

A conceptual image where a hand holds a book. The book's cover features a lush forest scene with tall evergreen trees and a path. Above the book, numerous birds are shown in flight against a light, hazy sky. A bright sunburst or lens flare effect emanates from behind the book, creating a sense of light and hope. The overall composition is layered and artistic, with a warm, golden-brown color palette.

# BOOKS FROM GEORGIA 2018/2019

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BOOKS  
FROM  
GEORGIA  
~~2018/2019~~



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

## SANTA ESPERANZA

Like Milorad Pavić, his favourite writer Aka 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. Santa Esperanza can be read in any order as a book has an unusual format for a novel.

Santa Esperanza is a multi-cultural country stretched on small islands lost somewhere in the middle of the Black Sea. The islands are inhabited by the Georgians, the Genoese (descendants of the Black Sea settlers), the Turks and the British. The islands are often visited by tourists, who essentially view the place as an earthly Paradise. However, there are occasional tourists who take a closer look at the distinct and singular culture, as well as the traditions turned into taboos.

This literary crackerjack transports the reader into a world that is sometimes ironically droll, sometimes slightly melancholy but always fascinating – the imaginary Santa Esperanza Islands. From countless fragments – love stories, messages in bottles, fairy tales, myths and sagas, ancient chronicles, emails and newspaper articles – a gaily coloured cosmos emerges. Santa Esperanza is a melting pot of very varied peoples: in the course of history Georgians, Genoese, Ottomans and finally the British have left their mark on the three wondrous islands. Those who remained there have evolved their own traditions, laws and customs in order to cunningly defy the constant stream of conquerors who seek to overrun their beloved patch of earth.

Imaginative, funny, sad and absurd – countless mosaic pieces combine to form a wonderful epic that describes what happens in every age and every place when old systems of dominion fall and social structures crumble. The novel Santa Esperanza was published twice in German language, in 2006 by Pendo Publishing (Switzerland) and in 2018 by Mitteldeutscher Verlag (Germany).



Full translation available in German.

# AKA MORCHILADZE

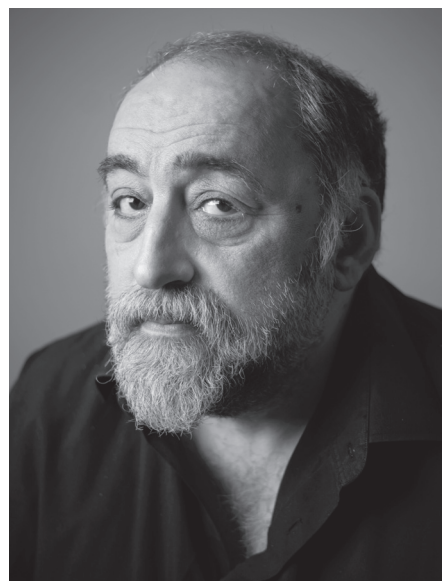


Photo © Nata Sopromadze

Born 1966 in Tbilisi, Aka Morchiladze is arguably the most outstanding and widely recognised talented writer of contemporary Georgian literary fiction. He studied and later taught Georgian History at Tbilisi State University; he has worked as a sports journalist on a sports daily newspaper. Since 1998, the Sulakauri Publishing has published more than twenty novels and three collections of short stories of Aka Morchiladze. 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. Aka Morchiladze has won numerous literary prizes in Georgia.

**Number of pages:** 765

**Published in:** 2004 / Sulakauri Publishing

**Rights:** Sulakauri Publishing

**Contact:** Mikheil Tsikhelashvili

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Aka Morchiladze in translation / Rights on Morchiladze's novels have been sold in several countries among them: Germany (Weidle Verlag, 2018; Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2018); Ukraine (Calvaria Publishing, 2018); Croatia (Hena.com2018); Italy (Del Vecchio Editore, 2016); Serbia (Dereta, 2016); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); Bulgaria (Arka Publishing, 2015); Macedonia (Antolog Books Dooel, 2015); Egypt (Al Kotob Khan, 2015, 2017); Albania (Shkupi Publishing, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014, 2012); Sweden (Publishing House 2244, 2013); Azerbaijan (Alatoran, 2013); Switzerland (Pendo, 2006).

**'The tragic, crazy, brightly colored chronicle of a fantasy archipelago.'** /S. Zekri, critic/



# MISHA BAKHSOLIANI



Born 1984 in Rustavi, Misha Bakhsoliani studied the history of culture at Tbilisi State University. At first, he wrote verse, although to the Georgian reader he is better known for his stories. He has written two books: *Everyone Loves Mari* published by Diogene Publishing, 2010 and shortlisted by SABA Literary Award and *The Budapest Snack Bar* which was published in 2017 by the Books in Batumi Publishing. Misha Bakhsoliani works in advertising and is the senior copywriter in the Holmes and Watson advertising agency.

'A reaction so natural is provoked in literature only by naturally inborn humour. It seems to me that it is impossible to invent this if you don't see, if you don't feel and don't relate, not in stories, but in reality, if you don't believe.' /E. Kevanishvili, poet, journalist/

## THE BUDAPEST SNACK BAR

Misha Bakhsoliani, it can be said, is the Georgian Tarantino. There is a lot of aggression, a lot of blood, scenes of violence in his stories, yet at the same time a lot of humour, sarcasm and, yet, romanticism. He depicts characters and situations comically. Often even poetically. In these stories (*The Budapest Snack Bar* consists of nineteen stories) reality and fiction, Georgia in the 1990s and post-apocalyptic Georgia, are all mixed together. The author likes to unfold his stories in provincial industrial towns, in a nameless, downtrodden environment. Often he sweeps aside all permissible boundaries in these stories. He switches between narrative portals and invents completely extraordinary characters: ancient Hitites who have invented television, or patients exhibited in museums as they are about to die. But whatever he writes about, however weird or grim the theme may be, a fleeting smile constantly flashes through his texts. It can be said, that Misha Bakhsoliani is one of the most distinct voices in the new generation of Georgian prose writers.

Number of pages: 254

Published in: 2017 / Books in Batumi Publishing

Rights: Books in Batumi Publishing

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'I occasionally need books which make me laugh out loud, freely, voluntarily when I read them, at times when you can't hold out, when you don't give a penny for anything that's happening outside – for example, people in the metro, a bus which you've missed, a suddenly caught stern look in a silent office where everyone has their head buried in their computer, then you read something like this, like Misha Bakhsoliani's kind of texts, and you clutch your belly with your hands.' /E. Kevanishvili, poet, journalist/



'Bugadze has a talent for humorously described scenes and a sense of absurd.' /Tagesspiegel/

## THE LITTLE COUNTRY

Based on a true story, the novel is narrated by the author-protagonist, whose short story was demanded to be banned by the parliament in 2002 and who was almost excommunicated by the Orthodox Church of Georgia. At the turn of the new century the country is headed by the aging Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Foreign Minister of the USSR and now the President of independent Georgia. The main demand is to change the government, which entails total changes – in a way the change of government is assumed to carry the power to change destiny itself. The author-protagonist publishes a story in a literary magazine of modest circulation. The satirical story is about the legendary queen Tamar of the 13th century, or rather about her unfortunate marriage to Yuri, the Russian prince, who demonstrated inappropriate habits at their wedding night, absolutely unfit for a royal descendant. Several months later, some MPs demanded that the author should be punished, insisting on introduction of censorship. In their opinion, the young author had insulted the national history and stained the name of the most revered queen.

If in the beginning the scandal seemed somewhat entertaining for the 23-year old author, his girlfriend and friends, later on it became rather tedious, even oppressive. Politicians and media got actively involved in the scandal, using it to manipulate the public opinion, applying various methods at their disposal.

Ultimately, the novel is about the period of change and aspirations for changes, or about the illusion that political changes can influence the national mentality and set of values. By the same token, it is about fear and anarchy, about search for new identity and phobia of losing the old one, politics and politicians, revolution and the war between Georgia and Russia, religion that is used as a propaganda tool to manipulate the society in the post-Soviet countries, about the confrontation between the Western and the Soviet values. Above all, the novel deals with love, ethical principles and the freedom of expression.



