements. Its main character is a psychotherapist, hitherto successful, whose wife, as the novel opens, is leaving him for a better life: any kind of life seems to be better away from him. Realising that her marriage is little more than 'fact or reality born of habit,' she tells him: 'We were doctor and patient rather than husband and wife.' As she prepares to leave, he tries hard to maintain his dignity, but this is soon mixed with defensiveness, poor attempts at humor, indignation, and accusations of infidelity, which appear to be true. Like many left behind in the break-up of a marriage, he becomes lost in a world of fantasy, doubt, and desperate attempts to regain his life.

The plot also focuses on the dramatic relationship between the protagonist and two women, who enter his life after his wife's departure – an astrophysicist Nunu, Levan's middle-aged patient, whose husband has committed suicide, and Ana-Maria, the wife of a foreign ambassador, whose family believes she needs treatment.

This book is about relationships, madness, and mental frailty, but above all, about isolation. Nunu's personal story is tragic and absurd, ending in a Moscow psychiatric ward. Ana-Maria is lonely and depressed. At the apex of this triangle is the psychiatrist himself, a man of sharp intellect but lacking emotional intelligence. The story's greatest tension comes when the author asks whether Levan should be giving psychiatric advice, or receiving it. In the course of Tamaz Chiladze's surprising novel very different characters appear: doctors, embassy employees, state security officers, lunatics and dissidents locked in the Soviet psychiatric institutions...

“And while the connections between the three characters are surprising, what's greater is the way Chiladze beautifully weaves together a number of themes, including 'unbearable loneliness' that waits 'at home, lurking in ambush,' the pain of the illusion of love, and how 'one needs an attentive, sensitive listener' in order to move from an old life to a new one. The result is a work as complex as the human psyche and as powerful as the heart.”

/ L. Farmer, book reviewer / *The Gazette* /

Tamaz Chiladze in translation / Chiladze's books have been translated into many languages: French, English, Ukrainian, Spanish, Italian, Czech, Slovak, Serbian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Polish, Turkish, Armenian, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. Rights have been sold to several countries among them: Albania (Fan Noli, 2016); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014).

Full translation available in English.

Born in 1931, Tamaz Chiladze is Georgian writer, playwright and poet. After graduating in 1954 from Tbilisi State University, where he studied philology, he published his first volume of poetry. Today his short fiction and novels are considered to be classics of Georgian Literature. Soon after graduating Tamaz Chiladze started working for then widely popular magazine *Tsiskari*. From 1991 on, he gave a course of lectures in dramaturgy at Georgia's Theatre and Cinema Institute. During the years 1997-2008 he was chief editor of the magazine *Mnatobi*. His plays have been successfully staged at theatres, both across Georgia and abroad, and often by celebrated producers. In 1996 the radio broadcasting corporation of Western Germany awarded him first prize for the play *The Quartet of Paradise*. In 1999 he was nominated for the title of the International Personality of 1999-2000 by the Cambridge International Centre of Biographies.

Number of pages: 156

Published in: 2008 / Pegas Publishing House

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GELA CHKVANAVA

The Toreadors



The Toreadors tells the story of two friends who help and support one another and who are trying to survive the war. The book portrays the ‘face’ of war and the difficulty of maintaining a capacity for compassion while fighting for survival. Two soldiers and friends, Koba and Dato, are the sole survivors in a company that has been routed. The friends try hard to cross occupied territory unnoticed. They hope to avoid the enemy and reach the town peacefully, in order to join friendly forces. On their way to town, the protagonists pass through deserted villages, looking for their comrades but instead, come across a small armed group and have to fight a battle. Although the friends manage to win the battle, the price is Koba’s death. After that the only thing what keeps Dato moving on is the desire to avenge his friend: then he sees a grenade lying nearby... This novel is essentially about war seen through a soldiers’ eyes, and its subject matter ranges from poor leadership to an introspective examination of a soldier’s feelings and emotions. It tackles issues such as fear and elation: the way a soldier tries to control his body and mind at crucial times, and the very real satisfaction – indeed, euphoria – that he feels when a job is well done, even if it costs him his life.

Gela Chkvanava has first-hand experience of local conflicts. He describes a wartime situation and the oppressive atmosphere in a gripping and very precise way. War is not an abstract concept for this writer. The atmosphere and people’s mood are described succinctly. The focus is on everyday life: the search for food, shelter and, not least, inner peace and quiet, even if only for a few minutes. Equally important are friendship, the urge to survive and a readiness to help others, because what matters is preserving one’s humanity, personality and pride, to be able to call oneself human even under extreme conditions. In this work, the nationality of the enemy is not defined. The events described do recall the armed conflict in Abkhazia 1992-3, but the actual period is not specified in the book, probably because the author wished to show the reader the horror of war in general.

“One thing that never fails this writer is his imagination. Gela Chkvanava can at any time break off or take up his narrative. He has a gift for invention and for plotting...”

/ M. Kharbedia, writer, literary critic / *Radio Liberty* /

Gela Chkvanava in translation / Chkvanava’s short stories have been translated into English, German and Russian.

Full translation available in English.

Born in 1967 in Sukhumi, Gela Chkvanava after finishing school, was recruited into the army and assigned to an anti-missile unit in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). After military service Gela Chkvanava returned to Sukhumi and studied philology at Sukhumi University. The armed conflict broke out in Abkhazia when he was still a student. Everything he wrote before the war was abandoned in Sukhumi and destroyed when his house was burnt down. To distract himself from the war, and to gain experience in creative writing, he began work on several stories set in peacetime. His Debut book titled *Local Colours* won the author Literary Award SABA 2005. This refugee author claims that he has two sacred words: *Sukhumi* and *Dzidzaria* (the latter being the colorful street he once lived in), the main inspiration of all of his works, that resound with his authentic and sincere literary voice.

Number of pages: 111

Published in: 2006 / Diogene Publishers

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GURAM DOCHANASHVILI

The First Robe



A young man Domenico, a seeker of adventure, is very much affected by a secret contained in the tale of a refugee: it is about the rest of the world, which he does not know: he leaves his parents' home and goes to seek his fate. Gradually, as he contacts many different people, he understands what friendship, love, goodness, evil and freedom are. Domenico is not yet 18 years old. So his 'Odyssey' begins, a prolonged and very hazardous path in life towards self-knowledge. His first adventure is to be in the city of beauty, where life passed in games and pastimes. Everything there is false: love, and friendship. In the city of beauty he gets to know Ana-Maria, whom he falls desperately love with, but Ana-Maria dies pregnant after a violent attack, and that determines Domenico's next journey – the traveler, in thrall to a desire for self-destruction, heads for a nest of evil, inhabited by bandits, the city of Kamora, hoping that some bandit will take his life. In Kamora everything is based on violence and evil and Domenico is a toy for nonentities. He sees that there is no limit to indifference and treachery. The 'contact' that Domenico needs most follows him from the city of beauty. That is where he got to know Alexandro, whom everyone considered to be mad. Alexandro does promise that it will be thanks to his brother that the traveler will escape from Kamora alive although reveals nothing to Domenico about identity of his brother. Domenico tries to recognise Alexandro's brother in every decent person whom he comes across in Kamora, and the reader, together with him, is 'tormented' by curiosity. The traveler, passing through hell, comes to Kanudos, a free city which shepherds and tillers of the soil have founded. Five rebels have created this dreamlike Kanudos for any person, a place where everyone is equal, everyone is for the others, and everyone is free. This is Domenico's second homeland. Despite of this the traveler goes back to his high village after wandering the world and failing to find anything better than his own village, built on a mountain peak. The novel's popularity in Dochanashvili's homeland is well attested by the fact that the first night club opened in Tbilisi during the Soviet period was called Kanudos, and it was always the favourite place for young people to gather. It is hard to find anyone who has read *The First Robe* only once. The reason probably is the wisdom so simply but brilliantly offered in the novel, and the vivid, memorable characters and interesting development of the plot: as a whole, the work arouses an amazing desire in the reader for a shared experience, a shared wandering, a shared learning.

'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, writer, critic /

'How much warmth and light there is in this book, what a free book it is, and imagine that it was created in the Soviet period, in an epoch of terror. In the 1970s, in years of stagnation and death, something completely unique was created – *The First Robe* was undoubtedly a genuine masterpiece.'

/ L. Berdzenishvili, writer, critic / *Books for Hot Chocolate* /

Guram Dochanashvili in translation / Dochanashvili's short stories have been published in many countries among them: USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012, 2014); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); Germany (Suhrkamp, 2000; Volk und Welt, 1984).

Sample translations available in English and German.

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. Javakhishvili 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 novel *The First Robe* has become a modern Georgian classic. In 2016, the composer Zaza Marjanishvili staged a project *The First Robe*, based on Dochanashvili's novel of that name in the Georgian State Opera Theatre: it involved elements of operatic, ballet, graphic arts and drama.

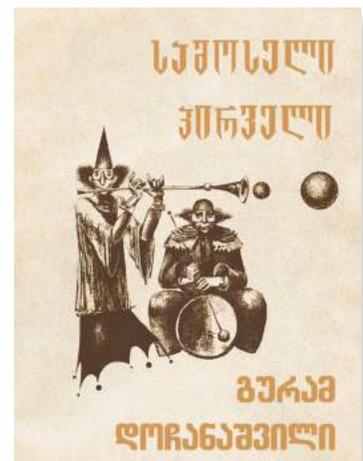
Number of pages: 664

Published in: 2011 / Meridiani Publishing

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NANA EKVTIMISHVILI

The Pear-Tree Meadow



Nana Ekvimishvili focuses on the subject of disabled children abandoned by their parents. She also speaks about the fate of children who have no guardians, and lack the encouragement, development and implementation of their needs and rights, and who continue to meet on the street and beg for food and shelter. Although, they are separated from the community by a barrier, they are still integral and ever-present members of the community. The novel's main heroine is the eighteen-year-old Lela, who is the centre for all the other characters – present or former boarding school pupils and teachers, people living in nearby apartments... This crowd of characters is developed at a giddy tempo. As well as describing the life of the boarders realistically, Nana Ekvimishvili tries to find something symbolic for them all. A pear-tree meadow represents them, a meadow of sin with its sinful trees, where the boarders rape one another: the meadow looks beautiful from the outside, but the moment you set foot there, your feet slowly get caught in a quagmire, and the pears that ripen there are watery and tasteless. Lela is also a rape victim, but she is raped not by a fellow boarder, but by a teacher, and all through the novel she thinks about killing him. All this is part of a horrific reality, which fate subjected the author to in her childhood. Nana Ekvimishvili grew up next to a boarding school, and was in close contact with the children that lived there; she played with them, they told her about anything that happened in the boarding school: 'I am amazed how I then calmly listened to them, or how one could co-exist with violations, when next to you such things were happening. Nobody ever believed anything these children said, and if they said that anything like that had happened to them, violence or rape, or if they had stolen cherries from the next-door garden, that made no great difference at the time, and nobody paid any attention. Now I am amazed, and I don't know what to think, I simply knew all this, people somehow accepted this background of general violence, and it didn't seem to be any great tragedy,' the author has said in an interview. It all had such an effect on her that when she was a teenager, together with her sister and a few friends, she intended to make a film about it. The fact that a novel has been written about these experiences, clearly, gives it more force.

“The boarding school in Ekvimishvili’s novel is our society: a space full of prohibitions or stereotypes, executioners and victims, in which we all live, together with Vano our paedophile or our infantile Irakli; and a society from which escape is just a dream, the fate of only a few chosen, daring inhabitants of the boarding school, just as in Ken Kesey’s novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.”

/ G. Lomidze, literary critic /

Full translation available in German.

Born in 1978 in Tbilisi, Nana Ekvimishvili is an author and director of a number of film scripts. In 2013 her Georgian feature film *Long Bright Days/ In Bloom* was screened in many countries and it has won more than 30 awards at various world film festivals. Her first stories were published in 1999 in the magazine *Arili*. Nana Ekvimishvili's first novel *The Pear-Tree Meadow* won LITERA 2016 prize by Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the Writer's House of Georgia for *The Best Debut* and ILLAUNI prize 2016 for *The Best Novel*. *The Pear-Tree Meadow* also has been shortlisted for Literary Award SABA 2016 in the category *The Best Debut*.

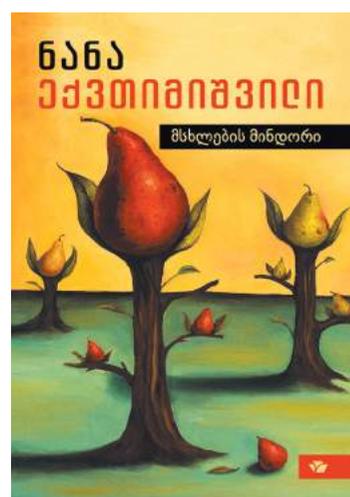
Number of pages: 222

Published in: 2015 / Sulakauri Publishing House

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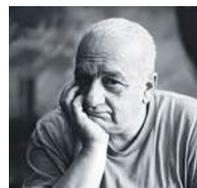
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REZO GABRIADZE

Kutaisi is a City



The novel's main characters are a German prisoner, Otto Schulz and a small boy, Varlam. The book tells the story of Varlam's 'child's old age', when he became ten years old. Varlam's mother was a violinist (as well as a seamstress and a teacher of German), but all that they know about Varlam's father is his postal address: 12\A\89423\6793 (i.e. the GULag). The few other indicators are his surname, first name and short biography. *Kutaisi is a City* (short novel) is brought to life by impressions and dreams of childhood, but the writer brings them to life against his own will, as he settles accounts with the past, or frees himself from it. If we look at it in this way, we may understand why the young Varlam puts up with injustice, mockery, violence and cruelty as if they were normal, why he struggles with them only in his feverish illusions and even then shows not the slightest aggression. As for the novel's title, *Kutaisi is a City*, that is ironical, because nothing is mentioned of the life of that city. Instead of a unified action, here the action is split up, fragmentary, and there is no essential link between these fragments. Anyone who knows Gabriadze's work, knows that plot is secondary for him – Rezo Gabriadze is an artist of situations. In describing the period after World War II, the author seasons the very grim social background, the cruel, tense relationships between people, with almost entirely unmotivated kindness. Kutaisi as Rezo Gabriadze sees it is a city where the weak suffer violence, but this violent force doesn't suffocate you; it is portrayed with black humour and with details that only Rezo Gabriadze is capable of supplying. It arouses not so much sympathy as a melancholy smile. One of the themes is that of German prisoners of war in Kutaisi, and this is something elaborated in a novel way: what is their mood and what do the locals think of them? 'Who is in captivity – them or us?' Sometimes they look down on the Germans, for after all they are PoWs, sometimes they appreciate them and understand that these people have culture and the consequences of that culture are visible. This dual attitude of the population towards the prisoners is something that the novel makes clear.

A light perception of grim existence, grim reality, and the light way in which it is portrayed is one of the novel's chief artistic merits. Everything is in the lightness of touch.

“When reading *Kutaisi is a City* many hitherto unconscious associations are aroused. Here it is not only Rezo Gabriadze's characters, scenarios and performances that you are reminded of, but also, for example, Woody Allen, with the simultaneously refined and eccentric humour of his prose, or the film *Sky over Berlin* [*Wings of Desire*], where angels befriend and rescue human beings, and stroll through Berlin, smoking cigarettes, just like Rezo Gabriadze's wartime Kutaisi.”

/ P. Javakhishvili, literary critic / *Radio Liberty* /

“I love Georgia. That country has given me many a happy day. I remember my friends – Rezo Gabriadze, who in my view is one of the best artists in the world.”

/ Tonino Guerra, screenwriter /

Rezo Gabriadze in translation / Gabriadze's short stories have been published in several countries among them: USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2013); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015).

