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LITERARY FICTION

Beshlei, Olga

Danilov, Dmitri

Davydov, Ivan

Fedyarov, Aleksei

Senchin, Roman

Slapovski, Aleksei

Slavnikova, Olga

Zakharov, Dmitri

TRUE STORY

Gromova, Olga

NARRATIVE NON-FICTION

Fedyarov, Aleksei

NON-FICTION

Puzyrev, Denis

BELORUSIAN

Martinovich, Viktor

rights list

selected Russian titles
critical of the regime
/ authors at risk
2023

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awards

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authors

literary
fiction

My weird lover from the FSB

Blog posts and stories. AST. Moscow 2017. 220 pages

Publishers: Estonia - Postfactum

Incompetent, vulnerable, cheeky, paranoid, yearning, shy, but also brilliant at self-presentation, and then, embarrassingly open; for everything that happens to the heroine Beshlei has also happened to the author Olga Beshlei. Nothing is really thought out. The sheer joy, needs, worries and dreams of a young Russian woman, whose stories follow the fortune and misfortune of life, the ebb and flow of the city of Moscow. They follow love, ambition, politics, belief and superstition, and above all people – friends and strangers and lovers past, present and maybe never to be. With a good eye for the off-key, a healthy sense of humour and her heart in the right place, Beshlei wonders why it is so difficult these days for a likeable and open-minded young woman simply to be happy.

It is not at all difficult for Beshlei's heroine to find emancipated soulmates in any Western city who have suffered similarly. Except perhaps, that in Moscow the probability is higher to discover that your lover is a gangster or a FSB officer. And the panic about trying to hide a huge pink dildo before a house search by the secret service should to be considerably less outside Russia.

The novel takes the form of a colourful collection of stories, but is basically a coming-of-age novel with the heroine courageously testing the breaking point of the rules that determine the life of her generation. And she tests her own limits as well. The author's prose leads the reader to the edge of his or her comfort zone. The education aspects of Beshlei's novel are not concerned with how hard it is to grow up, but on how hard it is to assert one's right to be accepted as a grown-up. Using her journalistic incorruptibility and literary skill, Beshlei proves herself to be a seismograph of a generation between the generations. She allows the younger readers to trip over their own half-baked principles and leads the older ones into situations where authority and experience no longer help.

"Life on the edge, where it hurts and makes one angry. The important things in life that really matter to us." *Valeria Pustovaya*

"To blast a metaphysical wind through a simple and normal life is such a skilful move that no-one has thought of before. It would appear that this literary sleight of hand is no artifice but has sprung from the depths of her talent." *Litteratura*

"Everyone in the FSB will read it and roll over laughing." *Aleksandr Lychagin*

"Life in its all-pervading garishness, making us so sentimental that one just wants to burst into tears. It is the way that Olga Beshlei writes about the common or garden things that makes them lose their banality. She has found her own, very strong style of connecting with life that simply takes my breath away." *Anna Berseneva*

Beshlei was born in Obninsk in 1989, a small research town in the district of Kaluga. After completing her schooling at the technical school for physics of the Institute of Atomic Energy, she went to Moscow to study political journalism. She became a political editor at the oppositional magazine "The New Times". After the success of her story "The FSB and my big pink Dildo" she was given the monthly column "Beshlei" on Colta.ru. In 2017 all those texts were published in book-form. At present Beshlei is editor-in-chief of Batenka.ru. Beshlei lives in Moscow.



THE AUTHOR

translations
1 language

sample translation available
english
german

Olga Beshlei

Russian literary fiction

Hello Sasha

Novel. AST. Moscow 2022. 180 pages

Awards: Book of the Year 2022, Yasnaya Polyana Award 2022 (sponsored by Samsung)

Foreign rights: Bulgaria/ Panorama, Serbia/ Shubenik Glasnik, Spain/ Entorno Grafico

Sergei, mid-30s, impeccable personal and professional criminal records, had consensual, prearranged sex with a 20-year-old woman. Lately, however, you are not an adult until you are 21. She swears in court that she believes he is innocent. However, the death penalty was recently introduced as part of a project to humanize the penal system for crimes where society has no real sense of wrongdoing. Consensual sex with minors is included. Rapists and murderers do not need to fear such punishment since they have already died a moral death.

