

Lithuanian literary fiction

Shtetl Romance

Novel. Moscow 2013. 420 pages

Publishers: Germany - Aufbau, Lithuania - Tyto Alba, Macedonia - Prozart, Poland - Fundacja Pogranicze, UK - Noir Press

A marvellous family novel, wise and pittoresque on the last 20 years of life in the Eastern European Shtetl. A moving piece of literature of a loss of the Jewish communities.

Schlojmke, a young taylor, has to serve in the Lithuanian army for two years leaving his sweetheart Chanke behind. Their love will endure and he will marry her against his strict mother's wish. It is their son nicknamed „Hirschele“ which turns out to be the author himself. Grigori Kanovich tells us the story of this own life here, of his family during the 20s and 30s. A nostalgic and touching account despite of major threats and shifts full of sympathy and of course a bit melancholic.

“I am no Jewish author, since I write in Russian. No Russian author, since I write about Jews. And no Lithuanian author, because it is not the Lithuanian language I engage in.”



THE AUTHOR

translations
7 languages

awards
EBRD Literature Prize 2020
National Prize in Art & Culture,
Lithuania 2014

sample translations available
full english

other works
Devilspel

“Kanovich makes us feel and see a world, that has long disappeared.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

“There is very few people who can portray life of the Eastern European Jewish communities like Grigori Kanovich.” *Brigitte*

“Lilting and melancholy as a Leonard Cohen song, the story is a tender portrait of the narrator's family.” *The Tablet - The International Catholic News Weekly*

Kanovich was born into a traditional Jewish family in the Lithuanian town of Jonava in 1929. Together with his parents he fled war-stricken Lithuania and spent years in exile in Kazakhstan and the Ural Mountains. In 1945 the family returned to Vilnius. Here, in 1953, Kanovich graduated from Vilnius State University with a degree in Slavic studies. He has written more than ten novels – a virtual epic saga – dealing with the vicissitudes of the history of Eastern European Jewry from the 19th century to the present day. Kanovich was declared a citizen of honor (2013) of his home-town Jonava. Between 1989 and 1993 Kanovich served as Chairman of the Jewish Community of Lithuania. Since 1993 the writer has lived in Israel. He is a member of the PEN club in both Israel and Russia. Kanovich is married and has two sons. He lives in Israel.

Grigori Kanovich