Sample translation available in German.

Born in 1936 in Kutaisi, Rezo Gabriadze is a writer, screenwriter, stage director, painter, sculptor and puppeteer. He has written over 35 screenplays. At some point Rezo Gabriadze, frustrated by the lack of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union, turned to puppet theatre as a hitherto overlooked way to tell his dramatic stories: in 1981 he founded and even now still heads the Marionette Theatre based in Tbilisi. Gabriadze has also worked abroad, where he has staged numerous productions. The theatre company has toured the world extensively including N.Y.'s Lincoln Centre Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, San Sebastian Festival, Spain, Toronto World Stage Festival, Theatre de la Ville, Paris, the Barbican Centre, London, etc. As a painter, he has contributed to numerous exhibitions and his works are kept in museums and private collections. Over 50 books have been illustrated with his graphic works. Rezo Gabriadze counts among his many international awards Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic.

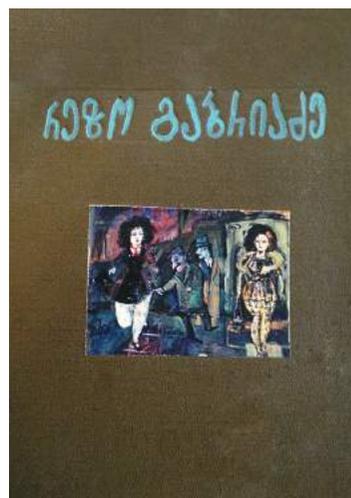
Number of pages: 100

Published in: 2002 / Sani Publishers

Rights: Rezo Gabriadze

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KOTE JANDIERI

Cinderella's Night / Globalisation



The collection of short stories *Cinderella's Night* by Kote Jandieri over three decades offers readers a wide range of topics as well as the impressive richness of the author's authentic language. *Blackberry* is the story of a literary forgery. The author discovers a manuscript written in expert Latin by an unknown author in the 20th century. The story describes the life of a Jewish man living in the epoch of Jesus Christ who eventually becomes a Christian saint. *Family Chronicle* is an epistolary novella. The members of a family communicate with each other in a strange way: by writing letters to one another. *A Short Vacation* is a story about degradation of human values. The story is told with great skill, portraying an ordinary person facing all the roughness and violence of the Soviet army.

Among his short stories we can in particular highlight a longer story, or short novel *Globalisation*. It is a story about an ordinary man who witnesses epochal events throughout Georgia's history. The whole story is narrated by a disabled peasant farmer from the region of Kakhetia. The story of the events which befall his family acts as a mirror to the troubled history of twentieth and twenty-first century Georgia. The inhabitants of the small village experience every turmoil of the entire country. They live through the period of the Russian Revolution when Georgia was a part of the Russian Empire. There followed the short-lived period of Georgian independence between 1917 and 1921, the subsequent civil war, Stalin's purges, the Second World War, Soviet communism, the collapse of the Soviet Union and then the armed conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia and the aftermath. Some people are flexible enough to adapt to the new capitalist system and the requirements of globalisation, such as the entrepreneurial peasant woman who opens a coffee shop, but many are lost and confused. Living in freedom appears too complicated and uncomfortable for many people. Orthodox Christianity which had been so much repressed under the Soviet Union, suddenly also became intolerant of any other beliefs. The Kakhetian peasant-narrator tells his sad story with humour and in the characteristic regional dialect. The tragic story of his sister who became a Jehovah's Witness is just one of many stories of those who have had to endure similar persecution, right up to the present day.

“In the short novel *Globalisation* the writer has achieved creative maturity. Naturally, Kote will write other things, this latest work is not characteristic of him, but here he shows himself fully formed as a writer and the work deserves to become known not only to the Georgian reader, but to readers all over the world.”

/ M. Kharbedia, literary critic / *Radio Liberty* /

“Kote Jandieri's *Globalisation* is a masterpiece of shorter Georgian prose in this decade.”

/ *Tabula magazine* /

Kote Jandieri in translation / Jandieri's short stories have been published in many countries among them: Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); Azerbaijan (ADK Publishing, 2015); Sweden (Tranan, 2013); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012); Germany (Suhrkamp, 2000).

Sample translations available in English and German.

Born in 1958 in Tbilisi, Kote Jandieri is a Georgian script and short-story writer. In 1980 Jandieri graduated from Tbilisi State University, Department of Geography and Geology. Soon after graduation this promising young author published his first short stories and started his career as a screenwriter. Since then Kote Jandieri has written numerous scripts for documentary and fiction films which have won popularity with Georgian and international audiences: they include *Orpheus's Death* (1996), *Love in a Vineyard* (2000), *The Cradle of Wine* (2011) and a TV series *Hot Dog*, which he co-authored with Nugzar Shataidze. The series was broadcast on TV Imedi in 2008-2009 and has become one of the most acclaimed projects in Georgian TV history. Jandieri also has produced two short story collections. His prose works have won a number of literary prizes in Georgia. Some of his works are included in school textbooks of Georgian Language and Literature.

Number of pages: 324

Published in: 2009 / Diogene Publishers

Rights: Diogene Publishers

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კოტე ჯანდერი
კინეკონს ღანგი



BASA JANIKASHVILI

Absurdistan Sovieticus

Absurdistan Sovieticus is a land where everything is absurd: music, entertainment, life itself. This country has existed, and may still exist anywhere that the word 'freedom' is heard.

One of the most thoroughly free manifestations of freedom in the twentieth century is rock music: the civilised world has had it since the 1960s. It was one of the western 'sicknesses', which made the Soviet Union very worried because of its boundless influence on people. The main character of the book is rock music itself, but this is not western rock: it is rock in Soviet Georgia, illegally recorded from radio broadcasts, imported, and disseminated by pirating, a phenomenon associated with freedom and which meant far more than music to Soviet music-lovers. 'The KGB knew who had videos, what films citizens were watching, and cut off the electricity at the entrance to blocks of flats. It's easy to understand that a video would stop and any pernicious illegal film or porn would be left on the video recorder. Then the secret police would come in and, with just a click on a button, would have evidence of an illegal performance in a Soviet citizen's apartment. One more thing: there was a myth about operational methods of combatting these things. A rumour spread around town that there was a special Japanese video recorder which, whenever the electricity went off (or was deliberately cut), would go on working for several minutes, so that the owner could calmly conceal his forbidden films. I don't want to leave young people with the impression that all of Transcaucasia was reared on pornography. The prohibition extended to karate, too, as well as the rock concerts I've mentioned...' This is an extract from Basa Janikashvili's novel, which is autobiographical and devoted to music, or, to be specific, to rock and politics. In Soviet Georgia of the 1980s and 1990s this movement was no longer forbidden, although finding good recordings is no easy matter now. Music-lovers have 'sweated their guts out' for such things, but have had no luck. Author calls the country as it was then 'Absurdistan Sovieticus', and it went on being absurd, and for many people existence carries on being absurd. Because people live by pseudo-values and pseudo-feelings, they listen to pseudo-music and enjoy a pseudo-freedom. The road to Soviet and contemporary Absurdistan Sovieticus passes through the times of the author's youth: we learn about the development of rock at the same time as life then, with its interesting details.

'Basa Janikashvili has brought into his book almost everything that has happened to him and his country over the last twenty years, and has tried to use a very simple, elementary language to talk about simple or funny, open or covert enthusiasms, situations in which he personally found himself, and about the people he met. All this is unified by music, contemporary pop culture, which imbued all our Soviet childhood, but turned into a powerful torrent from the end of the 1980s onwards. Basa's book deals with this period in particular, and he is one of the very first to devote a novel entirely to a popular subculture.'

/ M. Kharbedia, writer, literary critic / *Radio Liberty* /

Basa Janikashvili in translation / Janikashvili's works have been published in several countries among them: Ukraine (Pr-Prime Company, 2016, 2013); Germany (Theater der Zeit, 2015; Reichert Verlag, 2010); Italy (*Absurdistan Sovietico*, Palombi Editore, 2013).

Sample translation available in German.



Born in 1974, Basa Janikashvili is a famous playwright, prose writer and one of Georgia's most successful television and radio producers. He graduated from Tbilisi State University of Theatre and Cinema (Drama Faculty). In 1998 his first collection of short stories and plays *A Mosquito* was published. Since then, he has written numerous plays that have been regularly performed at theatres in Georgia. Some have also been staged in Great Britain and Russia. In 2006, he was awarded the SABA literary prize for the best play of the year. In 2009, he won the Russia and Caucasus Region category of the BBC International Radio Playwriting Competition. 2014 was also successful for the author, bringing him an award from the international playwright's competition *Talk About Boundaries*. In 2015 his winning play *Angry Bird* was performed in the Nuremberg State Theatre. In 2016 the play was also staged in Paris's Arnold Theatre.

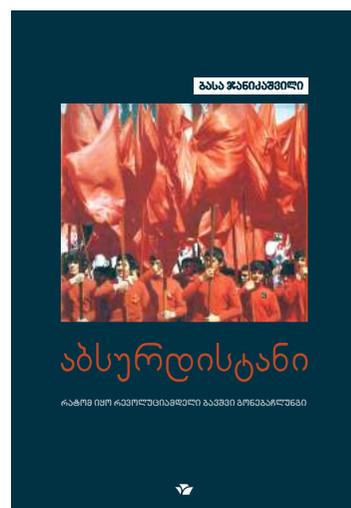
Number of pages: 152

Published in: 2009 / Sulakauri Publishing House

Rights: Sulakauri Publishing House

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JEMAL KARCHKHADZE

Antonio and David



The book by the Italian traveler and merchant Bartolomeo d'Aniti, written after travelling around many countries, tells us a thousand stories, customs and habits of various peoples. These events were personally experienced, some are funny, some serious, but the amazing drama of *Antonio and David* is shocking and makes many people think things that had never entered their minds before. This story takes place in a country known at the time as Colchis. The Argonauts once invaded this country for the Golden Fleece; today it is part of Georgia. It was here that the Italian royal court sent Bartolomeo, the narrator of this story, together with a missionary delegation, to study the possibilities for trade with Colchis. Bartolomeo makes friends with a missionary in the delegation, Antonio by name, who was once in confrontation with the Church, on account of which he had been sentenced by the Holy Inquisition to be burned at the stake. Antonio was pardoned as a result of the intervention of influential relatives and friends, but several of his friends and accomplices were burned, so that Antonio felt his pardon to be a heavy burden on his conscience throughout his life. While in Colchis, Bartolomeo and Antonio had to visit the local mountains to look for copper deposits. In the village where they were housed they noticed that people were living with a strange fear. After a short while the reason became clear, and the local inhabitants told them the story.

This novel is written in the first person by Bartolomeo d'Aniti, and such an 'outside view' of Georgia makes this book readily comprehensible to the foreign reader. The text of *Antonio and David* is one of those rare cases where a tense narrative and a powerful intellectual stream are harmoniously combined. Thanks to its faultless language and a writing technique of the very highest level, the text is easily grasped by any reader interested in the story, while at the same time it offers vast aesthetic and cognitive material for literary connoisseurs. *Antonio and David* is a most important work by Jemal Karchkhadze and one of those rare texts that stand the test of time.

“Great writers are identified above all else by their phrasing. Jemal Karchkhadze’s phrasing is astonishing.”

/ L. Bregadze, literary critic /

“In his prose Jemal Karchkhadze shows us that a human being has the capacity to realise an inner truth based on achieving the highest human concept: freedom.”

/ M. Beriashvili, philosopher /

Jemal Karchkhadze in translation / Rights on Karchkhadze’s novel *Antonio and David* have been sold to: Norway (Solum Forlag, 2017); Egypt (Al Khotob Khan, 2015); Sweden (Ruin, 2013).

Full translations available in English and German.

Born in the village of Ukhuti in western Georgia, Jemal Karchkhadze (1936-1998) was a Georgian writer who wrote six novels, numerous short stories and essays. He graduated in 1960 with a degree in Georgian language and literature. Karchkhadze held various posts between 1961 and 1982, before deciding to give up regular employment so as to devote himself full-time to writing. Jemal Karchkhadze’s first published works were very well received by the public, but were met with harsh criticism from the Soviet critics of the time. In spite of this, the author continued to write and publish regularly. In 1977 one of his most acclaimed short stories *Igi* appeared, followed by such significant novels as *Caravan* (1984), *Antonio and David* (1987) and *Zebulon* (1988). It is worth noting that in his lifetime Jemal Karchkhadze received no award or prize. Karchkhadze was rediscovered in the 2000s by a new generation, and today his popularity continues to rise.

Number of pages: 134

Published in: 2014

Karchkhadze Publishing House

Rights: Karchkhadze Publishing House

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ჯემალ ქარჩხაძე



DATO KARDAVA

Esau's Hands



The grotesque which saturates Dato Kardava's novellas not only gives the reader pleasure: it leaves him with a very special thought, a sadness, and this is why he can be read several times over. Dato Kardava has a peculiar way of portraying his own characters. On the whole, they always have comic attributes, they are caricatures, the author apparently distrusts them, but this mocking tone which accompanies his characterisation, can suddenly vanish and the intonation and attitude to the character in the narrative can change diametrically, even though at times there still is a flash of sarcasm in the texts. This ambivalence, this change of focus is not a superficial game invented by the author. It is his position, his view, his aesthetics, which borders on ethics. In almost every story – *Noah's Doves*, *Esau's Hands* and elsewhere – we can see obviously Biblical and religious themes, religious motifs. But these motifs cannot be taken completely seriously. In these texts Georgian pseudo-religiousness has found, in some way, its portrait. Everyone seems to be a believer, everyone clings to the topics of the Gospels. Some put their reliance on God sincerely, some less sincerely, and all demonstrate religious feeling, but everything is often false, insincere, as it is in our society. The plot of one story, *The Man who Filled in Someone Else's Pit*, is about digging a village latrine, no more or less. The hero is a refugee who is helping relatives do the job and, if one can say so, shares with them his 'philosophy of the toilet'. Just before the armed conflict broke out, he had dug the very same latrine pit in his own yard, and when he finished digging he looked at the sky from the bottom of the pit and said with pathos, 'God, don't kill me before I've filled up this pit.' Obviously, the pit remained unfilled, while this man, who doesn't have his own pit, is, in his own words, 'a walking corpse'. This is an echo of the Georgian fairytale *The Earth Will Demand Its Rights*. This is how the townsman and the countryman differ in nature, on the basis that a townsman doesn't have a pit to fill and therefore thinks that he will always be kept alive, and consequently, compared with the countryman, is relatively happy in mind... In a word, this is a complete philosophy which is born of man's tragic fate. The theme which flashes throughout the whole book is journalism which, twixt cup and lip, can be transformed into anti-journalism, a journalist's code which is an anti-journalist's one. This is one of the points made by *Esau's Hands*: 'A bad journalist is bought once, a good one is bought every time.'

'Anyone can be a journalist, but not everyone is one,' says a character in Dato Kardava's book. But I would paraphrase it this: 'Anyone can be a writer, but not everyone is one.' Now, Dato Kardava really is a writer and that is why you have definitely got to read his *Esau's Hands*.'

/ Sh. Iatashvili, poet, literary critic / Radio Liberty /

Born in 1968, Dato Kardava (the pseudonym of Jimsher Rekhviashvili) graduated in 1992 from Tbilisi State University's physics faculty. For over twenty years he has been a working journalist and at the same time writing prose works. Since 2002 he has been a reporter and blogger at the Tbilisi office of Radio Liberty. His first prose collection *Noah's Doves* came out in 2005. In 2011 his extended essay *A Toilet Reader* was printed. He has won several other prizes for journalism and literature. His stories have several times appeared in collections of the best short stories. In 2011 a story of his was included in the anthology *21st Century Georgian Short Stories*. He won LITERA 2016 prize by Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the Writer's House of Georgia in the category *The Best Prose Collection for the Esau's Hands* and 2016 for third time he has been shortlisted for Literary Award SABA 2016 in the category *The Best Prose Collection*.