However, the execution of the death penalty was humanized to the maximum. The prison is now called Combinat, you live like in a luxury hotel. So that no one becomes a murderer, executions are no longer carried out by executioners. Instead, a warden has recently taken you out for a walk every day through the same hallway, where one fine day you will be torn to pieces by a salvo of an automatic machine gun. This can happen in three days or in thirty years. As luck would have it. Even the guard has no idea. All humane, because you actually don't notice anything and can go on living your life as before. Sergei can also continue to practice his job as a university lecturer – online. Attempts to escape are not punished, because the law recognizes the desire for freedom as the highest human good, but Sergei's attempts to escape all end up back in the Combinat, where he soon longs to return – by remote control.

The absurdity of a life dependent on random algorithms is literally reflected in the absurdity of the dialogues with judges, law enforcement officials, ministers of various denominations or with Sergei's wife. To her he is a living corpse. He ruined her life, which is why she doesn't want to have anything to do with him anymore, as she makes him understand with increasing absurdity in his repeated calls from the Combinat. The absurdity of Sergei's own mental state is shown by the fact that after a short while he gives the machine gun a name and greets it every day on his walks with „Hello Sasha“. The absurdity of this little novel culminates in a surreal happy ending when Sergei disappears into the distance with his favorite prison officer on a last walk to the applause of all the protagonists mentioned in the book standing in a row, like during credits in the cinema. While Sasha, the machine gun, blasts the floor tiles to pieces in the deserted Combinat hallway.

The main character of the book, Sergei, is reminiscent of all the key figures of the most famous anti-utopias at once, from D-503 to Josef K., but the conditions in which he is placed have never been told in such a way. With the exception of the small fantastic basic premise, this dystopia moves right on the edge of the real. With his own style of writing, his laconic language working with repetitive structures, Danilov has already exposed our everyday routines in several novels in an ironic, philosophical and frighteningly beguiling way. But his style combined with this shocking plot made this new novel become a masterpiece.

Danilov was born in Moscow in 1969. Writer, playwright, poet. Author of eight books of prose, five books of poetry and six plays. „The Man from Podolsk“ was shown in more than 50 theatres worldwide. Danilov lives in Moscow.



THE AUTHOR

translations
6 languages

awards
Yasnaya Polyana Award 2022
Book of the Year 2022
Moscow Art Prize 2021
Golden Mask Award 2018
Premio Letterare Internazionale
Citta di Cattolica 2016
Novy Mir Award 2012

samples available
english

other work
Description of a City
Horizontal Position
The Man from Podolsk
Serezha very stupid

Dmitri Danilov

literary fiction

"Dmitry Danilov's book seems to be about the future, but the world of ultimate comfort and utter bondage in which the novel's hero finds himself looks suspiciously familiar. This is a forecast for tomorrow that is already coming true today."

YURI SAPRYKIN

"You're alive, but you're dead. People are indifferent and selfish, but kind and unselfish. Nobody cares about you, but you are not alone. Each time we choose one of the two. And only Dmitry Danilov chooses both at once."

MARIA GALINA

"Excellent read by Dmitry Danilov. I heard it in early April 2022 while walking the streets of Moscow and when it came time to say goodbye to my beloved city."

LITRES (Anna about the audiobook)

"Everybody's forgiven Sergei but the state."

LIZA HAYDEN

Dmitri Danilov

Russian literary fiction

The Hell of Paradies

Novel. Moscow 2022. 150 pages

Russia's emperor has started a future digitalization project. With the ultimate goal of saving his own brain, his memory, so to speak himself, in order to be able to upload himself into his own completely renewed body after his physical death. Or into a sane double body with all previous information purged from its head. Like cleaning a computer before filling it with new content and uploading a new identity.

But when the Emperor wakes up one morning, he has doubts about his mental state. Didn't his scientists inform him correctly? Is he the victim of a conspiracy? Because maybe what he sees and feels is just the world that appears to his digitized consciousness and no longer to himself? Maybe now he's just a brain in a bottle with wires attached? So it just seems to him that everything is there, but actually there is nothing? Perhaps digitization is still being worked on and he is currently in an intermediate state before returning to real life? Or is he already dead and transformed into the head and body of one of his several doubles?