**Number of pages: 501**

**Published in: 2017 / Sulakauri Publishing**

**Rights: Sulakauri Publishing**

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Lasha Bugadze in translation /Rights on Bugadze's novels have been sold in several countries among them: Germany (Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 2018, 2017, 2016); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014, 2013, 2012); France (éditions l'Espace d'un instant, 2015); Egypt (Al Kotob Khan, 2015); Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA (Dalkey Archive Press, 2014); Sweden (Tranan, 2013); Netherlands (Flemish-Dutch House deBuren, 2011).

Full translation available in German.

# LASHA BUGADZE



Photo @ Nata Sopromadze

Born in 1977 in Tbilisi, Lasha Bugadze is the author of numerous novels and plays which have been performed in many European cities. Bugadze focuses his critical and ironic attention on relationships between the generations, and describes situations in which people fall victim to their prejudices, fixed ideas or stereotypes. He won the Russia and Caucasus Region category of the BBC International Radio Playwriting Competition in 2007 and one of the two top prizes in 2011 for his play *The Navigator*. Bugadze is a writer and presenter of literary programs broadcast on TV and radio. He is also a gifted cartoonist. His two novels published in Germany by Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt was translated by famous Georgian author Nino Haratishvili. Lasha Bugadze's works have been translated into: English, German, Spanish, Swedish, French and Arabian and other languages.

**'The book is written with Lasha Bugadze's usual sarcasm, in a satirical genre, but here, just as in other works by him, the comic episodes and passages hide a great sadness, problems and pain.' /K. Devdariani, script writer, TV journalist/**

# OTAR CHILADZE

'Otar Chiladze puts the history of his homeland in the message in a bottle.' /Die Zeit/

## THE BASKET



Otar Chiladze (1933-2009) was a Georgian writer who played a prominent role in the resurrection of the Georgian prose in the post-Stalin era. His novels characteristically fuse Sumerian and Hellenic mythology with the predicaments of a modern Georgian intellectual. Otar Chiladze was born in Signaghi, a small town in Kakheti, the easternmost province of Georgia. He graduated from Tbilisi State University with a degree in journalism in 1956. His works, primarily poetry, first appeared in the 1950s. At the same time, Chiladze engaged in literary journalism, working for leading literary magazines in Tbilisi. He gained popularity with his series of lengthy, atmospheric novels, such as *A Man Was Going Down the Road, Everyone That Findeth Me, Avelum* and others. Otar Chiladze who became a Georgian classic author during his lifetime was awarded some Highest State Prizes of Georgia and in 1998 was nominated for the Nobel Prize along with five other writers. Otar Chiladze received Literary Award SABA 2004 in category the Best Novel for *Basket*, Ilia Chavchavadze State Prize 1997 for Artistic Work, The State Prize of Georgia 1993 for his Contribution to the Georgian Literature and Shota Rustaveli State Prize 1983 for *The Iron Theatre*.

**'Intoxicating psycho gram of Georgian soul. Associations, changing narrative voices, dreams and visions: *The Basket* is a virtuously narrated epic about Georgia under Russian reign - and at the same time the furious chronicle of a power-obsessed family dynasty that has determined the destiny of the country for many years.'** /C. Wüllenkemper, critic/

*The Basket* is a Saga-novel, overtly portraying 'empire of evil', its consequences and a long journey of Georgian society and culture. The story begins at the end of the 19th century when a Russian officer seduces a Georgian shepherd's wife: the resulting bastard, the ancestor of the novels anti-heroes, is kept in a basket where he cannot interfere with his mother's adultery. The shepherd avenges himself by murdering his wife and disemboweling himself, but fails to kill the boy in the basket. The boy, Razhden Kasheli, later rapes his foster-mother, before disappearing to become a robber and murderer, returning to Georgia with the Red Army and a female tramp he has married: he becomes a killer for the Soviet authorities. After he is murdered by a drunken Assyrian, his son Anton acts as a GPU and NKVD killer in the Great Terror of 1937-8, shooting countless victims. Anton's great achievement is to marry Princess Ketusi, whose father and husband he has murdered, thus initiating the process, fatal for Georgian society, of intermarrying and interbreeding Soviet killers with Georgian aristocrats and intellectuals. Anton is killed by a runaway truck in 1949, but his son Razhden 2nd takes over as an important Soviet official. Razhden's son Anton 2nd may not, however, be a real Kasheli, since his mother Pepe was pregnant before the parents married. Anton is a childish dreamer and, manipulated by Razhden 2nd, marries Liziko, the daughter of an unworldly writer, Elizbar. Razhden seduces Liziko: both Anton and Elizbar find out after Liziko confesses to her stepmother. More important even than these violent sexual and homicidal events are the author's and character's reflections on the irrecoverable degradation of the country. Otar Chiladze's last novel is a virtuoso depiction of a time image of his country, which is in a state of difficult change, and which first has to find itself after it has left the empire.

**Number of pages: 352**

**Published in: 2011 / Arete Publishing**

**Rights: Tamar Chiladze**

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Otar Chiladze in translation / Rights on Chiladze's books have been sold to several countries among them: Germany [Matthes & Seitz Berlin, two novels, 2018, Volk und Welt, 1998, 1988, 1983]; Russia [Kulturnaia Revolucia, 2016; Azbuka, 2003, 2000; Hudojestvennaia literatura, 1988, Radouga, 1987, 1986; Moscow, 1987; Sovetski Pisatel', 1988, 1985, 1984, 1981, 1978]; Azerbaijan [Alatoran, 2016]; Macedonia [Ikona, 2015]; Turkey [Aylak Adam Kultur Sanat Yayincilik, 2015]; Armenia [Antares, two novels, 2015]; UK [Garnett Press, 2013, 2012]; France [Albin Michel, 1994]; Estonia [Eesti Raamat, 1992, 1986, 1984]; Lithuania [Vaga, 1986]; Hungary [Magveto, 1983]; Czechoslovakia [Odeon, 1984]; Slovakia [Tatran, 1984; Sloven. spisovatel, 1980]; Ukraine [Jovten, 1977; Radianskii pismenik, 1968]; Uzbekistan [Adabiet na Saniat Nashrieti, 1973]; Luxembourg [Luxemburger Wort, 1973].



Full translation available in German.



'Whatever fate lies in store for this book, it will in any case remain a significant work and will without doubt resist the passage of time, and this young author from a small country, despite many obstacles and linguistic barriers, is becoming part of European literature and culture.' /W. Minela, critic/

## PERSONAL CHRIST

Nostalgic, destructive and apocalyptic events and moods alternate in the new book of Teona Dolenjashvili. Four stories that at first seem to be not at all connected, merge into one space while reading and in this space, anything that the human nature has been granted since the beginning of the time can happen.

Longing for countryside idyll, areas deserted and trampled by progress and nihilism; terrorism and security services that are completely helpless against it and that can end up destroying innocent people's lives in restless search for criminals; Humankind in expectation of the end of the world and a woman whose dream to have a child is doomed to be rejected by her husband, society and legislation. You will come across these and some other stories (and demons) in Teona Dolenjashvili's texts that tend to have intense plots and unexpected endings.

Teona Dolenjashvili has left her mark on the Georgian reader also with the story *Fidai*, or *Amina from Three to Five*. This acclaimed story describing the last two hours of a Shahida's life was nominated for the PRIZ EUROPE in category the Best Radio Drama/Fiction in Berlin.

Teona Dolenjashvili is the author of a number of novels, among them *Memphis*, in which the ageing and enfeebled heart of the western world. A young artist, a girl, who fled Tbilisi in the 1990s to go to Europe, finds the author gives us a succinct picture of herself in a civilized, brilliant environment which is at the same time a space concealed behind a façade of strength, and the main hero of the novel becomes a victim of the will of Memphis's false gods.



**Number of pages: 184**

**Published in: 2018 / Intelekti Publishing**

**Rights: Intelekti Publishing**

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Teona Dolenjashvili in translation / Rights on Dolenjashvili's novel *Memphis* have been sold to Italy (Edizioni Centro Culturale Studi Storici, 2015); Short stories by Dolenjashvili have been published in: Mexico (Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2015); USA [Dalkey Archive Press, 2014].