Number of pages: 178

Published in: 2015 / Intelekti Publishers

Rights: Intelekti Publishers

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ZURAB KARUMIDZE

Caucasian Foxtrot



In 1926 an American couple are travelling through Russia and Georgia. What starts out as a business trip soon becomes much more than that when they find themselves in the historic and mountainous province of Svaneti. The journey reaches its climax when they dance a foxtrot at a feast in the region's highest mountain village. It is a story about crossing cultural boundaries and exploring outer and inner worlds, expressed in love stories involving people of widely varying origin and culture. The central characters of the novel are vividly pictured: a young American businessman Bill Wasserstein, his wife Marion – a French aristocrat, though progressive and cosmopolitan – a Russian beauty, Nadia Dashkova, secretly working for KGB, and a flamboyant Georgian ex-prince Shakro Karmeli. They make up a love quadrangle, with all the predictable sentiments and passions. They are presented against the background of a historical panorama. In fact, the Age, the Historical Epoch is the fifth central character of the book. Special focus is made on Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, at that time – aka the Fantastic City where diverse ethnic and artistic traditions meet. The novel provides a picture of Roaring 1920s and Modernism in America, in Russia and in Georgia. We meet artists, writers, intellectuals, KGB agents and occultists of the period: it is a re-reading of Georgian Modernism of the 1920s and the lively artistic scene in Tbilisi at that time. We also meet such historical figures as Minister of Foreign Affairs of USSR Litvinov, the notorious journalist and head of the NYT Moscow desk Walter Durante, spy and adventurer Yasha Blumkin, the maker of the KGB Lavrenti Beria, the occultist guru George Gurjief, etc. It was a critical era that saw the Sovietisation of Georgia, as the influence of the Bolsheviks grew and grew, and – by contrast – it is about the adventure-filled folklore of the people of the Georgian mountains, lives of city aesthetes and their artistic places.

“To say that Karumidze’s text can be read with pausing for breath is to say nothing: You can read it without pausing for breath and, at the same time, it is mixed with spontaneity and reflexion. Zurab Karumidze has shown himself to be a real writer. This is now more than an interesting experiment by a talented intellectual; this is real prose, which brilliantly reanimates the ‘high Bohemia’ of Georgian modernism.”

/ Z. Shatirishvili on *Caucasian Foxtrot* / literary critic / *Arili Literary Magazine* /

“The wildness of imagination and energy of mind sparkle and blaze on every page. This work is unique, though it may comprise several works. Its narrative dissemination, poetic intensities, erudite pyrotechnics overflow every form.”

/ I. Hassan on *Dagny or a Love Feast* / Emeritus Vilas Research Professor at the University of Wisconsin /

Zurab Karumidze in translation / Rights on Karumidze’s novel *Dagny or a Love Feast* have been sold to: Germany (Weidle Verlag, 2017); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014); Turkey (Dedalus Kitap, 2014).

Sample translations available in English and German.

Born in 1957, Zurab Karumidze graduated in English from Tbilisi State University and was awarded a PhD in 1984. He worked for years as a research associate for the Centre of 20th Century Literary Studies at Tbilisi State University. In 1994-95 he spent a period at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as a visiting Fulbright Scholar, studying post-modernist American meta-fiction. Zurab Karumidze has written highly acclaimed novels among them: *Caucasian Foxtrot* and *Jazzmine*, which gained instant success among Georgian readers. His book on the history of jazz music, *The Life of Jazz* won Literary Award SABA 2009. For several years he has been an international fellow of the Centre for Humanities at the Washington University in St. Louis. He has also worked for the International Foundation for Sustainable Development, and Open Society – Georgia Foundation. Currently he is a foreign policy adviser to the Government of Georgia.

Number of pages: 232

Published in: 2011 / Siesta Publishing House

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BESIK KHARANAULI

Epigraphs for Forgotten Dreams



Epigraphs for Forgotten Dreams is a philosophical novel with three protagonists: one between eight and ten years old, one between fourteen and fifteen and the author himself. The author perceives his fellow characters as others and not as aspects of his own childhood; through them he tries to recollect and feel youth's passions and aspirations. Another key character of the novel is Mother – a half-mythical, half-real image of a woman who is the only tie binding the three characters, as she gave birth to all three and sees them as the one child born to her. In life nothing flows continuously: the author revives his and other characters' native village, region, country, city and with these fragmental images builds a chain of events that leads to a final amalgamation of three protagonists. The eight-to-ten-year-old first started writing at the age of eight; his inspiration was the word 'confession'. The meaning of the word influenced him so deeply that he decided to confide his secrets to paper. The adolescent stopped writing his confessions on paper and began instead to switch between the real and invented worlds. In the village, where he lived, the only tradition that survived were making khinkali (a sort of ravioli) and herding cattle: all the rest had vanished or had been prohibited. Grandmothers whispered stories of ancient heroic deeds. And in every family there were three sacred words: Fear, Hunger and Wood. One fine day the adolescent, aiming to show his notebook of poems to a famous poet, decides to leave his native village and travel to the big city. He wants dramatic changes in his life: to be reborn, since his native village has become a cage for a teenager. He longs for some symbolic catastrophe to jolt him free from his predetermined course of life. But the city has become a real cage for actual writers, offering only inescapable loneliness and hopelessness. The author's spiritual metamorphosis occurs when one day the young boy and the adolescent both visit him and tell him that the huge wooden cross on the grave of their mother has fallen down. At this crucial point they all start to rebuild the mother's grave, looking for a sacred mythical place on a mountain peak called 'The Giants Playground.' The image of mother unites them and inspires the writer to see the universe as it is in reality, revealing the truth that a human being is born not alone, but as one being.

“Besik Kharanauli's *Epigraphs for Forgotten Dreams* is a biographical novel, but one which Hermann Hesse would have called 'the biography of the soul'. Despite its fragmentary nature, *Epigraphs for Forgotten Dreams* is one continuous paragraph, which readers themselves will put together and make whole from the mosaic fragments which the writer has put before them. In general, in the case of Besik Kharanauli's texts, nothing is ever given gratuitously: these texts demand of the reader participation, collaborative thinking.”

/ M. Tkeshelashvili, literary critic /

Besik Kharanauli in translation / Kharanauli's short stories and poems have been translated into German, Dutch, Italian, Czech, Hungarian, Russian, Bulgarian, French and published in several countries among them: Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015); Azerbaijan (ADK Publishing, 2015); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012); France (Quidam éditeur, 2010).

Sample translation available in English.

Born in 1939, Besik Kharanauli is an outstanding figure in Georgian literature, one of the most recognized contemporary poets, who has produced more than twenty poetry collections and two prose books *Epigraphs for Forgotten Dreams* and *Sixty Mounted Knights or the Book of Hyperboles and Metaphors*. He graduated from the Philology Department of Tbilisi State University. He worked in the literary magazine *Mnatobi* and was the director of the publishing house *Nakaduli*. Besik Kharanauli's untraditionally ironic and modernistic works were considered a novelty on the poetic scene of 20th century. Besik Kharanauli comes across as an innovator by nature, brisk, wise and eternally youthful, as someone who managed to survive Soviet pressure and has contributed to the post-Soviet era in Georgia. Even today his works have kept their relevance and actuality. He has been awarded a number of prestigious Georgian literary awards. He won Literary Award SABA 2015 for the Contribution to the Development of Georgian Literature. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature by the Georgian government.

Number of pages: 320

Published in: 2005 / Sulakauri Publishing House

Rights: Intelekti Publishers

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LADO KILASONIA

A Bronx Story, Told in Tbilisi's Golden-Quarter-Style



This book by Lado Kilasonia is a collection of stories, but even more fragments of one entire narrative, novel-like episodes. As the title suggests, these are stories of Tbilisi's 'Golden Quarter' district, and in them the characters and stories are probably real. They recur from story to story and tell a continuous narrative, one general history, one life – as lived on the streets, in a human way, over the years, divided into death and life. There is plenty of aggression in the book, but this is not the controlling element, but a different sort of force, which may turn out to be even greater, if a man shows this force in his own person and then passes it on to others. The times, however, give rise to injustice and evil, which the author calls the 'time of fatherlessness'. The heroes of the story give the same name to the grey 1990s, when Lado and lads of his generation were children. When a boy most needs a father is the time when their fathers are fighting in the civil war, or in Abkhazia, or in South Ossetia, if they haven't fled abroad to earn money, or aren't on drugs, or in prison. The stories told in this books begin in the past, when impressions were most acute, in childhood. Such a hero as Maro Bebo in *The Kerosene Fairytale* is at the same time evil and good. So are the other characters who, when they cannot find goodness in man's world, establish a connection with creatures of nature. But in the end, the book's overall atmosphere is 'Bronx and the Golden Quarter', or stories about lads, both good and bad – material for a film, if any director would like to concoct an appealing blockbuster about the unbearable lightness of the 1990s...

“The author chooses themes and things that he knows and which are close to him, yet are so much personally experienced and endured that the reader is almost a participant or a spectator of these stories, which the young writer tells us so succinctly and simply. Lado Kilasonia's narrative manner is direct and full of humour, at the same time this humour is good-natured and positive and unalloyed, the narration is dynamic and full of zest, so many feelings come over you that it seems to have happened before your own eyes. With your participation and shared feelings, the book's heroes become people very close to you, with their own weaknesses and amazing personal charm.”

/ P. Kushitashvili, literary critic /

“It is an unforgettable journey up a river: to the source, to the past of your own country; every bend in the river thrusts the heroes into a new ordeal. The narrative's free-ranging and masterful style is like that river and provides the reader with many pleasant surprises. ‘May the unbeliever not find me!’ This is an adventure novel written with rare craftsmanship.”

/ A. Kikodze, writer /

Lado Kilasonia in translation / Kilasonia's short stories have been translated into Russian, Polish and Lithuanian.

Born in 1985, Lado Kilasonia studied rugby in Durban, South Africa, at the Sharks Rugby Club academy. In 2007 he graduated from Tbilisi State University (diplomatic history). At the same time he was a trainer for Georgia's 19- to 20-year-old rugby players' team, and a member of Georgia's rugby development group and national academy. He was four times European champion as a player and as a trainer. At the same time, he wrote articles on rugby for various sports and general newspapers and magazines and has run the Hot Chocolate rugby blog. He has written seven books. His works are published from time to time in Georgian literary journals and newspapers. He was shortlisted for Literary Award SABA 2008-2014 and became winner of Guram Rchelishvili prize and Best Prose Work of the Year prize from the newspaper *Our Literature* in 2009 and 2011. In 2010 he won Prize in Literary Gazette's One-Story Competition.

Number of pages: 252

Published in: 2014 / Intelekti Publishers

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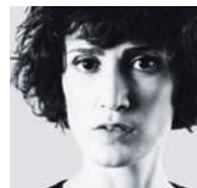
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NESTAN KVINIKADZE

The Nightingales of Isfahan



The Nightingales of Isfahan is a post-modern text, a novelistic narrative written like a single-take film, a short story about all of Georgia: it tells us about the lives and fates of the generations. The novel's main hero is an ornithologist Astamur who looks in various towns for the nightingales of Isfahan. Episodes from childhood form the novel's Leitmotiv, so that we learn that the main hero has not been able to tell which of twin brothers is which: Parviz, who is said to have died, or Astamur, who is said to be alive. The novel is intersected by the loss of something, then making sense of it, valuing it, confessing to it and finally finding it (in reality, or on a mystic level). These are the complex and contradictory paths by which the main characters achieve self-awareness. The new generation is split up and divided. One half cannot see the necessity of poetry in the chaos of a war and a country recovering from war: it does not recognise fleeing the country as a priority. The other half has chosen as its profession the smashing of stereotypes, has sold its property and is taking away from the homeland the knowledge which they will further elsewhere: their flight instinct gives them no peace. Astamur represents the generation which has fled the country to various other lands, without looking back. They have found refuge in a parallel world, but remain hostages to the past. The couple who have emigrated to Amsterdam seem, at first sight, to have settled comfortably in a foreign land, where meetings with émigrés and sharing a foreign culture is an interesting process, without letting them abandon a native Leitmotiv, which comes sometimes from letters written by a friend, sometimes imbued through memories. The novel has love, it has dashed hopes, it has loss of faith, but the writer doesn't depress her reader: she arouses her reader, who is tired and jaded by advertisements and superficial spectacles, to see beauty. The death of the other main hero, Tata (who falls victim to an incurable illness in early youth) is portrayed without any heart-rending pathos, so that the reader perceives death as a beautiful continuation of life. In the novel, the pain of mortality is overcome by the joy of faith in immortality. The 'Caucasian Alchemists' knew the secret of life; Astamur, too, subconsciously senses a kinship with those distant ancestors. His constant 'stargazing' is proof of this. The reason he does not marry Tata is that he is afraid of the mystery being 'diluted'. The novel awakens many associations in the reader's mind. With its 'flow of consciousness', using fragmentary and quasi-mythological symbols, *The Nightingales of Isfahan* shows a tendency to becoming a neo-mythological novel. The story, narrated kaleidoscopically in two cities, is in fact a digest of Georgia's recent past.

“This book brings together Nestan Kvinikadze's novels, tales and plays. But, although, this collection tells us all kinds of different things and combines characters, atmospheres, tonalities, sounds and colours, the reader's experience will always be that of one great, contrasting and often eccentric tragi-comic game played by the author. The stories in this book are sometimes unbearably realistic, sometimes, however, unexpectedly unreal.”

/ L. Bugadze, writer /

Nestan Kvinikadze in translation / Kvinikadze's works have been published in Germany (Theater der Zeit, 2015; Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 2013).

Sample translation available in German.

Born in 1980, Nestan Kvinikadze is a Georgian writer, scriptwriter and journalist. She graduated from the Shota Rustaveli State University of Film and Theatre (faculty of Cinema-Journalism). In 1998 she published the first volume of her short story collection *Unanimously*, at the age of 18. Since then she has written a number of film scripts and plays. Nestan Kvinikadze has also published several collections of prose, and three novels. Since 2006 she has been editor-in-chief of a monthly bilingual (Georgian-English) magazine *Focus*. In 2013 an extract from her novel *Techno of Jaguars* was translated into German and included in the anthology of contemporary Georgian women authors, *Techno der Jaguare* published by Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt. The title of the anthology was that of Kvinikadze's novel. Currently she works as the producer of a daily talk show *The Other Noon* on the TV channel *Rustavi 2*.

Number of pages: 388

Published in: 2015 / Books in Batumi

Rights: Books in Batumi

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ISBN 978 3 86044 430 0

ZURAB LEZHAVA

Child Takes a Bite from a Persimmon in the Month of October / Buy Our Souls



A Child Takes a Bite from a Persimmon in the Month of October is a collection of short stories and a short novel *Buy our Souls* – a naturalistic phantasmagoria. ‘If you are alone, if your fate is failure, if you happen to live somewhere where everybody is trying to escape, if you are surrounded by creatures just like you, and you still cannot find your own place among them, if the slightest change scares you, if you have surrendered to your past, to your present and, what’s more, to your future, then you are a happy man... you have a chance to see things that nobody has yet seen...’ These words are spoken by the protagonists but express the essence of almost all the characters created by Zurab Lezhava. Those words are attributed to a character sentenced for publicly raping a marble statue, a man who after leaving prison witnesses an extraordinary protest of statues; or the words may refer to a man who exchanges an old fridge for sex, or to a character who fearlessly faces danger in order to get Marilyn Monroe’s underwear to stop the Russian army’s invasion of Georgia.