Is this perhaps already his paradise? Or hell? Or hellish paradise? Or heavenly hell?

The suspiciously anxious Emperor is trying to keep his head cool to find out if he's really alive or just a resurrected consciousness?

THE AUTHOR
incognito**translations**
8 languages**awards**
Penne Award (Italy)

Davydov is the pen name of a renown Russian author who has publicly spoken out against the war in Ukraine. But due to new law enforcement he decided to publish under a pen name. Davydov lives in Moscow.

Ivan Davydov

Russian Warship

Three short texts about the Russo-Ukrainian War written by Russian authors

It is a common belief that understanding great historical events takes time. For example, the novel "War and Peace" was written by Tolstoy half a century after the war with Napoleon. Everything is different now. A lot is immediately clear, especially if you are willing to perceive and know how to distinguish truth from lies.

Many Russian writers do not support the war between the Russian government and Ukraine. They persistently follow the events and try to create a documentary and artistic reflection of the war on hot tracks. These texts can become performances and films, but they are written in such a way that they are interesting to read - and everyone can run their own film in their imagination, their own performance about what is happening not only in Ukraine and Russia, but to all of us.

Come Back

is a story about a man from Ukraine living in Russia. In the winter of 2022 he falls into a coma, at the beginning of the summer he wakes up again and finds that war is raging. It seems totally unbelievable, fantastic to him. After his coma, he lost human language, doesn't know how to read, he hardly speaks, so he can't understand anything. But suddenly he sees on TV his own bombed house in Mariupol, where he lived as a child and where his parents live (or lived?). And he goes back there...

THE AUTHOR
incognito

translations
8 languages

Russian Warship

A bombed Ukrainian city. A Russian officer is chasing a girl who for some reason grabbed a machine gun. When he catches her in a basement, there is an explosion. Both find themselves buried under rubble, face to face. The girl is also Russian, but she left Russia to look for her sister. She is pro Ukraine. The officer and the girl are enemies. Ready to kill each other. But they are forced to survive together.

awards
Penne Award (Italy)

The Button or Putin's Double

Since the war, Putin has received letters, requests and warnings not to press the nuclear button, but also requests and demands to press it immediately. Before these letters are presented to Putin himself, some experts first test and study the reaction of a double of Putin. The double resembles Putin in psychophysics, and it is important for the observers to understand which of the submitted letters can be shown to Putin himself. The form of the text is phantasmagorical, but it uses also real letters and statements.

Davydov is the pen name of a renowned Russian author who has publicly spoken out against the war in Ukraine. But due to new law enforcement he decided to publish under a pen name. Davydov lives in Moscow.

Ivan Davydov

Russian literary fiction

Sfumato: Dead Birds are Flying

Political dystopia. Zakharov Publishers. Moscow 2019. 189 pages

Welcome to Russia 2032. There is peace in the world. Russia, Europe, the United States and China signed a convention ten years ago that completely ruled out a nuclear war of aggression. Tired of the Kremlin's aggression, the world community reached an agreement with Russia: in exchange for its own security, the West no longer cares how the Russian government treats its citizens under its isolated power and only occasionally checks whether foreign policy agreements are respected. Human rights or repression within Russia are considered to be their internal affair. Russia is fenced and the borders are closed. America is no longer the enemy, the rhetoric has changed completely. The taiga is almost entirely cut down, the Chinese – Russia's 'fraternal allies' - have founded productive farms on the permafrost. The whole country is divided into 'clusters': the more critical you are of the regime, the further away from Moscow you are banished. Moscow is the zero cluster and has already been cleaned of all harmful elements.

This frightening dystopia is shrewdly realistic and timely, with the author drawing on his own knowledge and experience from today's prison and law enforcement system in Russia, instead of simply staging a darkly conceived scifi reality. The hyper-real political landscape of the novel is explicitly not post-apocalyptic, but rather develops consistently from today's political realities. The fact that the political dimension of this dystopia extends beyond Russia makes it an Orwellian warning call. A radically austere style that takes your breath away. A shocking unemotional look at a not too distant possible future, in which there is nothing that could not already be found in today's Russia.