# TEONA DOLENJASHVILI



Born 1977 graduated from Journalism and Filmmaking Department of the Tbilisi State University. For several years she worked at Georgian Television as a feature broadcasting director and author. Her first book, the short story collection *January River*, was published in 2005 and the following year was awarded the literature prize SABA for the Best Debut of the Year. Apart from writing, Teona has worked for various private and State establishments as a Society Communications Manager. She has participated in various literature projects including Goethe Institute, joint literary events with German, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Azeri colleagues. In 2009 Teona Dolenjashvili was again awarded Literary Award SABA. Her short stories are translated into German, English, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Slovak and Azeri languages and have been published in various literature collections of the above mentioned countries.

'Teona Dolenjashvili's collection of stories is constructed in such a way that it forms a single work and can be read as a novel. It is also an amazingly cinematographic text, so that I would recommend a film director to read it.' /L. Bugadze, writer, TV journalist/

# GIA EDZGVERADZE

'Gia has always been able to use subversive technologies in a very precise and natural way. This is a book which I'll come back to again and again. Perhaps some would say that it is merely an artist's critique or an artist's philosophy. I would reply that Gia's art is of a true philosopher.' /D. Andriadze, art critic/

## PARTISANS' STRATEGIES FOR A ROUGH LANDSCAPE



Born 1953 in Tbilisi, Gia Edzveradze is a visual artist, sound/music performer, writer, art-event organizer. Since 1988 artist moved to the West and had solo-shows: at Venice Biennale, Tate Gallery (St. Ives), MCA (Budapest), De Appel (Amsterdam), Sprengel Museum (Hannover), NCCA (Moscow) etc. and group shows: Documenta 13, Kassel, Fridericianum, Kassel; Ludwig Forum, Aachen; Arnolfini, Bristol, UK; Daimler-Benz, Stuttgart/Berlin; Haus der Kunst, Munich; MMA, Stuttgart; New National Gallery, Berlin; ZKM, Karlsruhe; ICA, Detroit; MuseumMAfrika, Johannesburg; Zimmerly Art Museum, New Jersey; Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; Tokyo Opera City Gallery; Museum de Arte de Sao Paulo; CoBrA, Amsterdam; etc. In his two monographs and numerous catalogues texts wrote: Boris Groys, Hubertus Gassner, Saskia Bos, Rainer Crone, Renate Damsch-Wiehager, Carla Schulz-Hoffmann, Igor Zabel etc. Lectured at: Columbia University; Royal Academy, London; UDK, Berlin; Academy of Media Arts Cologne; Rutgers University, Vrije University, Amsterdam; Academy of Fine Arts, Munich; De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam.

**'Most books allow you to stay cool, but some never do. That can be the product of the nature of the book, but in some cases personal motives may be the reason. Both are key factors in this case, I think. Partisans' Strategies for a Rough Landscape is a book where it's impossible to remain cold-blooded. It can make your cool mind hot and, if needed, chill your hot head down. It refreshes your views and even makes you experience some kind of state of self-denial.'** /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

*Partisans' Strategies for a Rough Landscape* is not Gia's commentary on his own art practice. On the contrary, it is his permanent, endless manifesto – and I think some new pieces are forthcoming. The book preserves Gia's art practice, and through that he re-emerges as a great artist and thinker. The forms and discourses that inform his practice seem to him such scarce resources that they need to be enlarged and expanded, starting from the very core fundamentals; and since artists are seldom philosophers, Gia cuts the figure of kind of stranger in the midst of our artistic environment. He is well-known as a prominent provocateur in the art world, but this challenging nature runs so deep, to the very essence of his being, that he never strays into banality. The intelligence is never something he seeks to hide behind – but he needs the opposition of God to act as some kind of fine tool in the process, as is clearly demonstrated within the book.

On the one hand you are exposed to bold and zesty contemporary French thinking, on the other, German rationalism and its metaphysical conclusions come into play, but in the end it is all blown up and evaporated into thin air. Irony and frivolity go hand in hand with stringent discursive thought.

Gia demonstrates an extraordinary grasp of an immense range of innovative thought and epistemic competences, but he remains undisturbed by any possessive attachment to all that knowledge – it is needed just to be given away. He never intends to gain anything out of this process, and this altruism shines clearly throughout his texts.

**Number of pages: 298**

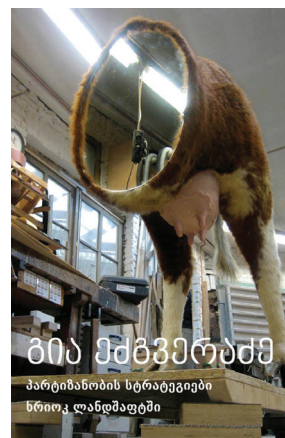
**Published in: 2015 / Sulakauri Publishing**

**Rights: Sulakauri Publishing**

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Gia Edzveradze in translation / Rights on Edzveradze's books have been sold in Germany [Verlag Kettler, 2017; Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009].

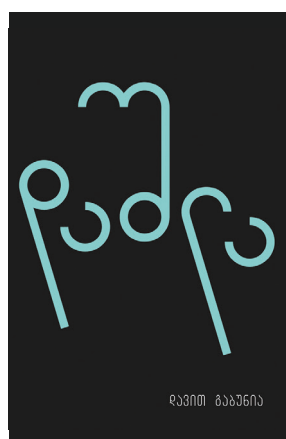


'It is not only the story that matters here but how it is told. Each word is well thought about, each word is so precise and carefully chosen. [...] which is typical for his theatre plays; but the novel has yet another distinguished quality – it is extremely cinematic in its imagery and story-telling technique.' /L. Bugadze, writer, Journalist/

## FALLING APART

To Blanche, my cat, who is watching me', this is the dedication that Davit Gabunia has put in his first novel. Open the page, and the text's epigraph is the first thing you see: 'I'm a fountain of blood in the shape of a...' Here the epigraph, which is a quotation from a Björk song, breaks off. It breaks off because the song is about a girl, while the author is starting by describing the fountain of a boy's blood and the beautiful forms of his dead body. This prologue demonstrates that a murder is going to occur in the book, but there is no gun hanging anywhere on Gabunia's wall; instead he shows us the corpse straight away, which we inspect and then this inspection takes on an entirely different form. At this point it is impossible not to be reminded of Hitchcock's *The Rear Window*. From the start, the author is playing with the reader, creating an intertextual work and he gradually turns his cat's harmless voyeurism into a dangerous voyeurism that destroys the individual.

*Falling Apart* tells an intimate story of a young Georgian family; the husband, Zura is unemployed, taking care of 2 children, the wife, Tina having a routine job, their life seems to be ordinary from outside. The Summer of 2012 turns out to be crucial – Zura becomes obsessed with a new neighbour's (a 21-year-old gay man) private life, observing and taking pictures of his secret sexual encounters with an older politician; while Tina plunges into a passionate affair with her younger colleague. Both storylines reach the climax when Zura becomes a witness of a murder and Tina is abandoned by her lover. There are several narrators in the novel and the shifts of the perspectives, different voices present the isolated worlds of the characters, from their own viewpoints they fail to notice the growing danger which threatens to ruin their lives.



**Number of pages: 132**

**Published in: 2017 / Books in Batumi Publishing**

**Rights: Books in Batumi Publishing**

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Davit Gabunia in translation / Rights on Gabunia's novel *Falling Apart* have been sold in: Germany (Rowohlt Verlag, 2018 - German title: *Farben der Nacht*).