The novel *Buy our Souls* describes a new modern world, very similar to the real one, where facts are absurd, people are surreal, the regime is chaotic and a man steps into the dangerous freedom but has no soul to embrace it. How would one feel given the possibility of seeing the devil himself at any minute? If he were suddenly to approach out of nowhere, with all his horns and teeth? If he were to show himself in every other person passing by? And worse of all, if he considered himself your friend? One day in one of Tbilisi’s jail houses, prisoners receive a proposal to sell their souls: for a bag of tea, for a pack of cigarettes, for milk and coffee. But Victor Nazradze, just an ordinary man, asks for freedom.

This unusual novel by Zurab Lezhava imbues an age-old plot with a very raw, naturalistic way of expression. Victor’s adventures, once out of prison, are filled with shocking images. He becomes a vagabond in the city of the Devil, where criminals and police are one and the same. Deciding he has nothing to lose, he settles upon a dangerous path to nowhere. Step by step he sees every legendary and unearthly creature. He marries a prostitute and discovers the ugly truth, washing his face in a magic spring at ‘Satan’s Ball.’ Accompanying the devil’s caravan, he even recognises the gates to hell: sewage tubes filled with excrement. Victor sees that the divine kingdom of Evil has no fairytale phantasmagoria. Instead, these supernatural matters are chaotically mixed into life’s troubles: poverty, filth, ugliness, criminality and solitude.

“This book is a cocktail. It mixes the prose of Charles Bukowski (whisky), Woody Allen (cream), Paul Auster (liqueur). If you add a bit of Venedikt Yerofeyev (acetone), Sergei Dovlatov (grappa) and the late Daniil Kharms (lemon), then, as far as taste is concerned, this what you will get. As far as music is concerned, it’s hard to say: when you read this book you are not reminded of Tom Waits’s songs, but you will have the timbre of Waits’s voice. The band is made up of prisoners from a gaol and instead of musical instruments, they accompany the singing with iron bowls, plates, pots and ladles, while the clip is directed simultaneously by Kusturica and the old Jarmusch.”

/ Z. Burchuladze, writer / *Tabula* magazine /

Zurab Lezhava in translation / Lezhava’s short stories have been translated and published in several anthologies: Azerbaijan (ADK Publishing, 2015); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012, 2011).

Sample translation available in German.

Born in 1960 in Tbilisi, Zurab Lezhava started working in a state-owned printing house soon after graduating the Georgian Technical College. In 1982 he was imprisoned for 16 years for resistance activities against the Soviet militia. As a result, that traumatising experience is often to be seen in his prose and is reflected in the intensity of his writings. Zurab Lezhava is a self-made artist, recently called the ‘Pirosmani of Georgian prose’ (after the legendary Georgian self-taught painter Niko Pirosmani). The writer with his naive style, his life experience and his acute literary sense takes the reader to something unique, Zurab Lezhava’s world, mesmerizing and sometimes even too horrible to imagine. Nowadays Zurab Lezhava, along with his successful writing career, earns his living making and selling decorative wooden statues. He has published five books. He won Literary Prize GALA 2010 in the category *The Best Book*.

Number of pages: 412

Published in: 2010

Sulakauri Publishing House

Rights: Sulakauri Publishing House

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TAMTA MELASHVILI

To the East



‘Where the pyramids stand in silence, when the sun is being married, I shall lie down on the sun-coloured sand, where the pyramids stand in silence, I shall want you, your eyes, your arms, your tenderness; who is the author of these lines? Who wrote 14 poems using the pseudonym of Elene Dariani? Was it the famous Georgian avant-garde poet Paolo Iashvili, or Elene Bakradze, the *femme mystère* who is suspected of being his secret lover? For a long time it was thought that the proud and erotic ‘Elene Dariani diaries’ were a poetic mystification by Paolo Iashvili, although, on the basis of archival material, another version appears in the 1990s, according to which the author of these poems was actually a genuine, existing, but unknown woman, Elene Bakradze. The heroine of Tamta Melashvili’s novel is a young woman, Irina. She is trying to solve the century-old mystery of Elene Dariani, although, her efforts, recently, have been more of an interpretation of her own personal life than a genuine search for the ‘truth’. In fact, Irina’s ‘search’ for the myth of Elene Dariani is determined by Irina’s wish, to take a century-old tense love story and merge it with her own life and use it to heal her own ‘failed love relationship.’ In the words of the critic Shota Iatashvili, ‘Irina who is depressed seems in a way to chose this topic in a mechanical way solely in order to address her own problems by researching this story, but she does everything in the most feeble way. The irksome monotony which imbues all this procedure is depicted in the novel by repetitive actions, by opening and closing her lap-top, by checking her email, by going into the kitchen and making tea, by telephoning her ex-lover when he least expects it and by the operator’s unvarying response: ‘the number which you have dialled is temporarily unavailable or is outside the range of service.’ On the one hand, the book is about a girl growing up in Georgia without love, a girl who is looking for love; on the other hand, it is about a woman who experienced the era of totalitarianism, whom history has tried to punish through love, by silence about it and by hushing up the real story. The novel’s characters are very much alive and modern. Tamta Melashvili is very good at creating character, and one of the merits of this novel is the interesting way characters are portrayed, which is, at the same time, a very good reflection of the times.

“War seen through teenagers’ eyes – just that theme is unusual in Georgian literature. But what is more noteworthy is the young woman writer’s style, the tempo of her text, which seems to be made up of verbatim direct speech. The dynamic dialogues, the short chapters and the rough slang of the adolescents make the novel *Counting Out* a breath-taking work.”

/ C. Eller on *Counting Out*/ *Spiegel* /

“In this absorbing and breath-taking prose time and place are unbounded. *Counting Out* is a very special debut. From a linguistic point of view, given the narrative’s radical style, the themes and the attitude, Tamta Melashvili reminds us of Agota Kristof.”

/ M. Ebel on *Counting Out* / *Tages-Anzeiger* /

Tamta Melashvili in translation / Rights on Melashvili’s novel *Counting Out* have been sold to: Macedonia (Shkupi, 2016); Croatia (Hena Com, 2015); Russia (Samokat, 2014); Switzerland (Unionsverlag, 2012). *A Killer’s Job* in: *Techno der Jaguare – Neue Erzählerinnen aus Georgien* in Germany, Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 2013, Germany.

Sample translation available in German.

Born in 1979 in Ambrolauri, Tamta Melashvili currently lives in Tbilisi and works as a researcher and teacher at Tbilisi State University. She is a feminist activist and has a background in Gender Studies (Central European University, Budapest). Her short stories first appeared online on literary websites and were later included in various anthologies of fiction. In 2010 Tamta Melashvili’s debut work *Counting Out* was published: it soon won success. The novel was acclaimed by critics as the work of ‘a new, highly distinctive voice’ and won the Literary Award SABA in 2011. The following year Tamta Melashvili’s work became known abroad and was nominated as one of the best ten in the 2012 Hotlist by *Die besten Bücher aus unabhängigen Verlagen* in Germany and won the *Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis 2013* in the young adult category. She has been shortlisted for Literary Award SABA 2016 in the category *The Best Novel for To the East*.

Number of pages: 126

Published in: 2015

Sulakauri Publishing House

Rights: Tamta Melashvili

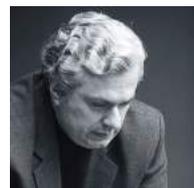
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GURAM ODISHARIA

The Black Sea Ocean (A collection of novels)



The collection of novels includes the author's four most acclaimed works: *The Black Sea Ocean*; *The President's Cat*; *Return to Sukhumi* and *The Cyclops Bomb*. *Returning to Sukhumi* is a semi-fictional-documentary novel. The tragic events of recent Georgian history, witnessed by the author himself, are depicted kaleidoscopeically, intertwining episodes before the war, during the war and after the war. The novel comprises 45 novellas, including the well-known *The Pass of the Persecuted*. In this novella the author describes episodes in the Georgian-Abkhazian armed conflict. He tells the reader how he crossed a high mountain pass together with tens of thousands of others fleeing their homes. The story is told in an emotional and brusque style; the short plots make the novel read like a film script.

The Cyclops Bomb is a novel dedicated to cameramen working in hot spots. The plot follows a journey by a cameraman who finds himself in various conflict zones. The stories and events unfolding in the novel are presented as a video camera would see them, as if on video tapes. The themes in the novel draw on reality. The author travels frequently to various regions of the Caucasus. He studies conflicts in the region and the lifestyles of people of various nationalities. The heroes of this novel seek a way to solve these problems, a way which may be partially revealed in the closing phrases of the book.

The main characters of *The Black Sea Ocean* are a journalist Zurab and a doctor Dea, who live in a town on the Black Sea, in Sukhumi. After the 1992-3 armed conflict in Abkhazia, they are forced to flee their native city, together with the ethnic Georgian population. After the war, Zurab and Dea live in Tbilisi. For various reasons they end up separating. One New Year's Eve, Zurab, who is celebrating New Year with a friend, happens to learn that Dea has died. He then slips away from the restaurant and heads for the coast in his car. Actually, the greater part of the novel is about Zurab's journey to the coast. All during the journey he recalls his best years spent with Dea, the terrible period of the war, and happy or sad events in the past. In short, the novel has many facets and many different aspects. It is a book about great love, about war and peace, hatred and sympathy, despair and hope. The novel's action is dynamic and make an immediate impression on the reader.

The President's Cat is virtually a book about one man, but basically this man is a kind of collective person, around whom a whole gallery of colourful personalities are gathered; the novel creates an impression with its humourous and warm stories about Sukhumi and Abkhazia, an impression that is half real, half mythical.

This is the first trail-blazing book about Sukhumi in the 1970s and 1980s. The characters in the book are real people. The book also contains maps and Guram Odisharia's typical interesting graphics.

“Guram Odisharia writes that in peace time only the loyal can feel love at its greatest, while the majority, unfortunately for us, need some serious troubles before they can open their eyes... and it is this ‘opening of eyes,’ or catharsis, to which the prose of this Sukhumi writer can be compared..”

/ G. Gvakharia, art critic / *Radio Liberty* /

Guram Odisharia in translation / Odisharia's novels have been translated into English, German, Russian, Ukrainian, Abkhaz, Turkish, Armenian, Italian languages and have been published in several countries among them: Russia (Kulturnaia Revolutsia, 2016); Armenia (Antares, 2016); Slovakia (Slovart, 2015); Ukraine (Anetta Antonenko Publishers, 2015); Germany (Reichert Verlag, 2015).

Sample translations available in English and German.

Born in 1951 in Sukhumi, Guram Odisharia is a Georgian poet and writer, formerly Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia. At various times he has been a correspondent for Abkhazian radio broadcasting, a reporter for the Abkhazian regional newspaper, a consultant to the Abkhazia Branch of Writers' Union, editor of the magazine *Ritsa* and director of the Abkhazia branch of Merani Publishing. Guram Odisharia spent the entire war-time period in Sukhumi, leaving his native city only on 27 September 1993 – the day that Sukhumi fell. Since then he has been active in the field of conflictology and has regularly participated in Georgian-Abkhaz peace talks. In 2008 in Seoul (South Korea), he was granted the status of Ambassador for Peace. His poetry and prose are greatly influenced by images of his native city Sukhumi. The play *The Sea Which is So Far Away* (based on the Odisharia's novel *The Black Sea Ocean*) was given an award as *The Best Play* of 2014.

Number of pages: 852

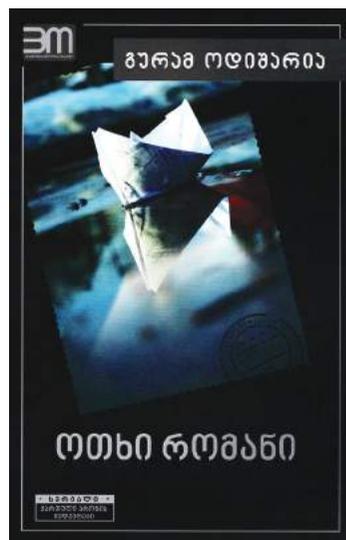
Published in: 2014

Bakmi Publishing House

Rights: Guram Odisharia

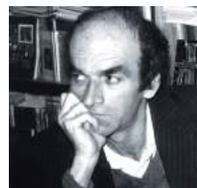
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SOSO PAICHADZE

Georgian Alternative Prose



Soso Paichadze's prose, in many aspects, is special, above all for dealing with and elaborating extraordinary moral problems, which is done by the use of original artistic and representational devices. Soso Paichadze is an architect of voluminous syntactical constructions. He tells us the strange adventures of his characters in extended sentences that are highly saturated with information. This is how he succeeds in bringing, as if simultaneously, into the reader's consciousness a number of contemporary phenomena or experiences, and together with them, sometimes, when necessary, things that have happened or are about to happen. The purpose of this narrative method must be to let us perceive the world, as far as possible, as something that cannot be divided up into separate phenomena, as a whole in which the past and the present cannot be separated – indivisible, inseparable and... hidden in fog. This is a fog which has the power of dimming the conscious mind and bringing to life the subconscious. A cool, magical fog, endowed with healing powers, capable of catharsis. Success in creating this atmosphere is also achieved by Soso Paichadze's characteristically spacious, if we can put it like that, epic similes, which are extremely idiosyncratic and acutely devised, giving the reader a complex, maximally precise idea of an experience: it is reliable proof of the great literary craftsmanship of the author of these stories. Soso Paichadze's prose is a literary reflection of the mysteriousness of the universe, which in today's mercenary world people's capacity to sense has been massively blunted. As a consequence, their life has become colourless and grim. These stories try to enhance our feeling for the mysteries of the world, so that we look at the world and our own selves with interest.

Soso Paichadze (1943-1994) studied history and philology at Batumi Pedagogical Institute, and then studied at the philology faculty of Tbilisi State University, graduating in 1965. At various times he worked as an assistant director in the Georgian Film studio; for many years he was deputy chief editor of the magazine Mnatobi. He began his literary career in 1969, when the newspaper Literary Georgia published his first article of literary criticism. His first short story appeared in 1970. In 1977 the Merani publishing house published his first collection of short stories The Last Substitute Player. In 1985 the writer's second collection appeared, in 1995 – his last book – Where did You Fall To? He won Georgian Writers' Union Prize 1990 for the story Warm, Magical Rain.

“Soso Paichadze's prose lies outside the framework of conventional, traditional prose. It deals with themes which previously went unnoticed or were by-passed, or were only implied by a subtext. In order to convey extraordinary, complex experiences which are hard to take in, naturally, it is necessary to create new artistic and representational methods. Complex syntax, complex and unusual associations, complex comparisons, complex composition are all characteristic of Soso Paichadze's stories. In short, he has to be classified as a 'difficult' writer. The one thing that is relatively simple in his work is the plot.”

/ L. Bregadze, literary critic /

“A lot of other pieces remind me of Michelangelo Antonioni's cinema work; one of his much-praised stories in particular, *Warm, Magical Rain*, has induced me to pass on this book to one of our famous film directors in the hope that he will want to make a film of it and, if he does, then I would not hesitate to write the script, if he entrusted it to me, of course.”

/ M. Mosulishvili, writer /

Soso Paichadze in translation / Paichadze's stories have been translated into Russian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Czech, German and Serbo-Croatian.