THE AUTHOR

other works

Agami – the sequel to Sfumato
Man in jail – narrative non fiction

sample translation

english

"An evil and sad dystopia – and the saddest part is that it's probably true. The purity and power of its first part is in no way inferior to Orwell's despair." VIKTOR SHENDEROVICH

"Conscious of human nature, Alexei Fedyarov demonstrates his insight to the highest degree ... It is hard not to believe his warning of the future, a future that lies ahead of the young and inexperienced as much as the old and wise. The brazen won't escape, nor will the fearless; neither the destitute nor the wealthy; neither the stupid, nor the clever – the planners of our future have a solution ready for everyone." ANNA BERSENEVA

"A successful dystopia is always a warning. It needs a very careful look at the present with a complete understanding of all psychological, historical and social mechanisms and trends, and then you have to pick up on these trends and persuade them convincingly. This is exactly what Fedyarov did ... This novel has frightened many readers and critics. And rightly so. Because it was written by a man who knows this world very well, and not just by hearsay." CARINA COCKRELL

"Fedyarov describes with astonishing exactitude the inability of our current elite to maintain the country in its current size and configuration." ARKADI DUBNOV

"I was shaken, left reeling just like after reading Kafka." VASILI GENERALOV

Aleksei Fedyarov was born in Chuvashia in 1976. After studying law, he worked as an investigator for the public prosecutor's office for ten years. In 2007, he started his own business. In 2013, he was suddenly arrested and convicted of 'particularly serious fraud' – a fate shared with many Russian entrepreneurs. He served a three-year sentence in a camp in the Urals. While still in custody, Fedyarov began filing appeals on behalf of other prisoners. Today he is not only a human rights activist, he is now head of the legal department of the Rus Sidyashchi Charity Fund, the only fund that helps Russian prisoners and their families. At the same time, he is the managing partner of a law firm. Fedyarov lives in Moscow.

Aleksei Fedyarov

Sfumato: Dead Birds are Flying

SUMMARY

The widower Anatoli is a postal clerk in the northernmost cluster FJL (Franz Joseph Land), to which those condemned for 'terrorism' or 'sodomy' are banished. However, they don't live in prisoner barracks, but in their own houses, sleeping on bed linen instead of bare beds. And they can send letters to other clusters with the exception of the zero cluster Moscow, which has already been cleansed of all harmful elements.

When Anatoli delivers the post to the neighboring island for censorship, as he does every week, he is arrested on account of a denunciation because, when drunk, he had spoken out in favor of using nuclear weapons against the 'brother states'. Under torture, Anatoli denounces his drinking buddy, both of whom are executed. Their neighbor Victoria is now taking care of Anatoli's son Stanislav. What she does not know: it was her own brother David, collaborator with high-up connections, who had denounced Anatoli.

Anatoli's son Stanislav also grows up unaware. At 16, he and his girlfriend Masha find themselves in a network of betrayal and envy that also affects their friends and families. Fortunately, the old secret service agent Sergei holds his protective hand over Stanislav and Masha. Along with other old intelligence officers, Sergei had become an enemy of the new convention. The old KGBers had only persevered because they alone were competent enough to organize the large-scale resettlement campaign. Done with the intellectuals, the oligarchs would have been the next and last ones. Most of the depopulated old cities have already been flattened and dug up by the Chinese, leaving no home to go back to. The malignant elements in the clusters die out so that less and less clusters are needed and the old intelligence officers finally get the situation back under their own control.

But Sergei can read the signs of the times: the old oppression system no longer works. Either Sergei himself becomes a victim and rots in a cluster or he joins in with the new slogan of 'integration', which promises a faster revival of Russia as an economic power.

Sergei sees himself not as a traitor to his old comrades in the secret service, but as far-sighted, since he is now pursuing the plan to take Stanislav and his girlfriend Masha to a special school on the site of the former Kremlin in Moscow. There the future generation will be vaccinated with the great historical significance of the Great Renovation. In fact, Stanislav tells his foster mother Victoria that he and his girlfriend will go to this school because they don't want to be victims; they hope to be influential in the future.