Full translation available in German  
Sample translation available in English

# DAVIT GABUNIA

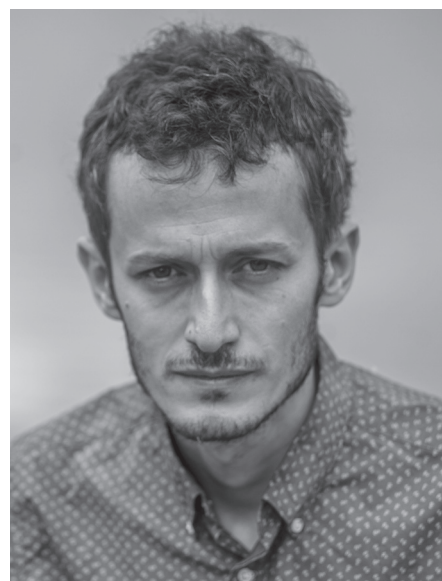


Photo @ Nodar Ladarua

Born 1982 in Poti, Davit Gabunia is twice the winner of the Independent Theatre Award Duruji (2013-14) for The Best New Georgian Play of the Year; winner of the Literary Award SABA 2014 for Best Drama. His plays have been produced at Royal District Theatre, Rustaveli National Theatre, Poti, Batumi Theatres etc. Gabunia's translations include plays by Shakespeare, Strindberg, Ibsen and number of contemporary British, Swedish and German playwrights. His debut novel *Falling Apart* appeared 2017 and turned into a national best-seller in Georgia.

'Tina's story is written with an awe-striking precision, without a single unnecessary word, and at the same time, with Flaubert-like use of 'right' words, without a sentimental regret or gullible attempts of self-analysis [...]. This is the first ever time in Georgian literature, I had a chance to 'listen' to this kind of text pronounced by a female; as if the indifference and patronizing arrogance she's been treated with have exploded in her hands. This part of the novel is one of the best things ever written in the Georgian language. No wonder, that this unexplainable, nature-force-like but highly credible love story served as a basis, on top of which the author built a 'magic mountain' of the husband's and neighbor's well organized report, full of common sense.' /L. Berdzenishvili, writer, critic/

# NAIRA GELASHVILI



Photo © Nata Sopromadze

Born 1947, Naira Gelashvili is a Georgian writer, germanist, literary critic and civil society activist. She began her literary activities with translations of German philosophy and poetry and gained popularity among readers for non-conformist prose, which eventually provoked a negative reaction from the Soviet authorities. Despite this, Naira Gelashvili has written a number of novels and short stories and has won several literary awards, including Literary Award SABA 2013 in category the Best Novel for *I am That One* and 2010 for *The First Two Circles and All the Others*; the Ilia Chavchavadze Prize for Artistic Work (2008); Literary Prize GALA 2007 in category the Best Literary Project for Rainer Maria Rilke (works in five volumes with commentaries); Prize of Austrian Ministry of Culture 1999 for translations of R. M. Rilke's works. The range of Naira Gelashvili's literary writings encompasses novels, stories, essays, poetry and children's prose, as well as children's songs and musical tales. 1994 the author founded and still heads the cultural-educational NGO Caucasian House Centre for Cultural Relations, which plays a significant role in the peaceful cooperation of different cultures and religions among the people of Caucasus.

'Today the main thing is for a writer to pose those questions which Naira Gelashvili asks very directly and with great skill. This momentous work by an author unusual for Georgian literature is very moving and at the same time has something to teach each one of us.' /I. Kakabadze, writer, conflictologist/

## MY BIRD, MY ROPE, MY RIVER

Three main threads run through the novel: political reality – violence against human beings, human violence against nature and the problem of religion. The novel's protagonist is a former astrophysicist, who is now an Orthodox church priest opposed to authority, whether the church's and the state's. The first part of the novel describes the life of the inhabitants of a Tbilisi street between 2003 and 2011, during Mikheil Saakashvili's terms as president, when democracy was a mere façade and in reality an inhuman authoritarianism victimized many people's lives. Khevi Street is the main field of action, the place where a powerful and half-underground protest movement begins. The street is next to the Vere river. The headstrong President, in order to have a motorway built, has the river concreted over and a hill flattened. This has caused trauma to the inhabitants of Khevi Street and liberated them from fear. That is why they fight so bravely against violence. The clairvoyant Barbara says that the river wants revenge and will sacrifice human lives (the novel was written in 2012-2013, and in 2015 a natural catastrophe actually did occur, when the river Vere swelled up and over twenty people lost their lives). The second part of the work describes a Walpurgis Night in Georgia, where every evil spirit, well-known political figures and men of violence celebrate their achievements: the ethical, political and economic crisis and universal chaos which Georgia, an ancient Christian country, has been subjected to. In the novel's third part the action develops in a wholly unexpected way: a big, colourful bird suddenly appears, caught up in the crown of a tree, needing help. The entire powers of the population of Khevi Street are devoted to freeing the bird, and they actually succeed in saving it. The novel is a synthesis of prose and poetic elements, which is typical for Naira Gelashvili's work. Her ability to make a montage, the amazing coexistence of humour and tragedy in Naira Gelashvili's work reach a real climax in this new novel. The novel is comprised of many characters, human fates, counterpoints and rapidly changing tonalities; nevertheless, the text is amazingly unified and reminds us of a musical work in its composition and its dynamism. That is why this novel is now talked of as a 'symphony-novel' and 'requiem novel' in Georgian literary criticism.

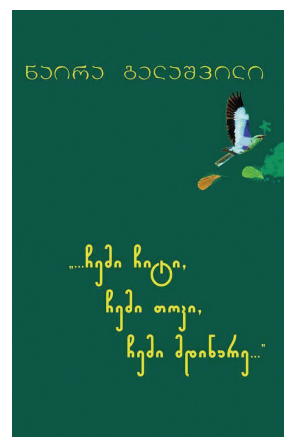
Number of pages: 740

Published in: 2017 / Caucasian House

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Naira Gelashvili in translation / Rights of Gelashvili's novels have been sold in many countries among them: Germany (Verbrecher Verlag: *I am leaving for Madrid*, 2018; *I am That One*, 2017); Short Stories (Edition Braus, 2008; Suhrkamp, 2000); Turkey (Benceajans Basın Yayın Dağıtım Eğitim Bilişim, 2017); Czechoslovakia (Lidove Nakladatelství, 1986).



'I could say *My Bird, My Rope, My River* is a requiem novel: Some kind of mourning after the nature and poetry of Georgia and Tbilisi. One big Psalm.'  
/G. Lobzhanidze, poet, critic, translator/



'This is in genre the most varied, in language the boldest and in plot the most surrealistic book that I have ever read. And the so-called 'mood' which imbues the whole book is real poetry.' /Z. Koshkadze, writer/

## THE CHEWING DAWNS SUGAR FREE

'Reality collapsed some time ago, every day chaos seeps out from the cracks... The Messiah, however, is bound to die. That's my style. Only death of this kind has the power to give birth to revolutions. Meanwhile, authors may die, but heroes do not.' 'If dancing is genuine, it will inevitably end in revolution; if not, then people leave the clubs towards morning with a terrible hangover and melancholy, because once again the revolution hasn't started.' *The Chewing Dawns Sugar Free* is the first ever Georgian cyberpunk novel which is a debut work by Zura Jishkariani. Set in apocalyptic Tbilisi, Georgia, it tells a story of the Second Coming (Parousia) of the awaited Messiah. But as everything is designed in codes and algorithms, a terrible bug shifts the process of coming into the digital world. While the government tries to mobilize a group of priests and soldiers for military affairs, young junkies venture to travel into the digital world to save the Messiah.

In the last twenty years the city has endured several local wars and revolutions and was nearly destroyed and built anew: a civil war, the Rose Revolution, the prison abuse scandal, street gang wars. But these haven't yet turned into history that isn't remembered because their participants are still here along with those who grew up in the non-stop chaos. On second thought, the city suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, all against the background of scenic views and wonderfully sunny weather. If you accept that Tbilisi is a psychedelic city, you won't be surprised to hear about a pusher who uses drones to drop drugs on the roofs of the houses where his customers live. The events described in the opening chapters of the novel are based on true stories that took place in the capital in the last two years.



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**Rights:** Sulakauri Publishing

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Zura Jishkariani in translation / Jishkariani's poems have been included in the anthology of modern Georgian Poetry in Germany (Grössenwahn Verlag, 2018).