Number of pages: 489

Published in: 2016 /

Karchkhadze Publishing House

Rights: Karchkhadze Publishing House

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TAMRI PKHAKADZE

Kitchen Gardening in a War Zone



Kitchen Gardening in a War Zone was written in 2004 and very quickly became popular. It became more significant, because the author returned to her work and introduced into it the theme of the August 2008 war. Because of its acute relevance a play of this name is still being staged in Georgian theatres. Regardless of the specific situation, the work deals with a global problem, for it touches on phenomena that arise in any conflict zone and in the theme of war. The work tells us the story of two brothers. They leave their village on the banks of the Liakhvi river and go to the capital city. The elder brother, Robinson, is an agronomist by profession, and works on the greening of the city; the younger brother Zaliko tries to marry a city girl and very soon succeeds. Robinson feels more and more nostalgia for his native village. Zaliko begins to have bad headaches. He says that he has caught a strange and dreadful disease which can only be treated in America. Robinson is horrified. Very soon Zaliko and his wife fly to America for treatment. Although his village is now in an area wholly affected by the conflict that gets worse every day, Robinson is overcome more and more by a powerful, subconscious love of his native village. And so, one fine day, Robinson gets into a bus and sets off for his birthplace... Worried and excited, he approaches his own house and the curtain is lifted on a terrible secret: Zaliko has, without telling anyone, sold the house and land and used the money to fly to America... Robinson is horrified, but he consoles himself that it is for the sake of his brother's health... Suddenly there is a frightful surprise: Zaliko's first letter from America arrives, and Zaliko is confessing that he never was ill, that he simply emigrated to America and needed money for his initial expenses. Robinson is left utterly alone with his pain. Again, he rushes back to the village which has now become a war zone. It is then that a strange idea comes into Robinson's head. Close to his house, on a fallow meadow he lays out a small area for a kitchen garden and thus gets himself a piece of land which needs defending... It gives Robinson's life meaning. Once again he is in his village, keeping busy, ploughing and sowing, expecting a harvest and the enormous walnut tree that his grandfather planted seems to be standing again and rustling in his soul. The sound of weapons becomes more and more frequent. Women and children flee. Some men's resistance fails. The new owner of Robinson's house is wounded and is taken to hospital. He leaves his house and land for Robinson to defend. Robinson selflessly defends his kitchen garden, his former house, his heritage...

“Everyone ought to read this person's work, whatever their age. Everyone will find something for themselves in it... Tamri Pkhakadze has written a number of remarkable novels and stories... She has an amazing work, *Kitchen Gardening in a War Zone*. It is a wonder... When I read it I want to have lived there, in the village of Tamarasheni.”

/ G. Kiladze, critic / newspaper *Sakartvelos Respublika* /

“It is a long time since I have felt the breath of our land anywhere, in the way that Tamri Pkhakadze portrays it in *Kitchen Gardening in a War Zone*. The feeling is just like the recovery of somebody you love.”

/ M. Mosulishvili, writer / magazine *Literary Palitra* /

Sample translation of the novel CV available in German.

Born 1957 in Tbilisi, graduated from Tbilisi State University (philology faculty). Tamri Pkhakadze has a PhD in philology. From 1980 to 2006 she worked at the Institute of Georgian Literature; since 2011 she has been working for the publishing house Triasi as editor in chief. Since 2015 she has become a scriptwriter for the children's workshop Basti-Bubu. She has published three novels, three collections of prose, plays and up to fifteen children's books. Quite a few of her works have been staged in various theatres, among them *Kitchen Gardening in a War Zone*, which has been performed in four different cities. A film based on this work is planned. She has several times given readings to military units.

Number of pages: 56

Published in: 2010 / Shemetsneba Publishing Rights, Contact: Tamri Pkhakadze
tamri22@mail.ru



IRAKLI SAMSONADZE

The Cushion



The novel is set in the 1990s when the poverty-stricken country provides a whole class of bureaucrats obsessed with making money with a comfortable life. The protagonist is a writer who considers himself 'a respectable member of the society of has-beens.' He cannot adjust to or accept any ideology, because he has the ideology of an individual, the faith that only love can tell him who he is destined to be with. This novel, written in one continuous flow, is distinctly important, since it narrates an honestly and impartially described story of a recent sad reality. The novel's hero, a writer, has a wife, Ketino, and a boy, while his mother lives separately. He also has a friend called Vakho, a drug addict with whom he intends to set up a business, which is to keep himself and his family going. Things are bad in the land: destitution, no electricity, recent war, aggressors and refugees. An old schoolmate, Andro, comes to visit the writer and Vakho; Andro has a good life abroad and reproaches with bitter truths those who have stayed in Georgia. The writer and Vakho can no longer find anything in common with him. Even the church gives them no consolation. There, unfamiliar rituals, which have nothing to do with faith, have become normal and the church only obliges people to observe these rituals. The writer and his wife often have arguments about lack of money. After one of their regular quarrels, the writer leaves home and, together with Vakho, gets drunk with two whores, and depresses himself even more. Husband and wife are reconciled. At night, in their frozen bed, after conjugal relations, they play a sort of ball game using various letters of the alphabet. Thus they try to get through the winter and life in general. Meanwhile, Vakho proposes a lucrative idea: they should sell a kidney each. The writer becomes obsessed with the idea. They contact the crippled Nana who is in the business. Nana explains to them that if they agree, their kidneys will be sent to a Moscow laboratory and they will be paid 5,000 dollars each. But the deal turns out to be impossible and they keep their kidneys. Vakho's next idea is linked to the pre-election period: he suggests the writer should join a party. The party is interested in the writer as a personality. Vakho introduces him to an activist, who is a woman writer, using the pseudonym of Maksime. Here too, the writer fails to feel at ease. The project fails. Vakho decides to leave the country. The writer periodically tries to summon up the strength to write a story about a cushion which his mother gave his son as a gift.

Irakli Samsonadze is a writer who makes no concessions. Everything he writes is an artistic representation of a harsh reality and leaves a long-lasting impression on us. *The Cushion* concerns a people and a land suffering from the destruction of an empire. Its cruel realism is heartrending and melancholy. Every human experience in it is in focus, as if recalling a significant human experience of the recent past, and a detailed testimony of the flow of life. *The Cushion* is a creation out of chaos, it is the sadness of a society with both order and justice disintegrating. Irakli Samsonadze can definitely be considered one of the creators of Georgian neo-realism, because he has created honest and well-focussed texts about post-Soviet Georgia.'

/ E. Tskhadadze, literary critic / newspaper *24 Saati* /

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

Sample translations available in English and German.

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*.

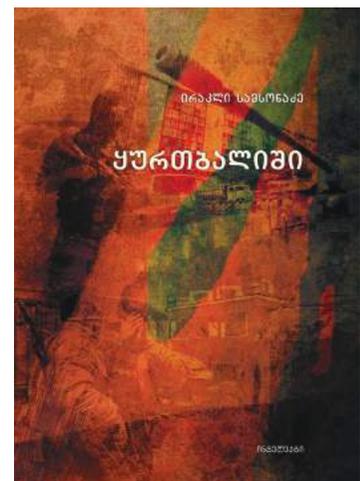
Number of pages: 136

Published in: 2004 / Arete Publishers

Rights: Intelekti Publishers

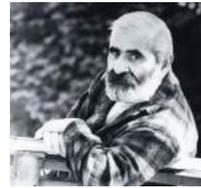
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NUGZAR SHATAIDZE

Journey to Africa



Both stories included in this book (*The Island* and *Journey to Africa*) are Nugzar Shataidze's well-known works and were an instant success from first publication; years later they became the basis for two extremely popular films.

In the novel *Journey to Africa* a young refugee Tedo and his mother flee war and ethnic cleansing in the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia, leaving his father behind. After arriving in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, the young boy encounters difficulties. He feels utterly alone in an alien city, and goes off to his native village to search for his father. The village isn't far, but the journey is difficult and dangerous, full of countless painful incidents, as well as rough living conditions. The 12-year-old boy, on his journey to lost dreams, homeland and his father, is forced to put on a thousand masks and tell countless lies, and undergo many ordeals. The journey involves the environment of the 1990s, the panorama of devastation and destruction, idle factories, rusting cars, railway sleepers, tracks, pipes senselessly scattered, deserted streets, huts blocking the pavements, hungry stray dogs, the choking smell of rubbish heaps and people rifling through them, muddy roads, deserted allotments and abandoned gardens, withered fields of grain – all described in a very graphic way. People who are right at the bottom are all around the main hero. Adolescents intoxicate themselves with acetone: they are hungry and cold. But they have an instinct for solidarity and standing together, even though they are all on their own, existing with nowhere to go, tramps, prostitutes, beggars. With 27 lari and a gold ring he has stolen from his mother, the boy goes to Abkhazia, a region more frightening than any other, as remote as Africa. He's not afraid, because he has been traveling to a place where he knew harmony between his parents. And here is their block of flats – a silent, deserted, derelict building with not a pane of glass left intact. This is the return of the Prodigal Son to emptiness, to a house with no father. The 'return' is described so clearly and so realistically that it becomes for us a symbolic picture of the Abkhaz armed conflict.

The sick father has married and gone away somewhere; there is no trace of him, and the last illusion is shattered. For some time his mother has belonged to someone else, and is also somewhere else, in very dubious company. All the boy has left is to return to his camp, to the lower depths from where he made a vain attempt to escape. He sniffs acetone glue so as to drown his grief with this popular, democratic drug.

“You think as you read: why is it so easy-going, healthy, earth-bound, understandable, firm, powerful, harsh? Without doubt, because of the element of language. He knows his language, he doesn't just have a command of it. It is impossible, he has a command of himself in the structure of the language. He is free in his depictions. He doesn't seek, he finds. He perceives. He recognises. He is a worshipper at the shrine of his forebears. He's a traditionalist. He is a defender of custom and tradition. He is an apologist for antiquity. At the same time, he is out of the ordinary, he is receptive of the new, he communes, he evaluates. Harsh and simple. That's how he appears, and that is how he was. His narrative style is the same.”

/ I. Amirkhanashvili, literary critic /

Nugzar Shataidze in translation / Shataidze's short stories have been published in several countries among them: Azerbaijan (ADK Publishing, 2015); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2012).

Sample translation available in English.

*Nugzar Shataidze (1944-2009) was a well-known Georgian writer, dramatist and scriptwriter. For years he was the chief prose editor at Merani Publishing and the magazine Omega. In 2009 the director Giorgi Ovashvili made a film *The Other Bank* based on Nugzar Shataidze's story: it was shown at international film festivals in over thirty countries and won the author the prize for Best Screenplay at the Gonfreville Film Festival (France). Cooperation between writer and director continued with the short story *The Island*, which later became an acclaimed film, *Corn Island*, directed by G. Ovashvili. The film was among nine films shortlisted for an Oscar 2015 in category the Best Foreign-Language Film. The writer's creative work is imbued with a particular pained empathy for his country and for mankind in general. There is almost no significant stage in the history of Georgia, especially that of the twentieth century, that has not received the author's attention.*

Number of pages: 146

Published in: 2014 / Intelekti Publishers

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NINO TARKHNISHVILI

Nino's Notes



Nino Tarkhnishvili writes social prose, enhanced with documentary features, full of naturalism, and brilliantly involves her contemporary audience in her world, illustrating facts and events happening in our epoch, in our city, just next door or thousands of miles away, from different perspectives. The author tries to depict reality in her own fictional way and to raise urgent issues as topics for further discussion. In her stories X always equals 3: mother, father and child create an eternal triangle, which often falls apart because of everyday troubles or the changing world around us. The collection encompasses stories which did not, or could not be included in the author's journalistic texts. These are attempts to bring together the author's notes written at various times, mostly as her personal Facebook statuses, which have had tremendous feedback from users. In her notes the readers may discover all kind of women, strong or weak, find out about the feelings of minorities, or about children with 47 chromosomes, or single mothers. The compilation is divided into four cycles according to themes: seven stories about human beings and writers; *Odes* – reflecting hardest social and mental issues in nowadays Georgia; *Behind the News* – the author's vision of catastrophes and political injustices in the modern world and *Nino's Notes* – personal notes about women.

'These stories are like no others. Or perhaps they do have some resemblance, for all I know. The characters in these tales don't exist, but they might do somewhere or other. Probably there is somewhere a man who has a beloved in Peking, a beloved who has hair like his wife's and even a knickers gusset turned yellow by urine. Or perhaps such a journalist doesn't exist. He may even be living in Kabul on the Street of Flowers, a Jew who has fallen in love with a woman of Kabul. But the woman has been blown up in a field of poppies mined by the Taliban. Or perhaps this Jew has already died. Probably somewhere a mother exists who cut the throat of her daughter's rabbit and then fed her his minced meat, just because she got bad marks in maths. Then the girl grew up, ate her mother and fed her flesh to her father. Or, for all I know, perhaps such people don't exist. Perhaps somewhere there is a woman who gave birth to the earth. Yes, she exists, I've seen such a woman, locked up in a psychiatric unit. Perhaps a god may exist who lives close to you, as a neighbour, who enjoys eating bread and fish in the evenings, tells stories and has a smoke... These are the characters in my tales. There are others, too. I'll tell you about them later. Every tale is based on a real story. A real story which I have made unreal,' says Nino Tarkhnishvili in an interview about her characters.

'Nino Tarkhnishvili skilfully imbues her miniature texts with huge poignancy and sends an relevant message to her readers, or to be precise, to the world, for her writings do not resemble texts created for readers; the 'reader's sector' or 'intellectual's sector' is less interesting for the author, she tries to reach to people outside closed circles and to address them directly about their misfortunes, pains, mistakes, injustices. And in attempting to do so, she is sometimes quite harsh, sometimes soft-hearted, sometimes passionate. These texts are her personal notes, where her whole nervous system pulses.'

/ Sh. Iatashvili, poet, literary critic / literary magazine *Saunje* /

Translation of short story *Luck, Fluck and Juck* available in German.

Born in 1979, Nino Tarkhnishvili is a Georgian writer and journalist. She graduated from Tbilisi State University with a degree in International Journalism. Seven years ago Nino Tarkhnishvili joined the team of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and since then has worked there as a reporter. Simultaneously, Nino leads an active writing career. Her second collection of short stories *Title on the 37th Page* evoked much controversy among Georgian readers and was praised as one of the most sincere, brave and appealing texts by new voices from Georgia. Nino Tarkhnishvili's long-awaited book *Nino's Notes* became an instant success on the day of publication and has been shortlisted (for second time) for Literary Award SABA 2016 in the category *The Best Prose Collection*. She won *Guram Rcheulishvili Literary Award 2011* for the essay *Ode to My Brothers and Sisters* and the *Lib.ge* contest for short story 2008 *On the Street of Flowers in Kabul*.

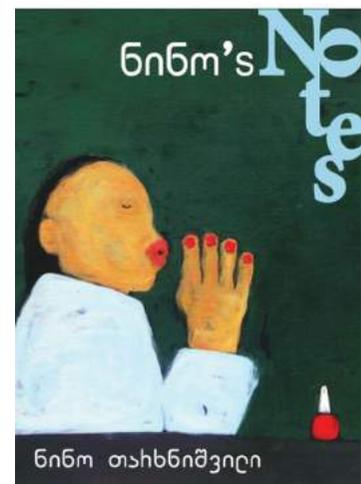
Number of pages: 142

Published in: 2015 / Intelekti Publishers

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JEMAL TOPURIDZE

Dioscuria is a City at the Bottom of the Sea



Jemal Topuridze is one of the most anti-totalitarian writers of the second half of the 20th century. He destroys stereotypes, harshly and unequivocally. Like or not, these stereotypes existed in our literature, and still exist. Two-dimensional characters, bureaucracy, a thousand different frameworks, censorship, the absence of any broad arena, all mean a tragic fate for anyone endowed with creative talent. Such people have developed a cynical attitude to what was going on, because their minds couldn't put up with the formalism, or the rules of the game of these 'ideological curtains', which a totalitarian regime imposed on them. These were the people who opposed the existing stereotypes and the characters of Jemal Topuridze's stories, like the author himself, are among them. The totalitarian regime virtually dictated to him, 'Write that we have a good life,' whereas his creative answer was, 'I shan't write lies, I'll write what I see and what I have experienced.' In many of his stories we see the environment of Tbilisi in full transparency. Every aspect of its language, characters, qualities, atmosphere appears. But a deeper layer is also important: the writer's attitude to his own characters, which is marked by pure sympathy and pain. In several stories he describes provincial life, and here we sense the characteristic pride of Georgian prose in this deeply patriarchal way of life, still untouched by the city's way of life. In Jemal Topuridze's final and most important work, *Dioscuria is a City at the Bottom of the Sea*, he seems to gather and merge the most significant aspects of his work and effortlessly hits the right tone for his narrative. The story's main character is the author himself. Willingly or not, every writer writes about himself, but there comes a time when the author's features coincide with those of the main character and the writer seems to be talking about everything at the same time. This 'everything' is deeply affected by the concrete reality of his own experiences in life. The main hero of the narrative, like the author, perishes tragically: in the book he falls under the wheels of a train; in life he was run over by a car. This was somehow a premonition of the writer's premature death.

