

Belarusian literary fiction

Night

Novel. AST. Russia 2019. 411 pages

Publishers: Germany - Europa

Blackout in Central Europe. Earth's rotation has stopped. No more electricity, water is only available by the hour, due to a change in the atmosphere, oil and coal do not burn anymore, even compasses do not work. Minsk has disintegrated into clans that are in part fighting. About what happens outside the city limits, circulate only terrible rumors. The end of a suicidal world in which technology has overtaken ethics. Knizhnik is the owner of the only not yet burnt library and the last not yet eaten dog in Grushevka. Since he lends his books to dear book lovers who pay for it, he has accumulated great savings, not in the form of money that has become worthless, but in the form of zinc batteries. One day, with a flashlight and an old map, he sets off for his lover, who was in Nepal at the time of the blackout. There, according to Knizhnik's calculations, should be eternal sunrise.

The novel puts Belarus in a classic post-apocalyptic setting of deserted landscapes, deserted houses, mutant pig-nose, goat's feet, androphagas, werewolves, oracles, undead. But Martinovich's dystopian travelogue goes beyond a mere parable on the social-political conditions of this last dictatorship in the heart of Europe. For on his journey through the desert land, the intrepid Knizhnik can see the world step by step differently than before, when he, like all others, closed his eyes out of fear, stupidity and habit and believed in propaganda and rumors: the czar of garbage dumps, the people's brigade, the hypocritical priest, the miners' foreman, the lonely radio operator - through his unexpected acquaintances, his encounters with good and evil, Knizhnik begins to see and hear with his heart. And as the reader follows the hero through the horrors of darkness, he discovers with him that there is no greater enemy than the own self-centering thoughts. Thoughts create reality, and in the dark as in the light the strongest power is the word. Fake news and troll factory - believing them can cost you your life.

„An epic like the book NIGHT has not yet been read. An epic for our time. Above all, however, this phantasmagoria, rich in literary allusions, is a celebration of storytelling. As long as a society still has literature in which hope, courage and goodness are preserved, not all is lost.“ DEUTSCHLANDFUNK

„In many ways, „night“ is like „paranoia“ - a novel about fear. But in „Paranoia“ the fear instinct wins, while „Night“ is a book about overcoming fear.“
DARYA KOSTENKO

„In the end, the mystical darkness clears, and the enchanted reader finds himself unexpectedly in a philosophical vessel full of paradoxical technical wonders.“
LIVELIB

Martinovich was born in Oshmiany, Belarus in 1977. He is a political scientist, doctor of art history, and professor at the Vilnius University. He is a regular contributor to the German weekly DIE ZEIT. His literary works are published parallel in the Belarusian and Russian languages. Paranoia, published in Russia at the end of 2009, was immediately banned from sale in Belarus (unofficially prohibited). In 2017 he was Writer in Residence at the Literaturhaus Zürich and PWG foundation. Martinovich lives with his family in Minsk.



THE AUTHOR

translations
4 languages

awards
Bogdanovich Literay Award
2012
Best European Fiction anthology
2011 (Dalkey Archive)

sample translation available
english

other works
Mova
Paranoia
Revolution
Lake of Joy

Viktor Martinovich