# ZURA JISHKARIANI

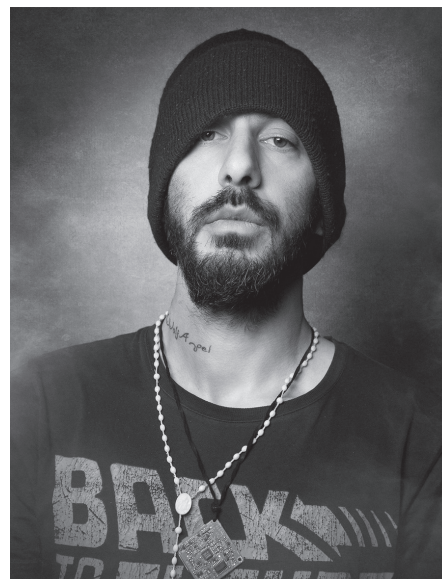


Photo @ Guram Muradov

Bio-robot Zura Jishkariani a.k.a Dilla, multimedia artist, writer and a self-proclaimed mayor of Sokhumi was officially manufactured and distributed as a single demo version 1985 in Sokhumi. After the war in Abkhazia he was living in ghettos under the refugee status. In the early 2000's he gave up studying sociology in university and launched punk rock band 'EVA'. Later he founded a local art-guild 'Eurasian Laboratory', a union of young poets, musicians and performers. 2007 he started his most successful music project 'Kung-Fu Junkie' which was disbanded after 10 years. 2014 Jishkariani created the first ever Georgian chat-bot 'Cyber-Galaktion' which is a linguistic simulation of the most prominent Georgian poet Galaktion Tabidze. As he believes that chat-bots are the future of storytelling, Dilla is actively involved in their personality design process. He is interested in how sadness, trust, joy and other emotions in people are created by algorithms and logical codes. 2016 he founded the company 'ZEG' which works on creating of interactive tombstones. Currently he works on his second novel and dreams about Mars colonization.

'This is a novel and a shriek imbued with dubious hopes, or, supposedly, a voice from the ghetto, uncouth prose. I have a rough idea of what is happening in the holes of Zura's chaotic, storm-tossed, pitch-black brain... and it's attractive, very attractive.' /Z. Burchuladze, writer, critic/



# RUSUDAN RUKHADZE



Born 1974 in Tbilisi, Rusudan Rukhadze graduated from the History Department of I. Javakishvili Tbilisi State University. 2008 she completed her MA in Media Management and Journalism in GIPA. She has worked for numerous periodicals since 1996. Her first story *The Morning Before Christmas* was published in *Literaturuli Gazeti* in 2013. Rusudan Rukhadze was awarded with the Literary Award SABA 2017 for her second book *One of You Betrays Me* in the category The Year's Best Prose Collection. One of her short stories has been included in Book of Tbilisi published by Comma Press (UK) and bringing together ten short stories written about the Georgian capital, showcasing the work of some of the country's most loved writers.

**'First of all, I must begin with Rusudan Rukhadze's *Hoya*. It is an extremely good, admirable text in which neo-realism and magical realism, both stylistically and as literary topics (and not just of Georgian literature), are written, yet preserving the best traditions. For one thing, it deals with the incurable and most frightful plague of our society, and secondly, the author writes so gently, with a lightness that is not human and with the best sort of humour about girls who have not yet been born and never will be born: death becomes so near that in the end I feel that death becomes life.'** /Z. Chkheidze, critic/

'Creating an atmosphere is probably one of the main tasks that Rusudan Rukhadze has set herself. Depiction of surroundings, the tangibility of the intimate, of the erotic, of passions are what creates the atmosphere in these stories.' /M. Ldokonen, writer, critic/

## ONE OF YOU BETRAYS ME

The evangelical phrase is interpreted in an original way in the story of that name, in which we have treachery in the foreground and are shown how the body visualises treachery: two couples go to a sea-side resort, cards, beer, sea air, the scent of all four persons in one bathroom... The story shows that when the conscience begins delving in the body, neither mind nor body obeys the rules any longer.

In *A Mobile Feast* we have the narrative of the relationship between a young woman teacher and a pupil in the top class, showing how they run away to the village, from a family obsessed with self-contained eroticism, begin to organize cinema shows in the village, play at 'cinematics' and how these 'cinematics' finally turn into a tragic game.

In *Nagasaki* the author uses a cigarette to make us feel the smoke-filled atmosphere of a newspaper office, the venomous passions of a boy and girl newspaper workers who are organically poisoned by the 'atom bomb', and their futile attempts to cleanse themselves of these poisons and achieve a sense of loyalty.

In *The Golden Palace*, however, the atmosphere of an old-Tbilisi 'Italian court' is caught through the eye of a small boy in his story we sense very clearly the scent of an old quarter of the town. Every day has its own fragrance and people of various nationalities. This is a colourful collection.

*A Cavatina of Yellow Rain* is a fable-type story in which a young woman from a big city chooses to go to live in a small town and begins working as a cleaner in a hotel there. The author describes a town of suicides, a town where those who want to commit suicide can go and, after consulting the doctors, legally obtain the painless death they wish. Until that point they stay in this hotel where the young woman works as a cleaner. Thus, in the end, the author tries to create an atmosphere of Eros and Thanatos in this little town.

Number of pages: 200

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Rights: Intelekti Publishing

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Rusudan Rukhadze in translation / Short stories by Rusudan Rukhadze have been published in: Germany (edition fünf, 2018); UK (Comma Press, 2017); Turkey (Gece Kitaplığı, 2015); Azerbaijan (DK Publishing, 2015).



Translations of Rusudan Rukhadze's short stories available in English.

'Irakli Samsonadze has his own voice, his own rhythm in contemporary Georgian literature. He constructs novels in this rhythm, novels which delight the reader with their elegant precision. This precision is to be found in the inner harmoniousness of his texts.' /M. Jaliashvili, critic/

## THE WEDDING IN THE WIND

Told by the protagonist, the novel is about our time: she is an actress suffering from a mid-life crisis. She hasn't been offered any new roles for years, which causes her acute anguish. She was in a relationship with three men – an actor, a director and a playwright, but she is childless though she hoped to have one. Her present uneventful life is somewhat cheered up by an occasional chatter with a gay theatre critic.

Actually, there is a secret passion in the protagonist's life: she is a kleptomaniac and when she steals anything, usually an unwanted petty object, she feels an adrenalin rush, which is akin to the experience of being on the stage.

Quite unexpectedly the woman is obsessed with a new idea: she wants to steal a hammer belonging to a neuropathologist living in her neighborhood. Left alone in his surgery, she struggles with the overpowering urge but finally succumbs to it and takes one of his hammers. Soon it transpires that the whole thing was staged: she wasn't left alone accidentally, in fact, she was encouraged to steal in order to shame her later. As a result of the highly embarrassing situation and her sense of guilt, she doesn't know if he raped her or the sex they had was consensual. Exposed of her shameful vice for the first time, she is terrified of losing her only passion in life. Hoping to free herself from the fear, she heads for the underpass where she intends to steal something trivial off the numerous counters, her only desire being to revive her passion through such 'a hunt'.

The neurotic condition aggravates as the Hieronymus Bosch-like nightmare comes to life in the underpass, driving her thoughts towards suicide. However, a happy end comes as a complete surprise...



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

# IRAKLI SAMSONADZE



Born 1961, Irakli Samsonadze is a Georgian writer and playwright. In 1983 he graduated from the Journalism Department of Tbilisi State University. He 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*.

'Irakli Samsonadze depicts the simple colourless, at first sight, life of the 'man in the street' in circumstances of similarly simple surroundings. He does not seek or create characters or any weird and wonderful developments for the reader. The writer, in this case, follows the so-called traditional path and lovingly depicts people who are often badly treated and broken down by life, who amaze one with their great hearts and their immaculate sincerity.'

/M. Jaliashvili, critic/

# PAATA SHAMUGIA



Photo © Nata Sopromadze

Born 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. 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 *Liberati* and writes reviews and critical essays for Art Magazine *Indigo*. 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. *Adobe Godmaker* is his first novel.