“Jemal Topuridze is an extremely human writer. Notably, he knows that only sympathy is capable of saving his characters. The writer's own stance towards his characters is extremely individual. He has sympathy, he shows pain, subtle irony, but he also has something which is hard to put a hem to and which is not always noticeable. This is the desire to find the sense of existence. This desire subconsciously forms part of his characters and shows itself at extreme situations, such as complete self-sacrifice for a friend.”

/ A. Buachidze, writer, literary critic /

“The self-aware and self-confident ‘I’, the basis of whose activity is solely in a personal element, finds a definite theoretical shape and orientation in Jemal Topuridze's work, it admits the uniqueness of a person's qualities and echoes the democratic principles of western society, which have had a hand in creating psychological theories and schools.”

/ G. Arganashvili, writer, literary critic /

Jemal Topuridze in translation / Topuridze's stories have been translated into English, Russian and Spanish.

Sample translation available in English.

Jemal Topuridze (1947-1978) graduated from Tbilisi State University (geography and geology faculty). At various times he worked in the Georgian Academy of Sciences', Economic and Governance Institute and Institute of Georgian Literature. From 1974 on, his stories were published in the literary journals Mnatobi, Nobati, Tsiskari, the Georgian Union of Writers' newspaper Literary Georgia, etc. He won Georgian Writers' Union Prize 1978 for The Best Story of the Year.

Number of pages: 300

Published in: 2014 / Intelekti Publishers

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ZAZA TVARADZE

Words



Words was first published in the series *The Best Georgian Short Novels of All Time*. After that, the author extended his text and after his death the novel was published to be remembered by critics as one of the most important examples of Georgian post-modernism, in which the existence of ordinary people in Georgia over the last decades is portrayed to perfection. Two friends, Zaza (a psychology student) and Levan (working in the theatre as a literary consultant and studying at the directing faculty) establish an 'office of bliss' where the 'bliss experts' can provide everything that gives utter bliss. Their third friend, Guja, chooses a fairly traditional form of bliss, a beautiful young girl; but the main hero of the work, to everyone's surprise, doesn't choose any drug or other intoxicating (bliss-giving) substance: he chooses a jewel casket which contains living words. Levan reacts to these words with childish fear, in case they escape from the casket. But for Levan and Zaza, from now on, every word takes on a face, a smell, a body. For instance, the word 'me' is blood-coloured, fleshy and tremulous. Words can fly, swim and they become the main active force in the atmosphere. The novel's heroes begin to create new sentences and texts with these words. Zaza Tvaradze dedicated the novel to a deceased friend, Leviko Chqonia. This Levan is in fact the main hero, but the writer has managed at the same time to create the best self-portrait; Zaza as a character seems to take back-stage in the book, although in the dynamic course of the work, he in fact emerges as the main hero and from a virtual shadow comes the birth of the powerful writer, as a reality. He introduces us to a world full of magic, in which he spent his life from the treacherous 1990s, when 'the city coughed like a consumptive idiot whose teeth have fallen out.' *Words* is the outcome of the richest and most unbridled imagination; it is a book in which irony mixes with melancholy and which is built on dreams. The novel will be liked by the new generation of readers, those who are seeking something with a particular affinity to them in contemporary literature. It is because of the creation of this magical world that Zaza Tvaradze has established his permanent place in Georgian literature and that today, after his death, his 'silvery words' once more light up and rebound, as they did in the author's lifetime. Read the novel *Words* and you will understand what it means when words wordlessly submit to a writer.

“This novel really was like nothing else that I had read, and yet it was something that meant a lot to me: even though the novel contained elements, such as what we could call, on one hand, a jungle of words, on the other hand the utterly unbridled imagination of the novel's heroes, and so on – despite the so-called non-realistic aspects, the novel was very realistic and one of the best novels to portray Georgian reality in the 1990s.”

/ L. Shatberashvili, philosopher / *Radio Liberty* /

“There is no point recounting the plot of the novel. I'll just talk about the sphere of words, words which in the novel seem to emerge from the bottom of the sea, sometimes emitting the scent of honey, sometimes of almond milk, sometimes drifting along, bobbing up and down, while at other times fluttering like butterflies. They are like trees in blossom, yet every word in itself arouses some unique associations, and involves the author in a game, so that you are reminded by it of Plato's *Cratylus* dialogue.”

/ M. Kharbedia, writer, literary critic / *Radio Liberty* /

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

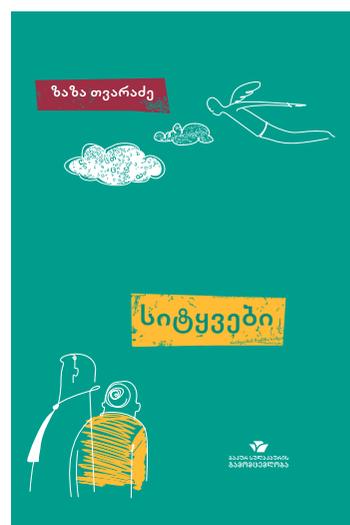
Number of pages: 280

Published in: 2009 / Sulakauri Publishing House

Rights: Sulakauri Publishing House

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RATI AMAGLOBELI

Collection of Poems



The collection of *Poems* includes selected verses from three different collections by the author: *Verb*, *The Circle* and *If*. At the time of publication each collection played a crucial role in Rati Amaglobeli's literary career and was regarded as a significant and influential poetic production by a young author on the contemporary Georgian Poetry scene. His poetry invariably rhymes and likes to play with the rules of the sonnet and of other forms of verses. He does not shy from archaic words, perfectly harmonised with very contemporary issues. He is extremely inventive in seeking forms for his poems, but the essence and idea are never less important. This collection includes his iconic poem *Sequentia* – or, as it is often called, *An Ode to the Alphabet*, in which all the letters of the alphabet are employed and woven into the fabric of the poem.

“Today, when poetry of a western type is becoming more or less standard poetry created according to oriental traditions may become a means of aesthetic renewal. Rati Amaglobeli is an example of such a stance. You can sense in his texts that he has read and experienced plenty of western literatures, but their form – ornamentation, archaicism (using mediaeval Georgian, approximate quotation, etc.), frequent alliteration, idiosyncratic versification, shows us the face of a poet of an oriental type.’

/ Sh. Iatashvili, poet, literary critic /

‘Rati Amaglobeli is the dervish of contemporary Georgian poetry. His sonorous poems have an incantatory feel. Mostly, the words swirl in a spiral around one or two sounds. Admittedly, this poet tries out the borderline between sound and meaning, but he never goes so far as to reduce a poem to mere sound.’

/ Ingrid Degraeve, translator / source: *Poetry International Rotterdam* /

Rati Amaglobeli in translation / Amaglobeli's poems have been published in several anthologies among them: UK (Arc Publications, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

LETTING YOU FREE

*I am letting you free... the world is vast, I am not frightening you –
Letting you free for you to be reborn under the sky and Sun.
Not pointing at you, but letting you free – I said, agate night
My lakes dried out, have no tears –
Letting you free without tears
I love you with every exhale, inhale, with naked
painful sleep, awake and I let you free on your
Only way, narrow way and it means
I am letting you free into your own depth and entrails.
Holy Mary returned home after Golgotha,
Crucifixion evening has faded away and probably
(Though not spoken, thought over or written)
She was arranging, cleaning things at night (...)*

Born in 1977, Rati Amaglobeli studied philosophy at Tbilisi State University. His debut poetry collection *Verb* became an instant success throughout the country. Rati is famous for his live performances, which have made him a star of contemporary poetry in Georgia and a welcome guest at various international literary festivals. In 2005-2010 Amaglobeli was the host of a literary programme ‘The History of Voices’ at the Georgian Public Broadcasting Radio. Later he worked as the editor of the popular journal *Hot Chocolate* and since 2011, he has been the president of Georgian Pen-Centre. He is cofounder of *Literary Avard SABA*. Despite his youth, the author's poetry seems to run counter to present tendencies. He also translated Goethe, Morgenstern, Nietzsche, Rilke, Tsvetaeva, Akhmatova and Brodsky into Georgian.

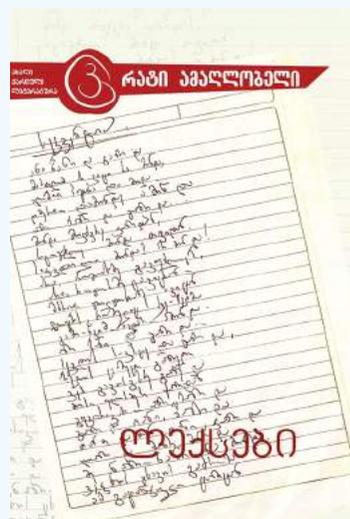
Number of pages: 312

Published in: 2011 / Palitra L Publishing

Rights: Rati Amaglobeli

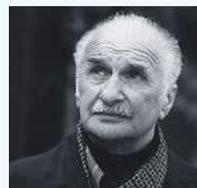
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TARIEL CHANTURIA

The Black Box of Love



The poetry which Tariel Chanturia has been writing for many years is a special phenomenon in Georgian literature. A distinguished poetic voice, a sharp-witted mind, a lightness which does not put up with irony or sarcasm have created an entirely new world that imbues readers with impressions and motivations for life which may have been hitherto alien to them. The author has at his command a great hermeneutic and informational knowledge, which is why he is able to manoeuvre freely in various strata of language and thus stage remarkable artistic and literary performances, mixing together various paradigms, contexts and texts. In his case, such linguistic devices take on the quality of something greater than language games, and they extend into definite forms of interplay of examples of ideas. An effective use of a limited lexical resource is typical of him, as is minimalism and the use of slang forms. Tariel Chanturia's poetry's universality is a result of the different layers in it: his work is meant for an intellectual reader and, at the same time, it is accessible to recipients of all sorts of background. This is poetry which is invariably up-to-date, young in attitude and full of soulfulness. This is why it is always attractive and interesting for people of any taste and any age.

“Tariel Chanturia is a striking figure in contemporary Georgian literature. Who is he? – a master of innovation, a virtuoso of paradoxes, the king of experimentation, a magician in rhyme, or an architect in rhythm? It is hard to say. His verse is hard to define, it slips out of your hands like a fish, and the more you study it, the more elusive it becomes. But one thing is certain: everything he creates is full of light and life, wit and humour.”

/ I. Amirkhanashvili, literary critic /

“It is as if the poet is faced with a gigantic lottery-ticket drum filled with words and objects that exist in space or in abstraction, paradigms and contexts. Tariel Chanturia picks out from it at random a few of these things and by using his unique talent and mastery manages to induce a chemical reaction between them and thus create a completely new, brilliant concept and combination: sounds with their echoes.”

/ L. Doreuli, literary critic /

Tariel Chanturia in translation / Chanturia's poems have been published in anthologies and magazines in several countries among them: Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

GOD THE GRANDMASTER

God is carrying out simultaneously
a session of games
On six and a half billion boards:
“The grandmaster has won
Every single game!”

The Neighbouring (a bad choice)

children are throwing snowballs at each other,
the adolescents are using mud

The Teachers

over the age of thirty-one
as far as your memory can keep it,

the softest prints
of our fingers raised for the lesson...

An Elderly Husband and Wife
raise each other's blood pressure,
then take each other's blood pressure!

The Next Day, After the Flood
at a Biblical breakfast
a dove sizzles on the fire, after
bringing an olive branch:
Mr Noah liked to have red wine
with his bird meat!..

/ Translation by Donald Rayfield /

Born in 1932, Tariel Chanturia graduated from Tbilisi State University (faculty of philology, department of journalism) in 1956. His first poetry collection *Fleeing* was published in 1964. When he appeared on the literary scene he attracted attention with his daring experiments, which were very much a form of *Fleeing*. He often uses irony, parody, paradox, grotesqueries and slang. His basic collections are *Swing* (1965), *Stone and War* (1967), *New Moon* (1970), *The Two* (1972), *Exhausted Serpentine* (1973), *The Year of the Gentle Sun* (1975), *A Year of Bliss* (1978), *Longer Poems* (1979), *Stresses and Words* (1980), *Selected Poetry* (1982), *Pacing Up and Down* (1993), *A Writer's Red Book* (1995), *Colchian Capriccio* (1998), *Year of Bliss 2* (2002), etc. He has also published collections of children's verse, critical essays, translations, etc. Tariel Chanturia won Shota Rustaveli State Prize.

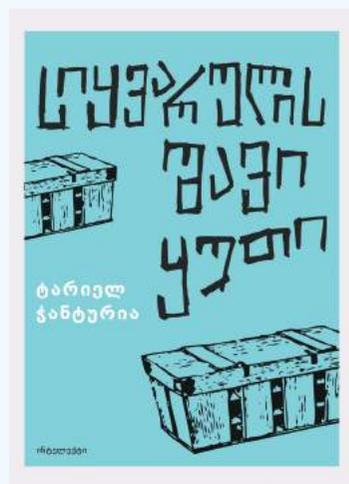
Number of pages: 204

Published in: 2016 / Intelekti Publishers

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SHOTA IATASHVILI

The Bitterness of Poetic Experiences



Normally, poets achieve what is called their personal poetic voice, their individual style by a long period of work, by trying out a variety of paths and devices. But in the case of Shota Iatashvili, everything happened very differently: from the very start of his creative path, at the beginning of the 1990s, he sensed and decided on the image, the model of his poetry for which he should strive in the years that followed. As time passed he would return to this model and in the intervals he searches for paths that will lead to it, various different, sometimes mutually exclusive paths, for every time he has to meet demands from different sides. Shota Iatashvili manages to write about everything: about money, an electrical plug, a cigarette-lighter, a blood-pressure machine, clothes, tinned sea cabbage... This is what is most characteristic of his texts: admitting that poetry is like an arena for confession and profession. He will often simply tell you something, then take back what he has said, retrieve the question and leave you wondering. Shota Iatashvili's poems are characterised by a narrative style of humour and always saturated with a paradoxical way of looking at things.

“His latest collection is like an ordinary, and at the same time an extraordinary diary, which, because of its many themes, can be of interest to everyone – from a ‘Neanderthal’ who is furious with poetry, to a poetry gourmet.”

/ L. Kodlashvili, literary critic /

“For me, Shota is wandering poetry. If you were to ask what sort of poetry it is, I'd say it's, you know, Iatashviliian. Do you know what it reminds me of? Van Gogh's sunflowers, which seem to be swaying. That's what his poetry is to me. Every joint and every bone of his is elegant, as if made of rubber. Do you know what his poetry is like? He seems to be sitting among friends and chatting to them, or he's sitting quite alone and talking. That's what his poems are.”

/ R. Kaishauri, poet /

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 (Krok, 2016); UK (Arc Publications, 2016); Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2015; Pop Verlag, 2015); Russia (OGI, 2014); Netherlands (Poëzie Centrum, 2010); Azerbaijan (Mütercim, 2009).