Horried, Victoria doesn't understand whether Stanislav made this decision out of conviction or out of immaturity. But then she herself, as the last representative of the old Moscow Intelligentsia, gets an offer from Sergei to manage the Integration media project, to gather as many survivors from that time as possible and re-educate people to the new system. Only after promising her a long life through medical intervention, Victoria agrees. And from now on, as a teacher, she always can stay connected, via a hologram bracelet, to her foster son Stanislav in the distant zero cluster Moscow.

Aleksei Fedyarov

What do you want?

Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2014. 170 pages

Publishers: France - Noir sur Blanc

Dasha is fourteen years old. Through her and with this book Senchin more or less grants us access to his own home by presenting his daughter, himself, his family and friends as typical representatives of a place and a time. With Dasha's documentary-like inner perspective Senchin brings us directly into the midst: we hear the conversations, observe the everyday life of a normal family who had moved from Siberia to Moscow, had been able to get more or less settled and is now able to keep their heads above water without acknowledging that their social situation is in fact a dead end. There are millions of such families in Moscow, and all of them would of course prefer to live in peace and prosperity.

At first glance Senchin seems to be describing two parallel realities: here the parents, there the youth. Yet the author does in fact leave everything to fourteen year old Dasha, through whose eyes and ears we experience the winter of 2011-2012 when civil protests were staged outside her home on the streets of Moscow. And inside the adults getting all worked up. What do they want there on Bolotnaya Square with their white armbands? Who are they, American agents or normal Russian people baring their souls? In this book it is not the pubescent teenagers who are the problem, it is the adults. Dasha finds more questions than answers when she tries to understand her parents' world. When, in the end, Dasha understands that parents can also have doubts, make mistakes, torture themselves helplessly, that her parents are also in the same state of incomprehension as the rest of the country, that is when she takes her first major steps towards adulthood.



THE AUTHOR

translations
13 languages

awards
Big Book Awards 2nd Prize 2015
National Bestseller shortlist 2010
Big Book Award shortlist 2010
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2009

sample translation available
full french

other works
Flood plains
The Eltyshes
Rain in Paris

"Senchin's prose is always about one thing for me: instinct. In its effect on me, on the reader. There are books that make you think. There are books that make you feel. Senchin's books arouse the survival instinct." *Irina Bogatyreva*

"Following the frighteningly hopeless ELTYSHEVS, which also focusses on a family, Senchin has come up with a book full of light and hope... Perhaps even the best of all the books Senchin has written." *Aleksei Varlamov*

Senchin was born in Siberia in 1971 where he subsequently grew up. Having completed his engineering studies he then went on to study at a Moscow literature institute where he still lectures today. His prose has made him one of the most prominent exponents of "New Realism". His works have so far been translated into German, French and a number of other languages. Senchin lives in Ekaterinburg.

Roman Senchin

Russian literary fiction

The Unknown

Novel. AST. Moscow 2017. 500 pages

Big Book shortlist 2017

Publishers: Slovak Republic - Slovart

The subtitle of Slapovski's most recent book is: "Novel of a Century 1917 to 2017". And indeed, the story begins with Nikolai Smirnov's entry into his diary on the 17th December 1917 and ends with a letter from Gleb Smirnov to his father Victor in 2017. Thus the novel is also a family saga spanning five generations, but not in the usual way as there is neither a clear picture of the family Smirnov nor of 20th century Russia. The family-tree is shown in the appendix and only a few of the members of family are given a chance to speak. Two separate branches of the family are presented, whose narratives either overlap or leave gaps in time.

What may appear to be a design error in the novel, is intentionally so composed with style and content consistently applied. Noteworthy are the gaps in the family mosaic which automatically bring the fissures of the previous Russian century to the fore. Slapovski holds the family together over a century merely by story-telling, which in hindsight, does not yield any final truths. Every character is influenced by their own epoch and narrates in their own particular style - diaries, letters, interviews, short stories, emails - thereby mirroring the time in which they live. It is only in a judicial report that we learn of Anton Smirnov's career as an unwitting crook, for which he was sentenced to death in 1962. The only common thread in all these different lives is the presence and influence of the Russian secret service.