'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 works 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, journalist/

**ADOBE GODMAKER**

2013 Hafid, an Arab boy, stole an iPhone and immediately became hugely popular on the internet due to posting numerous photos taken with his new phone. However, he didn't know his stolen iPhone was uploading all his selfies to the owner's dropbox. His identity was soon revealed, but the original owner didn't report him to the police, opting for a different kind of revenge: she uploaded his photos on the Facebook with her funny comments. In a little while the whole thing turned into a virus spreading across many countries. Within 15 minutes of reading the information on the internet, Paata Shamugia sat down to write his first novel.

*Adobe Godmaker* is a political-psychological drama unfolding in Georgia and New York. Its format suggests it is a kind of anti-Lolita, or *Lolita's* reverse version: Tamara, the protagonist is a 35-year old Georgian woman, while Ismail is an underage lad, only 15. Tamara's phone was stolen in New York but as soon as she returns to Georgia, she discovers an Arab boy's photo in her dropbox, soon followed by videos. She knows he had stolen her iPhone, but instead of reporting him, Tamara follows his life, becoming his secret witness and even the receiver of his online confessions. The boy writes blogs practically every day, telling the story of his life: from being bullied at school to his refugee status. Having escaped war-torn Syria, he faced more bullying and racism in the US. Being sure no one will ever read them, Ismail's blogs are a method of compensation for all the evil he has encountered in life. In fact, his video blogs have quite a different fate awaiting them. Though the plot focuses on the fate of a future terrorist, it is Tamara who is the main character of the novel. The blogs change her life completely: her day starts with refreshing her dropbox account to see if Ismail has uploaded anything new. Her son is also 15, so Ismail's emotional recounting of his traumatic experience helps her to better understand what needs to be altered in her relationship with her teenage son. Sadly, Tamara's son is killed in a car accident and suddenly she falls in love with the future terrorist, but she is unaware whether it is a motherly love when Ismail can potentially fill in the void left after the tragic death of her own son, or an erotic feeling towards Ismail.

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**Rights: Intelekti Publishing**

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Paata Shamugia in translation / Paata Shamugia's poetry collection has been published in Sweden (Smockadoll Förlag, 2018); His poems are included in anthologies published in Germany (Größenwahn Verlag, 2018, Pop Verlag, 2018).

**Adobe® Godmaker**



Sample translation available in English.

'Aleko Shugladze's voice is impossible to classify and you cannot help being captivated by the sad joyfulness and almost thunderous reverberations of his timbre.' /Z. Burchuladze, writer, critic/

## MYSTERY

The action takes place in today's Russia, in Siberia. The main hero, Sasha Khubov, a Georgian palaeontologist goes to Irkutsk where he is to join an expedition with his Russian friend, Pavel Romanov. When Sasha goes to the town he finds that his friend is searching for his lost daughter. The suspect who is thought to have abducted the girl has been sought by all the Irkutsk police force for a week now, but in vain.

The plot develops in an unexpected way: Pavel takes Sasha into a cellar where he has imprisoned a man. This man is the suspect who abducted the girl, Ksenia Romanova, hid her and raped her. Moreover, it turns out that this rapist had been detained shortly before by the police, but escaped and went of his own accord to the Romanovs' house to seek refuge. Now Pavel is hiding him from the Siberian police and from the furious population.

Soon the suspect offers the girl's father a sort of settlement: if Pavel treats him humanely and shows him love, and makes him, as an enemy, see that people really exist who are magnanimous to such a degree, then he will reveal to him where his daughter can be found. The criminal confesses that the reason he abducted the girl was to create a sort of test for the father.

The novel's next part deals with their relationship, the arrangement between them. The father tries to renounce vengeance and to befriend the criminal.

From start to finish the novel keeps up its narrative tension and avoids banal detective plotting. Aleko Shugladze preserves the humoristic story-telling style so typical of him. The novel clearly demonstrates the writer's great mastery, as if the reader follows him of his own free will wherever the author wants, and right until the last sentence we do not know the outcome for his heroes.



**Number of pages: 330**

**Published in: 2016 / Diogene Publishing**

**Rights: Diogene Publishing**

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Aleko Shugladze in translation / Rights on Shugladze's novel *Hiding Away* have been sold to: Germany (Klak Verlag, 2018); UK (Francis Boutle Publishers, 2018).

# ALEKO SHUGLADZE



Photo © Nata Sopromadze

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

'Aleko Shugladze, like an accomplished acrobatic strategist, moves from one action to another, from one style to another, from mood to mood, and does so with natural artistry... This is his literary device: to put on a drama for you, where comedy is one thing, the absurd another, and the fantastic makes for another form of drama.' /L. Kodalashvili, writer, critic/



# TAMAR TANDASHVILI



Photo © Nata Sopromadze

Born 1973 in Tbilisi, Tamar Tandashvili holds degrees in Languages and Literature (Tbilisi State University), Psychology (Tbilisi D. Uznadze Institute of Psychology) and Conflict Studies (University of Notre Dame, Indiana). Tamar's doctoral dissertation in progress (Central European University, Budapest) examines social dimension and cultural practices of personhood construction among Georgian women activists. Having lived through two wars and intermittent political disturbances, Tamar observed the unlikely historical continuum from the very last decade of soviet era to the newly democratised European-to-be state. Her blog on psychology and social milieu (one of the most-read among its kind) accurately depicts the schizophrenic contextual change and consequent ethical incongruity in post-soviet Georgian society. Tamar teaches at the Ilia State University (Tbilisi) and runs private counselling practice along with working for LGBTQ and women's organizations as psychotherapist and coach. From 2013 she is involved in promoting LGBTQ and women's rights. The author is one of the pioneers in introducing and promoting discourse on non-human personhood in Georgia. She is passionate about animal rights and volunteers for an informal network of activists operating as emergency animal rescue team.

*'This book which has been overshadowed in this season's well-publicized literature nevertheless deals with the most well-hidden and most painful problems. If you want to see the real face of the unpunished violent Georgian 'male', read this little book. One woman writer has all the same managed to raise her voice and we can hope that she will meet with more empathy.'* /Z. Andronikashvili, critic/

*'Meanwhile what is so amazing is that Tamar Tandashvili has written a book which is very bold, in a new genre, full of humour, but written on a very painful theme.'* /T. Khatiashvili, critic/

## MATERIKON

*Materikon* tells the story of a mid-age criminal investigator whose entire world outlook is about to alter. An ethical dilemma Medea faces at the pick of her professional career will either put an end to her family life or eradicate her self-trust. A prominent nun of undeniable spiritual merits loses the closest friend and ally to premeditated murder. Knowing that the killers cohabit with her at the cloister mother Barbara is keen on unearthing the heinous crime. Meeting of these women will challenge the established order in their respective communities leaving a profound scars on the lives of many.

*Materikon* is a rare example of literary take on ethnographic witness account. Survivor of sexual violence in early adolescence approached the author with the request of telling her story. The book is a result of their teamwork.

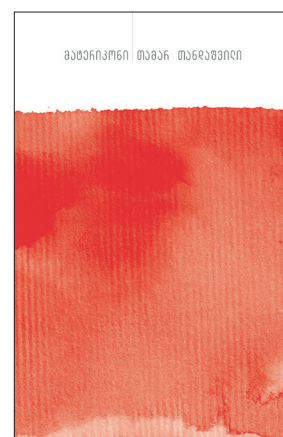
**Number of pages: 166**

**Published in: 2017 / Siesta Publishing House**

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Tamar Tandashvili in translation / Rights on Tandashvili's novel *Snowstorm of Orange Dandelions* have been sold to Austria (Residenz Verlag, 2018).



Sample translation available in English.



'Both greater and transient lives wail in poets feelings and it infects the reader too. And the end of both lives is equally apocalyptic. Dear names such as Khitale, Chirdili and others remain enigmas in the post-apocalyptic dream. 'Times has woven ruins with dry fern'... Only fern, the oldest dweller of the Earth remains to witness its end.' /Z. Kiknadze, critic/

## GVRINI

Giorgi Arabuli emerges from the spiritual ordeals of the Khevsureti – region where he was born, from mythology, mysticism, from personal histories of legendary or real people; he uses dialect and by all these means he creates his poetics, which are completely contemporary and loaded with metaphors and existential thoughts.