ON HOW A CITY GETS PUBLISHED EACH DAY

They start working at dawn,
the proofreaders and city stylists.
They mow the lawns,
paint the
facades of buildings,
reconnect broken cables,
read the streets line by line
like professionals:
this dog should not be here, let's take it off;
let's add a newsstand between these two trees,
and down there, at the end of the street
a trash can should be placed but
let's change the street name.
Right there we need to correlate a super-

market with its original text –
citations from American life,
those the city just recently approved.
Frankly, many tasks wait to be done,
but not out of weakness.
Every morning there's a steady diligence;
they stick their noses in the dusty volumes and
do their never-ending jobs:
replace the street tiles,
re-paint billboards in accordance
with each holiday,
hang the street signs
and, finally, bring this stylistically corrected
city to the Night Editor for publishing.

/ Translation by Timothy Kercher /

Born in 1966, Shota Iatashvili is a poet, fiction writer, translator and art critic. He has published a significant number of poetry collections, four works of prose and a book of literary criticism. In 2007 and 2011 he won Literary Award SABA and in 2009 International Poetry Award KIEVSKIE LAVRY (Ukraine). Currently, he is editor-in-chief of the literary journal *Akhali Saunje* and leads the Library rubric at *Radio Liberty*. Shota Iatashvili has taken part in numerous international literary festivals such as EST-OUEST (Die, France, 2006), Poetry International (Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2007), SOTZIA (Tallinn, Estonia, 2008), BIPVAL (Val-de-Marne, France, 2011), Time of Poets (Lublin, Poland, 2012), 'Kievskie Lavry' (Kiev, Ukraine, 2009, 2016), Xichang-Qionghai Silk Road International Poetry week (Xichang, China, 2016) etc.

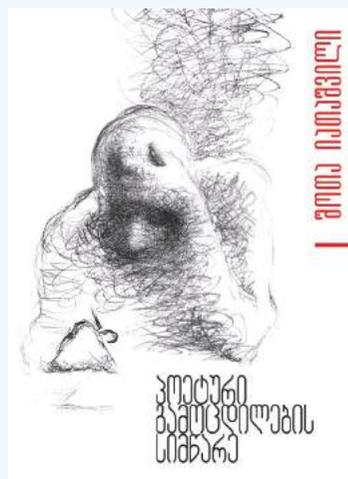
Number of pages: 102

Published in: 2015 / Intelekti Publishers

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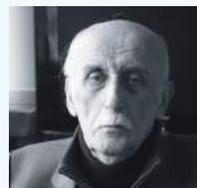
Contact: Gvantsa Jobava

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VAKHTANG JAVAKHADZE

100 Poems



Vakhtang Javakhadze has made a very important contribution to the development of contemporary artistic thinking and poetic culture. Most of his poems are like an intimate conversation with the reader: sharing an idea or asking thought-provoking questions. The poet's peculiar quality is that he not only shares his thinking and experiences with us, but brings us into his 'laboratory' too and makes us take an immediate part in seeking the appropriate form for these thoughts and experiences. He seeks for new means of embodying them, he wants to work out where the limit to the possibility of poetic expression lies and he uses, in order to communicate what he 'has to say', graphic devices as well as elements of everyday prose.

'When Vakhtang Javakhadze first published his poems, his readers had the impression he was a mature writer, as if his mastery was effortless, achieved without toil or exertion. His style was instantly recognizable because he would spin his lyrical imagery around an unexpected poetic idea, the coil being complex and easy, thoughtful and alert at the same time.'

/ D. Tserediani, poet, translator /

'Vakhtang Javakhadze is one of those writers who defines the level not just of poetry, but of modern literature. If we make an effort, we want to become participants in a European poetic process and we say that for this we have sufficient strength, among those who make this evaluation is Vakhtang Javakhadze. He is an eternal seeker, and that is why his work's depth and novelty always seizes our attention.'

/ R. Chkheidze, writer, literary critic /

Vakhtang Javakhadze in translation / Javakhadze's poems have been published in several anthologies and magazines among them: Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

TO THE TRANSLATORS OF MY POEM

*Dear sponsor, if you wish, change the rhythm.
If you wish, change the metre too, twice or thrice.
If you wish, simplify the complex rhymes, too.
Don't avoid alliteration, either.
If you need to, break off the line at the beginning.
Decode the metaphor, too, it doesn't matter, it can take it.
Don't imitate syntactical similarities and matches,
Take a free comparative view of comparisons,
Don't keep count of subtexts and abbreviation signs,
Don't preserve every example of inversion.
Don't search for appropriate slang and epithets,
Avoid reproducing the exact intonation.
Don't pursue the accent or the pauses,
You may refrain from emphasizing some refrains.
You may occasionally sacrifice a hyperbole,
There's no need for every subtitle.
Leave out, when you come across them, exact adjectives,
Leave out a stanza and leave out a line.
Leave them out forty times, leave them out sixty times...
But don't omit my name and surname!*

/ Translation by Donald Rayfield /

Born 1932 in Kutaisi, Vakhtang Javakhadze graduated from the Georgian Philology Department of Tbilisi State University in 1956. He started working as an editor in the publishing house Sakhelgami. Since 1980 he has been the Chief Editor of the publishing house Sakartvelo. He began writing poetry while still at school. He has published the following books: Beloved Winds (1959), Rain-Washed Street (1962), A Thousand Suns (1968), The Seventh (1974), The Heron Triangle (1978), Comparison (1980), And So On (1983), My Regards to the Sea (1988), I'll Tell You (1989), 2002 Lines (2002), Vakhtanguri (2012) and The Unknown (1988, 2002, 2007, 2013).

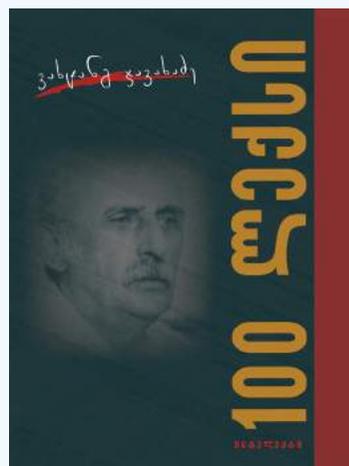
Number of pages: 204

Published in: 2008 / Intelekti Publishers

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GIORGI LOBZHANIDZE

A Teacher of Arabic



The author, in spite of his questing nature, does not apply any cutting-edge experimental poetic means: he keeps to his general creative direction. His attitude to life, with its brutality and its beauty, is expressed by sad characteristic touches, fused with ironical, sometimes even parodied features. A rich vocabulary, deep poetic thinking and intellectual experience all together creates his poetry, which at first sight is modest but at the same time deep, multi-coloured, varied and contemporary, free from any pathetic elements. It has the ability to charm and involve the reader, for his verses are the best reflection of the spirit of our epoch. Giorgi Lobzhanidze's poems can rarely be broken down into parts. It is hard to select lines, to quote him, because we would generally be breaking up a narrative. The narrative is either about a person's life story, or about the views, ideas, perceptions which the author himself has and which he is then busy proving in one way or another. He rarely 'throws out' a short explanation or a neat metaphor. The book is a re-evaluation of the author's own work, a work in which the material and the imagined worlds coexist and come to reveal each other.

“In his time, John Keats pointed out precisely that the imagination was a sphere by which reality found aesthetic significance: ‘The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream – he awoke and found it truth.’ It is by this sort of phenomenon that we can define many cases of Giorgi Lobzhanidze's poetry where the everyday is poeticised or the romantic is found in the unromantic: a prosaic family drama becomes poetry, ordinary things are presented to us under an extraordinary veil, a parody of the conventions of love lyrics or the suicide of a Shahid woman and a terrorist act are transformed into an uplifting aesthetic representation of love.”

/ G. Lomidze, literary critic /

“Giorgi Lobzhanidze is ordered and consistent, and his work has changed a great deal recently. His thinking has become more radical. If earlier he was inclined to be decorative in an oriental way, recently he has discovered a different sort of intensity. It may be that *A Teacher of Arabic* which he wrote a few years ago, or a poem saturated with love, but trust me, after that period his poems have become even more radical and ‘anti-politically correct’. Nevertheless, I should stress that this is not the first case of youthful radicalism summoned up by enthusiasm; it is the protest of a poet who has reached maturity.”

/ Sh. Iatashvili, poet, literary critic /

Giorgi Lobzhanidze in translation / Lobzhanidze's poems have been published in several anthologies among them: Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

SHAHADA

*Kiss me bitterly,
we will not exist in the morning;
both of us will carry out our task,
we will be scattered on opposite ends
of this large city
and never again manage to reunite,
we will rise skyward like smoke,
we will be scattered around,
and who knows,*

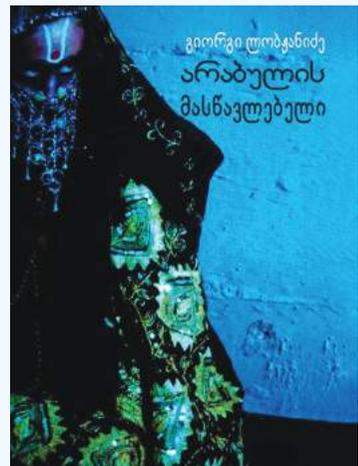
*maybe we'll never meet again...
Kiss me bitterly right on the lips,
consider my whole body with your tongue,
don't rush this,
don't leave a single un-kissed feature,
a single rib,
because tomorrow this body will turn to dust
and the wind will take these eyes... (...)*

/ Translation by Ana Kopalani
and Timothy Kercher /

Born in 1974, Giorgi Lobzhanidze is a Georgian poet, translator and orientalist. After graduating Tbilisi State University (faculty of oriental studies, Arabic language and literature) he taught at the Department of Semiotic Studies of the State University. In 1997 he went to Iran at the University of Tehran (faculty of theology) to work on his PhD research project in Religion and Mysticism and defended dissertation on the topic 'Jesus and Virgin Mary in the Qur'an'. He is head of the Oriental department at the Centre for Georgia's Cultural Relations 'Caucasian House' and head of the Centre of Islamic Culture. Today Giorgi Lobzhanidze is regarded as one of a new generation of distinguished translators, a man who has not abandoned established traditions of translating oriental literature into Georgian and who has brilliantly translated influential works of the Oriental world. Giorgi Lobzhanidze himself is the author of five poetry collections.

Number of pages: 132

Published in: 2013 / Saunje Publishing
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GAGA NAKHUTSRISHVILI

Strophe



The poetry collection *Strophe* includes 60 poems. The whole collection is divided according to style, mood and form into six cycles: *Without Title*, *Summer Nights*, *Strophe*, *Old Fashion Vers Libres*, *Vers Libres of Dreams*, *Vers Libres with Rhymes*. Each cycle or chapter consists of ten verses. *Strophe* allows us to discover Gaga Nakhutsrishvili's real poetic voice: into his idealised poetic topics, he always manages to fuse some lightness and irony, to match content perfectly with the rhymes and accents and thus give his verses a unique characteristic. Short phrases, unexpected turns, a little sadness and a little irony create a very individual phantasmagoric reality.

“I would say that here the naiveties and complaints are somewhat excessive. There is a sort of sad simplicity in which the mood becomes grave, and then begins to show flashes of light. The author is not seeking anything extraordinary; quite the contrary, what we come across is something familiar. For that reason, personally, on reading this book, I have been crossing from the author's rails onto my own rails and remembering things from my own life, then I have again been returning to the author's rails..”

/ Sh. Iatashvili, poet, literary critic /

“Gaga Nakhutsrishvili seems to me to be the last Romantic in our absolutely pragmatic world. And I think that today romanticism is especially significant. People are living their own lives, moving about, keeping busy; some are tired of it. Some are ill-tempered, some are angry. This isn't poetic reality. But deep down inside this there is poetry. Simply, not everybody can see it. That is why poets exist.”

/ R. Kartvelishvili, writer /

Gaga Nakhutsrishvili in translation / Nakhutsrishvili's poems have been translated into French, Slovenian, German, English and published in several anthologies among them: UK (Arc Publications, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

Born in 1971, Gaga Nakhutsrishvili graduated from Tbilisi State University, majoring in history. Later he studied at the Rothenburg Goethe Institute, Germany and took classes in literature in Perugia, Italy. He is the author of numerous poetry collections; some of his poems, translated into Slovenian, appeared in the book *Dnevi Poezije in Vina, Medana* and in *Goriška Brda* in early 2000s. Gaga Nakhutsrishvili is co-author of well-known marionette play *Mouu*, which was staged in the Sardapi Theatre in Tbilisi. Gaga Nakhutsrishvili is regarded as one of the most productive poets of his generation: he actively publishes new works and continues to surprise the reader with his sincere, unexpected and on the same time rich poetic language and images. Gaga Nakhutsrishvili still works as a lecturer at the Ilia State University, Tbilisi. Gaga Nakhutsrishvili received Literary Award SABA 2003 in the category *The Best Poetry Collection for Departure and Expectations*.

Number of pages: 66

Published in: 2013 / Siesta Publishing Rights, Contact: Gaga Nakhutsrishvili g.nakhutsrishvili@gmail.com

THE EARTH UPSIDE DOWN

I don't denounce or defy anything
And whom can I seduce with a word,
Where is the axis, give me the axis
To turn the Earth upside down.
To not change anything,
I have already drunk what there
was to drink,
To not fall in love with anyone,
To just look at the empty sky.
I don't disclose anything, nor judge,
I don't want to defame anything,
I sit alone in my cozy house
And the cozy evening is settling outside.
I don't empty or refill anything,
And I'm not the first or the last,
Who was inventing foolish tales,

Who believed in magical birds.
I don't denounce or defy anything,
And do not wish to tempt myself,
Where's the axis gone, give me the axis,
To turn the Earth upside down.

/ Translation by David Gabunia
and Maia Nakhutsrishvili /



ZVIAD RATIANI

Only You are Allowed



Only You are Allowed is Zviad Ratiani's sixth collection of poetry. He is a very bold poet in form and content, not afraid to experiment with well established Georgian poetic forms and, using traditional forms, always seeking his own new way of writing. Often for Ratiani the main point is the whole image, what he wants to depict with his words and not the word itself and therefore his verses always give readers' imagination an opportunity to reinterpret them. Zviad Ratiani is a poet who has always successfully written poetry that follows convention as well as free verse. Both bear his personal, sole and integrated signature. But this collection is entirely in free verse. This collection also contains minimalist poetry, a truly surprising aspect for his work. It is true that the 1990s are the characteristic period for Ratiani's work, but his output cannot be entirely consigned to the 1990s. It can be elsewhere. The poetry of the 1990s is rougher, harsher, somehow simple in its conception, whereas Zviad Ratiani's poetry is more intimate, and sometimes softer and, above all, complex, distinguished by the wider horizon of his view.

“In every poem by Zviad, one can find a melancholy, but a different sort of melancholy, which never tries to evade or escape. It is like standing at the seashore, observing a huge approaching wave, when you start to realise that there is no place to escape to, that the end is inevitable and the only thing you can do is just to stay and enjoy the beauty of your last seconds before this wave engulfs everything around.”

/ Sh. Gagarin, poet /

“Zviad always walked a tightrope, not he boundary of conventional and free verse. In the collection *Only You are Allowed* we finally see Zviad Ratiani freed. I can say without reservation that Zviad Ratiani has amazing talent to create a personalised intimate world around him and, naturally, he is the only person to whom we can link the renewal of Georgian poetry, who has brought a new word; I feel that this book will be the start of something new.”

/ P. Shamugia, poet /

Zviad Ratiani in translation / Ratiani's poems have been translated into English, German, French, Russian, Azerbaijani, Ukrainian, Latvian languages and published in several anthologies among them: Germany (Corvinius Presse, 2015; Pop Verlag, 2015).