### The Cares of Old Age

Berdia surveyed his patrimony,  
He laid a stone and said, 'Here I aged.'  
Berdia surveyed his high and his low moments.  
He laid a stone and said, 'Here I aged.'  
Berdia surveyed his conscience,  
He laid a stone and said, 'Here I aged.'  
Berdia made the sign of the cross,

He laid a stone and said, 'Here I aged.'  
Berdia surveyed his wife,  
He laid a stone and said, 'Here I aged.'  
Berdia surveyed his life,  
He laid a stone and said, 'Here I aged.'  
Berdia surveyed, but could no longer find a stone to lay,  
So Berdia said, 'Everything has its time.'

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/

# GIORGI ARABULI



Born 1991 in Khevsureti, in the mountainous region of Georgia, he graduated from the Drama Department of Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Cinema University in Tbilisi. He has been publishing his works in various periodicals and has participated in personal and group poetry discussions in Georgia as well as abroad. In 2012 Intelekti Publishing published his first collection of poems *Setting Off*. Since December 2013 he is the director of Dusheti Drama Theatre. Giorgi Arabuli is the winner of Tsinandali Prize in the category The Best Poetry Collection 2016.

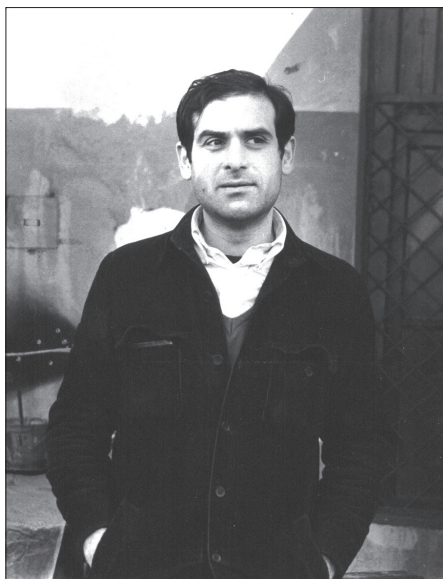


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**Published in:** 2017 / Intelekti Publishing  
**Rights:** Intelekti Publishing  
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# DATO CHIKHLADZE

*'His texts are crowded with words: life, friendship, love, infatuation, freedom, death, flower, light, fire, etc. Or this is a tight-rope crossing.'* /Sh. Iatashvili, poet, critic/

## WANDERING DROPS



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

*'In David Chikhladze's poems we find the Soros fund and, no less and no more, a sonnet is dedicated to it; there exist 100,000 monks looking for an exit, there is a Serb military officer, checking a passport at the frontier between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, there are black cleaners wearing yellow crosses on their backs and refusing to open a door, there are Buddha, Krishna, Kali, the mother of souls, and finally there are lines devoted to the friendly girl nun Nino, including the sermon of Saint Ilia the Second, full Catholicos and Patriarch, in Sioni cathedral...'*  
/Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

This book is David Chikhladze's first collection of poetry, published at the age of forty, which in today's circumstances seems very odd, all the more so if we bear in mind that, starting with the mid 1980s, he has constantly appeared as an author in Georgian literary (today, 'art') space as an innovator. He is distinguished by his exceptional knowledge of contemporary art, by his ability to inherit and to analyse new phenomena in Georgian cultural life. The pages of this collection are like layers of skin which make up the basic composition of his world both as a poet and as a thinker. There are quite a lot of layers, especially from a formal point of view. During the period when David Chikhladze experimented with various poetic forms, the reader and the author himself may have created the impression that this work is made up of blocks which are cardinally opposite to one another, and that they can be split up only by simple factoring, which, who knows, demonstrates the complexity even of gathering the poems into one book. It is difficult for someone in the middle of an experimental process to 'arrange' your work and then assign primacy to any one particular block, and to affix your own 'brand mark' to it. That is probably why it was better to write verses in a thousand strange forms, to print them in the literary press and read them only to a live audience, but not to publish them in book form.

### Karlo Kacharava Returns from Paris

He came – his eyes were silent  
His lips were as eloquent as a rose in a  
moonless summer night  
He said, 'I've seen the left-wingers there,  
and ten litres of beer were turned into ten  
litres of tears  
which turned in Tbilisi's streets to joyful  
and lame torrents  
flowing towards the Circus where children  
shouted inwardly

towards the Television station where Nodar  
Begiashvili was by the control panel  
towards my father's lorry  
towards Giorgi  
towards Shalva  
It went – it saw the toppled rains of spring  
the rose of Americans in a fog of nylon  
it was like a little garden  
where in spring only two sparrows sit on the  
bench.

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/

Number of pages: 72

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'In order to understand Karlo, we have distanced ourselves from his art, but we mustn't say that he was more an artist than a poet. If we look at his canvases, we see the great tradition of German expressionism, and these pictures are full of texts. And just as he has texts on canvas, he also has canvases in his texts.' /Sh. Dighmelashvili, poet, critic/

## 100 POEMS

Karlo Kacharava can be viewed as a documentary poet. His documentary nature is not a straight-line method of description: it uses completely polar means for narrating what has happened, and creates a convincing synthesis of the real and unreal, the earthly and heavenly. Consequently the picture and image of phenomena is formed as a document of the epoch in all its raw or gruesome state. The author was himself well aware of his documentary nature, an example of which is his longer poem called *A Documentary Film*. In the years during which formations were changed, and there was war and devastation, he becomes a 'one of the people' himself, echoing them, with a magic ritual of documentalism. Karlo Kacharava's poetry has an astonishingly natural co-existence of the old and the new, so new, that Georgian reality actually still has no idea of it: the coexistence involves cardinally different cultural spaces: Georgian (inherited memory), Russian (with its Soviet aesthetics and the underground that opposed it) and western (often German, which he was connected with and which had a big influence on him, on his formation as an artist and thinker). They frequently alternate with the elegance of 'a montage of attractions', creating a mutual exploration, or to be clearer, each cutting out its own existential signs.

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We didn't get to say proper byes among the symbols  
inspiring desires of somebody's ownership  
or servitude.  
Excitement, hope, fear of decay, hungry  
laughter.  
Man's life is meager and long  
in this city, on photos, in letters, in memories  
yet unborn,  
since solely that of the other has garnet-like  
coloration.

And fear brings yearning for sleep devoid of  
dreams.  
We adjust the surroundings according to  
fears we got,  
or inevitable acceptance of fate, your choices  
and our elation, yearning, love feed  
on a perverse desire of extending the  
suffering longer.

/Translation by Gvantsa Shengelia/



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Rights: Lika Kacharava

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# KARLO KACHARAVA



Karlo Kacharava (1964-1994) was artist, poet and art critic. In 1986 he graduated with distinction from Tbilisi's Kutateladze State Art Academy in the faculty of art studies. From 1986 to the end of his life in 1994 he worked as a research fellow in the Giorgi Chubinashvili Research Institute for the History of Georgian Art, in the department for research into contemporary art. In 1991 he worked in Germany, in the Françoise Friedrich Gallery in Köln. From 1989 he was a member of the editorial board of the magazine *Literature and Art*; from 1990 he was a member of the board of the association of art critics. He was a founder member of the Archivarius group of artists and the author of its charter; later he was a founder of the *Tenth Storey* artists' group, the theoretician, art critic and ideological leader of the group. Over his lifetime he published some forty scholarly works and articles; he was an active participant in exhibitions. His heritage includes up to 1000 coloured and 3,700 graphic works.

'I think that for him poetry is above all something sacral, so that he hasn't hidden his own artistry and has always hidden his poetry. It has been sacral if only because depicting a picture was for him a natural act, while writing a poem was a violation. In any case, that's what I think. Drawing was a natural movement for his hand, writing a poetic text was, however, something more metaphysical. In a poem he went much further, in any case he tried to escape far away. For some reason I think that he was utterly confident of his own artistry, but in his poetic work he did have occasional doubts.' /Sh. Iatashvili, writer, critic/

# SOSO MESHVELIANI



Born 1974, Soso Meshveliani studied at Kutaisi State University's faculty of history and philosophy, but, for a number of reasons was forced to break off his studies and go abroad. He spent seventeen years abroad, living for the last thirteen of them in Spain. Meshveliani's poems have been translated into English, Russian and Armenian. He has won several literary prizes.