SHAVING

(to my own face in the mirror)

Don't be afraid:
I'll never recognize myself
in you.
This drop of blood
blossoming on lather
Will never bring us together—
Don't be afraid.
Don't be afraid:

I'll never cross over your flat surface;
I'll never peel you off the mirror glass;
I can't even recall your features.

I'll never allow myself to notice your
imperfections
in fear that you'll become confused each
time
you match your smile with mine.
Don't be afraid:
We won't grow old together.

/ Translation by Timothy Kercher /

Born in 1971, Zviad Ratiani is a poet and translator. Ratiani has been a contributor on the Georgian literary publishing scene since 1992. He has published six poetry collections and has at the same time worked intensively on translations of English and German poetry. Among his numerous translations Zviad Ratiani has introduced to Georgian readers such major work as the poetry of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Lowell, Rainer-Maria Rilke, Derek Walcott, Mark Strand and Paul Celan: for Celan Ratiani received the Goethe Institute Prize in 1999. He won several prizes and awards, among them LITERA Prize 2016 (Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the Writer's House of Georgia) for his last poetry collection *Only You Are Allowed* and Literary Award SABA 2010 for the *Negative Film*. Both times in the category *The Best Collection of the Year*.

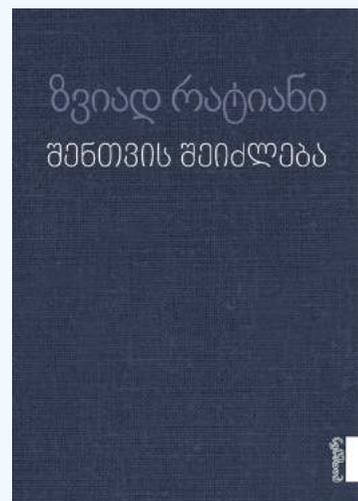
Number of pages: 60

Published in: 2015 / Diogene Publishers

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MAIA SARISHVILI

Microscope



Maia Sarishvili writes short, evocative verses that cover everything in one breath. The author deals with everyday subjects by referring to concrete objects and actions, and thus her poetry seems like a catalogue of the madness of everyday life, observed through a microscope. The main leitmotif of the collection can be said to be the phenomenon of children – an eternal curse and blessing. Often, the protagonist is presented as a mother and a child simultaneously, namely a woman who is still surrounded by her own childhood reflections and has to deal with the responsibility of motherhood and at that same time the symbol of a child turns into a punishment and an unbearable burden. Maia Sarishvili brilliantly manages to overturn traditionally established concept of motherhood, and suggests some poetic inversion. Generally, such harsh sensitive reflections are unfamiliar to Georgian poetry and it is very significant that female author manages to revolt against those traditional stereotypes and demolish them with her unique literary sense and voice. Maia Sarishvili's work is suffused with images that, because of their directness, physicality and psychological force, have introduced a new sound into Georgian poetry.

“Her poems are like Rilke's *Duino Elegies*. Somehow self-sufficient, and somehow something is always happening inside them. Whenever I touch them, whenever I read them over and over again, something else is happening inside me each time. Her poems are naked, containing so much naked feeling and sense, but on the other hand, so much intelligence.”

/ Z. Ratiani, poet /

“In her depiction of every event, object and action Maia Sarishvili wraps reality into a linguistic membrane. Her poetic world gives the means to stop and think. For Maia Sarishvili reality, outside the bounds of poetry, would be like a path on which life would fly past at an unimaginable speed. By means of poetry, however, the poet subdues reality in her verses. This blazes a trail through the tensions of everyday life and chaos.”

/ I. Degraeve, translator /

Maia Sarishvili in translation / Sarishvili's poems have been translated into many languages and published in several anthologies among them: UK (Arc Publications, 2016; Boutle Publishing, 2016); Sweden (Collection of Maia Sarishvili's poems, Smockadoll Förlag, 2015); Germany (Corvinus Presse, 2015); Russia (OGI, 2014); Netherlands (Poëzie Centrum, 2010).

NOW, THE STORM HAS ARRANGED THE INSANE

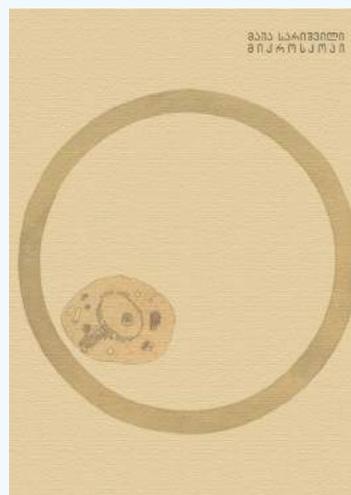
Now, the storm has arranged the insane,
set down a different order.
Those at the end are children, like rhymes.
A lunatic poem started as a protest.
My smile is thrown down
like a wounded wing – clumsy me –
I can't lift it, can't grip it.
A crowd tramples my lips –
it gets worse in the throng's midst.
I look up – drops like mini-megaphones.
I chase them down and to each one,

read my poems.
It's odd. Not a single drop lingers with me.
And I remember the sticky stage
in a packed-out house where, once upon a
time as a child,
I foolishly rose when my mother was dying
and clumsily climbed up on the table
to make God better hear my prayers...

/ Translation by Timothy Kercher and
Nene Giorgadze /

Born in 1968, Maia Sarishvili studied pedagogy and currently teaches at a primary school. A mother of four children, surprises audiences with her new sound in Georgian poetry, displaying a realistic and concrete touch that she refashions in her spiritual search for the nature and power of woman. Maia Sarishvili has published poetry collections and radio plays for children. Her radio play *Three Buckets of Snow* won a prize for the best radio play in 1997 at a Georgian-German radio-play competition. Her work has appeared in *Crazy Horse*, *Versal*, *Quiddity*, *Nashville Review*, *Asheville Review*, *Plume*, *Guernica* and other publications. She has taken part in numerous international festivals, including *Poetry International* (Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2007), *SOTZIA* (Tallinn, Estonia, 2008), *Poetry Parnassus* (London, UK, 2011) and was invited to Portugal, to a translators' seminar, where her poems were translated into Portuguese (*Casa de Mateus*, 2007). Maia Sarishvili won Literary Award SABA 2008 in the category *The Best Poetry Collection for Microscope*.

Number of pages: 80
Published in: 2007 / Link Publishing
Rights: Maia Sarishvili
Contact: Ingrid Degraeve
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PAATA SHAMUGIA

Schizosociety



Fond of experimenting with language, always seeking fresh metaphors, neat epithets, broad hyperboles and all-embracing allegories, Paata Shamugia is a master, skilfully mixing the comical with the tragic. Readers will find out more about his style and imagery when they read the present collection and become paid-up members of Schizosociety.

Philosophical themes come into his poems in a way that lets one understand how deeply the author has gone into them and thus manages to endow these themes with artistic life. For certain theses of historical thinking and for representation and re-actualisation in the field of contemporary artistic and linguistic concepts, the author often resorts to stylistic methods of parody and falsification.

Despite the uproar which Paata Shamugia's books periodically provoke, this book is fundamentally different from the output of other shock poets, and the difference lies in the depth of his dependence on reality, and his attitude's fundamental divergence from the shock poets. For him shock is an instrument for discovery, and something which may be found in the history of literature. Or Paata Shamugia considers shock from the point of view of a man standing apart, not as a shock artist himself.

“For me Paata is – I don't want to use the word project – but he is a project. He continues as he began, and he is moving by a geometrical progression, upwards. For now, in his poetry I can detect no sign of calming down or allying into anything, or, let's say, a reduction in his emphasis. It isn't like a cardiogram which goes up and down, up and down: it increases.”

/ E. Kevanishvili, poet /

“It can really be said that Paata is a reader's poet, that his poetry is addressed to somebody: I can recognise the people for whom Paata Shamugia's prayers, exegeses and poetic precepts are written, as well as his so-called philosophical poems so full of bitter irony.”

/ M. Kharbedia, writer, literary critic /

Paata Shamugia in translation / Shamugia's poems have been translated into English, Russian, French, Turkish, German and published in several anthologies among them: Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

WHY DO I WRITE?

*I often ask this question
I never have the answer though
And always when I have no answer
I write.*

*Thus, I write because I have no answer:
This could be an answer on this question -
An oblique stone thrown
Into the garden of the questioner and the
answerer simultaneously*

*I hope the next poem of mine
Will start with a description
of a beautiful landscape
Infants tottering in the green mall
Calmness*

*Totality of calmness
I will let a cute dog
Into the poem for more effectiveness
(It's a common symbol of devotion,
And after all, influences positive emotions)*

*And the poem will be doomed to be an answer,
To be as trusty as an eyewitness*

*The evidence I shall give shall be the poetry
The whole poetry and nothing but the poetry*

*But when still asked:
Why do I keep writing?
I fearfully stare at the humpback abyss
Between the question mark and my body.*

/ Translation by Nino Gagua /

Born in 1983, in Abkhazia (Georgia), Paata Shamugia graduated from Tbilisi State University (faculty of philology). His book *Anti-Tqaosani* (a wordplay on the famous Georgian medieval epic poem *The Knight in Panther's Skin*) provoked much controversy and for several months was widely discussed in the Georgian press and TV, as it was boldly taking issue with the country's most prominent literary text. In 2011 Paata Shamugia received Literary Award SABA in the category *The Best Poetry Collection* for his *Akathistos*. In 2012 the art magazine *Hot Chocolate* named him *Person of the Year*. Currently he works as an editor for the magazine *Liberali* and writes reviews and critical essays. Since 2011 Paata Shamugia has been a member and web-editor of Georgian Pen Centre. His poetry collection *Schizosociety* won another Literary Award SABA 2014 and thus made Paata Shamugia the first contemporary poet in Georgia to win twice this prestigious award in the same category.

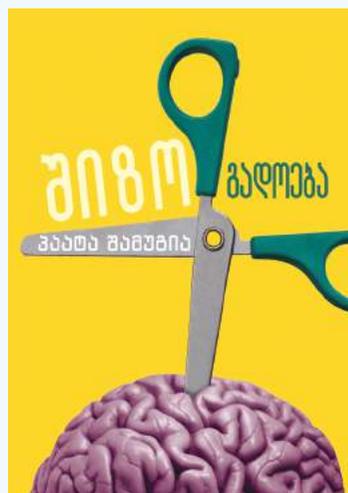
Number of pages: 96

Published in: 2014 / Intelekti Publishers

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LIA STURUA

Selected Poems



Lia Sturua made her entry into Georgian poetry showing a mastery of free verse, which has its origins in our early hymnography, and she has become organically and inseparably a Georgian poet. But to achieve this has only become possible after great poetic persistence and undeserved criticism. Many have accused her of choosing blindly to imitate foreigners and letting her desire to appear original determine what she writes. The structure behind all her world, however, is extraordinary metaphor; another reason why Lia Sturua has been criticised. But unlike ideological reproaches, these have been somewhat belated 'aesthetic' rebukes. The main virtue of Sturua's poetry is that it is so utterly sincerely written, that even the most far-fetched metaphor is perceived by the reader to be natural. Today she is seen as a monolithic figure in Georgian literary space, and her influence on the development of Georgian poetry is now undeniable. We should note that Lia Sturua is also a great craftswoman in conventional forms. The most striking example is a cycle of sonnets, which is also included in her selected poems. The distinguishing feature of this cycle is that it faithfully keeps to the form of the classical sonnet, but aesthetically we can identify these sonnets as 'modern sonnets'.

'Voices from Lia Sturua's poems create what we might call a Landscape of Sounds, which can be regarded as the basis of Lia's poetry. At first sight, her poems show disoriented rhyme and free verse, but for me, personally, it is the internal freedom of her verse which is crucial, which defines the person who is living in this verse, actually entrapped in this verse'...

/ O. Chiladze, writer /

'My delight at Lia Sturua's sonnets does not mean at all that I am indifferent to her free verse. Quite the contrary, it has for a long time aroused my constant interest. Quite frankly, the power of her imagery and metaphors is so full of content that it is enough for an entire film, and very often I am filled with joy and envy.'

/ R. Esadze, film director, poet /

Lia Sturua in translation / Sturua's poems have been translated into German, French, English, Finnish and published in several anthologies among them: UK (Boutle Publishers, 2016); Germany (Pop Verlag, 2015).

WILL ANY MAN BELIEVE

*Will any man believe
I am pregnant with the sea,
Or that such tremendous volume is possible
to fertilize in an ordinary bed?
Such panic
when I attempt to give birth to a couple
of waves!
Who will be willing to murder them?
What spot will they drive a nail into?
I think about it
under the command of a tear,
salt eating up my bitten finger nails,
what bitterness!
I will force myself to put on airs
after I become lighter by one sea,
I, who walk on the bottom
out of depression
with algae-hair*

*and with such an active tongue
it will strangle if it wraps around neck.
Nobody has ever seen my aggression!
But what about children, or that man
who spared the last fire for me,
for whom I'm grateful and in return give the sea!
I made him realize this!
Just as the aquarium with just a few
glasses of water thinks about the ocean,
I got him to see
the huge and predatory spaces
leaving fear of myself
along with the possibility
of giving birth to sea waves
even from my heart
directly, on the surgery table.*

*/ Translation by Dalila Gogia
and Timothy Kercher /*

*Born in 1939, Lia Sturua graduated from Tbilisi State University's philology faculty. In 1974 she defended her PhD thesis on 'The Artistic Function of Colour in Galaktion Tabidze's Poetry'. She delivered lectures at the University and at the same time was a senior research-worker at Shota Rustaveli Institute for Georgian Literature. Since 1999 she has been a literature consultant at Galaktion Tabidze Museum. Her first collection of poems *Trees in the City* was published in 1962, followed by other twelve books. As well as poetry, Lia Sturua has published a number of fine prose collections including: *Happy Silence, Stone Dropped in Milk, What Ate the Vine?* (a novel of perceptions). In addition she has published essays and articles. In 1997 a Norwegian television company made a film about her. Lia Sturua won many awards and literary prizes among them: Literary Award SABA 2013 in the category *The Best Poetry Collection*.*

Number of pages: 496

Published in: 2013 / Diogene Publishers

Rights: Diogene Publishers

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'THE TURBULENT NOVEL FROM GEORGIA'

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

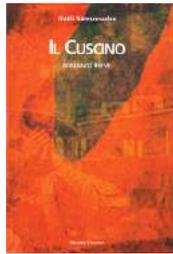


LASHA BUGADZE
Literature Express

Translated into German
by Nino Haratischwili
Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt
Germany / 2016

'ATTRACTIVE IMAGE OF TIFLIS AND ITS INHABITANTS'

Frankfurter Allgemeine



IRAKLI SAMSONADZE
The Cushion

Translated into Italian
by Ketevan Charkviani
Palombi & Partner S.r.l.
Italy / 2015



ANNA KORDZAIA-SAMADASHVILI
Who Killed Chaika?

Translated into German
by Sybilla Heinze
Verlag Hans Schiler
Germany / 2016



GEORGIAN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Translated into Spanish
by Pablo Duarte Sánchez
Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura
Mexico / 2015

'ORIGINAL TEXTS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH DAILY AND DARING TOPICS'

Tidningen Kulturen

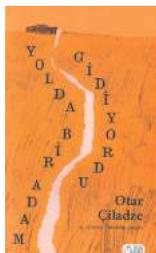


LIA LIQOKELI
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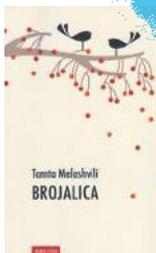
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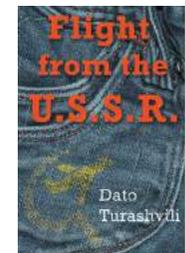
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