'You can tell by the book that it is the result of a great internal and physical emigration, when poetry, like prayer, is given the function of reinforcing the soul and represents the sole real refuge for a person in a certain period of this life.' /G. Lobzhanidze, poet, critic, translator/

ARBOLES ALTOS

*Arboles Altos* means tall trees in Spanish. Soso Meshveliani's poetry is a retrospective of the universe seen from a very natural human height and equally implies a peasant and an intellectual as its potential reader.

For the author, life is a ceaseless feeling of 'delightful hunger' that it first passionately evokes in others and then generously nourishes it at the vast board of the universe like at a sacred feast.

The universe is whole and undivided with its patriarchal placidity and megalopolis noise. Poet's memory carries the unity composed of pagan and Christian, mythical and folkloric reflections. One can not distinguish the levels of pain and joy, suffering and pleasure in this poetry as life is enough to experience it all and poetry itself looks at life from the point where the tops of the highest trees meet, it contemplates life as the most natural substance, as an 'inflicted perfection.'

## Hunger

Friend, I'm very hungry,  
Do you know what an extraordinary experience it is?  
Do you know how happy one is to be hungry?  
You can feel with your fingers the taste of bread,  
when you grope about in your back-pack  
under a gigantic lime tree.  
First you rinse yourself with water,

You wash the hay dust from your face,  
then you shake out the ants  
hiding in the cracks in the bread,  
Your each for the cheese wrapped in butter-bur leaf  
and...  
Do you know what an extraordinary experience it is?  
Do you know how happy one is to be hungry?

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/

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'Soso Meshveliani's poem's lyrical hero is alienated or, to be more precise, is a man differing from his community, and his problem is a sort of mental minority, whose isolation is even more unbearable than any other form of minority that may nevertheless under one or another banner be able in any group to find its own identification and self-realization.' /G. Lobzhanidze, poet, critic, translator/



'I like the unadorned, sincere, often rough way he introduces us into his own world. His voice is genuine, not put on.' /G. Nakhutsrishvili, writer/

## FABRICATION

This book is attributed to two authors, although it was written by just one, Giorgi Shonia. Hans Promwell is a mystification by Shonia. Giorgi Shonia appears to have offered up his own biography for an American poet of the new generation, a post-modernist; he has even added a photograph and his poems from a number of years, supposedly translated from the English, and has published them in literary periodicals, on the social network and won considerable popularity for them. Now that this book is published, the mystification is cleared up and this is due to the author's own initiative, since he considered that Hans Promwell had exhausted his possibilities. It should be noted that Giorgi Shonia has tried to evade his own signature and has ascribed various poems to Hans Promwell, once again successfully. Hans Promwell is an elegant and laconic poet. Tragic, too, but the tragic note is not insisted on. He's nostalgic, as well. Beatnik America, or even an earlier period, is mentioned and we find these times reflected almost everywhere. He's intertextual. A lot of things in today's world displease him, but he isn't aggressive about it. Giorgi Shonia, compared with Promwell, is more aggressive and verbose, following his obsessions in an unbridled fashion, playing with what he has to say until its possibilities are exhausted. It can be said that his poetry sets the stage for a battle against social inequality.

### From Hans Promwell's 'Manhattan Haikus'

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Jack London's works  
are like first sex,  
You never forget them.

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I have always wanted  
to have a grandfather like Walt Whitman's.  
Derek Promwell is a judge  
Who supports the Republicans  
and reads only the New York Times.

\*\*\*

I am silent,  
You are silent.  
Even the statue of liberty is silent.  
They are jabbering.  
They have nothing to say.

/Translation by Donald Rayfield/



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Contact: Gvantsa Jobava

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Giorgi Shonia in translation / Shonia's two poems from the collection are included in anthology of Modern Georgian Poetry in Germany (Größenwahn Verlag, 2018).

# GIORGI SHONIA

HANS PROMWELL



Hans Promwell, born 1991 in Zugdidi is pen name of Giorgi Shonia. He studied at the Faculty of Business at Ilia State University in Tbilisi. 2017 he completed his MA of Philology in Foreign Languages and Comparative Literature at the same university. 2013 he participated in the literary project – 'International Translation Masterclass in Poetry', together with Ukrainian, Belorussian and Lithuanian poets. Giorgi Shonia's/Hans Promwell's poetry collection *Fabrication* won Literary Award LITERA 2017 in the category The Best Debut. Giorgi Shonia's poetry has been translated into German, Lithuanian, Belorussian and Ukrainian languages.

*'By coitus between outer suburb ghettos and central urban glamour, Hans Promwell offers us an interesting model for mixing styles, and he creates for us an experiment in proletarian elitism by stylizing colloquial language. The last thing I would want to impose is political seasoning on Promwell's poetry, but Sir Hans is a hedonist poet. He's a singer of sweet and pleasant things; pleasure, however, I would remind you, is the most serious form of politics.'*  
/P. Shamugia, poet/



# TEA TOPURIA



Photo © Nata Sopromadze

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

'At one point it seemed to everyone that she was writing about Abkhazia, writing very long letters to Sukhumi, her city, but she was simply writing about love.' /E. Kevanishvili, poet, journalist/

ECOCIDE

The amplitude of this author's work is very broad: at various times it radically changes quality from humorously written children's verses or fairy tales to poetry and prose that is full of traumas. The author frequently talks to us simultaneously about this world and the next – the dead, or those departing for the next world – discuss with her existential questions of life and death, bequeathing useful advice to her, while death itself is like a journalist who suddenly pesters the person he is questioning. In these poems it is simultaneously rough and refined, inwardly at peace and well-prepared, yet at the same time full of self-irony. With Tea Topuria death is not to be feared. Sometimes it is even easy. This is what she herself says: 'Many say that I write about death. That is not really true: I write about a country which is beyond us, to which we shall depart and which we shall stay in considerably longer than we have been here, and where everything will be more real.'

## However Hard You Try, it is Impossible

However hard you try, it is impossible to remain exactly the size that constitutes a concrete object.

I could not even live through a short winter day

being solely occupied with my rightful business.

Every time a thought stretches like an old t-shirt,

it exposes you, there, where you are most ashamed

whilst concealing that which is of no interest to anyone.

This cloud on the vapour trail of an aero-

plane

is like a white cat lying on a clothes line,

this river – so sluggish that the water sometimes flows upstream

and a thousand other nuisances,

do not merit a single smile,

all are lost like warmth from a house without doors,

where all of us who are adults,

those who endured chicken pox, measles and love,

are standing in the freezing weather

and jumping up and down on the spot to survive.

/Translation by Natalie Bukia-Peters and Victoria Field/

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"Once There was a Girl" is a collection of modern Fairy tales about extraordinary women and girls living in Georgia. 21 Authors and illustrators collaborated on the collection with UN Women Georgia to produce this colorful collection of fairy tales.

## THERE ONCE WAS A GIRL

For many children, fairy tales are an important introduction to the outside world. They teach children how to distinguish kindness from malice, recognize justice from injustice, generate empathy and encourage bravery. Fairy tales can contribute to shaping a child's value system and may serve as a powerful tool in promoting gender equality. This potential has inspired UN Women Georgia to engage 21 Georgian authors and illustrators in producing a colorful collection of 21 fairy tales inspired by real female figures from Georgian history, titled "Once There was a Girl".

In this collection of modern "Fairy tales" the young readers can find different heroines from ancient to modern times of Georgia such as: Rusudan Zhordania, a world war II fighter pilot, Maro Makashvili a young military nurse who was killed in the red army invasion in 1921, Medea a princess from Colchis in ancient Georgia who was immortalized in Greek mythology. The fictional stories recount the courageous deeds, determination, wisdom, dignity and fight for justice of the female heroines. These colorful stories are meant to give young readers heroes they can believe in.

The initiative was realized as part of the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality in Georgia, funded by the Government of Sweden.



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*'A new book of modern "fairy tales" celebrates the accomplishments of women in Georgian history -- and aims to destroy the gender stereotypes found in much of children's literature. The book was issued with the support of UN Women..' / Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty/*

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