In THE UNKNOWN Slapovski's well-known ability of remaining authentic over the whole stylistic bandwidth as well as his much-vaunted empathy with each of his insignificant and bungling protagonists, which were recently reviled as "too soft" by patriotically disposed critics, come together creating a magnificent multi-faceted novel. There is no single style that smooths the image of the century. No hubristic judgment of the individual fate. Many members of the family recognize that they are on their way into the unknown. Significantly, the succession stops for those who react with a closed life-plan because they fear the unknown future too much. THE UNKNOWN is thus a courageous response to new and old political reflexives in Russia: the rising self-emancipating and self-opening society being harassed from above and isolated from the world.



THE AUTHOR

translations
8 languages

awards
Big Book shortlist 2017
Penne Award (Italy) 2009

other work
Genii

Slapovski was born in 1957 in Saratov. He holds a degree in philology from the university of Saratov. He worked as a school teacher, truck driver and journalist. His writing debut was a theater piece in 1985. He won several awards (Eugén O'Neill Drama Festival/USA, European Theater Festival/D-Kassel, Moscow Theater Competition). He has successfully written several novels and TV-series and has been nominated four times for the Russian Booker and two times for Big Book Award. His works are translated into many languages. Slapovski lives in Moscow.

Aleksei Slapovski

Russian literary fiction

The Lighthouse

Novel. AST. Moscow 2010. 231 pages

Publishers: China - People's Literature, Egypt - Al Arabi, France - Mirobole, Italy - Fandango, Macedonia - Tri, Poland - Draga, Romania - Alfa

Maxim Ermakov weighs four kilogram's less than a normal person. Even as a child, his head felt as light and empty as a balloon. With his good grades and a good deal of application he manages to become the PR manager for a chocolate factory. Ermakov is an almost normal representative of the new Moscow middle class, what he earns is not bad, he loves the free market, his Toyota and his apartment (apart from the landlady). He enjoys the little personal luxuries he has worked for. Ermakov is still single. Then he receives a visit from two gentlemen from the state Institute of Social Prognosis. They maintain that tests reveal that he radiates a damaging alpha field triggering world catastrophes. Ermakov is responsible for climate damage, terror attacks, car accidents, fires and, illness. He needs to end his life voluntarily for the good of mankind. The alpha field will be eradicated only if he commits suicide. The state will make him a posthumous hero, complete with proper compensation as well. Ermakov does not want to, however. He has had too much of a taste of individual freedom and determining his own way of life to be able to sacrifice himself for the reasons of a state with he no longer identifies at all. He feels himself to be more a citizen of the world than a state citizen. Anyone who does not listen to Russian authorities must be made to feel. Ermakov is put under pressure and under obvious surveillance, the door to his apartment smeared with slogans, his landlady gives him notice, his company demotes him and the mob demonstrates on the street against the man refusing to grant salvation from evil.

Only one person sticks by him, little Lyusia from his company. Having lost his job, money, apartment and reputation he finds a safe little haven of love and marriage with her. And then the Institute of Social Prognosis announces that they had made a mistake. The pressure is off him. And Lyusia falls pregnant. Anyone believing in a happy ending for Russia is very much mistaken, however.

With sound, witty punch lines and razor sharp analysis, Slavnikova's quasi-literary experiment puts archetypal Russian qualities under the conditions of globalisation to the test: individualism versus communism, self versus society, the willingness to make sacrifices versus egoism. What is the Russian soul still worth today? A scandalously entertaining book as the logical sequel to the author's analysis of Putinocracy in her successful novel "2017", just in another genre. One could define LIGHT HEAD as a political farce if it were not for the very bitter ending, as bitter as that in the Orwell adaptation of Monty Python's BRAZIL.

"The irrational absurdity does not disturb the reading, on the contrary, it reinforces the tragic impression." *Ex Libris*

"A high-tension, entertaining, but absolutely frightening novel devoid of hope." *Vedomosti*

Slavnikova was born in 1957 near Ekaterinburg. She writes reviews and essays for Novy mir, Znamya, Oktyabr. She was a member of the Russian booker prize jury in 1999. In 2000 she was part of the board for the Novy mir Prize for short stories and now organizes the Debut Prize of the Pokolenie fund. Her novel "Strekoza, uvelichennaya do razmerov sobaki" was shortlisted for the booker prize in 1997. "Odn zerkale" won the Bazgov Prize and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 2000. Slavnikova lives in Moscow.



THE AUTHOR

translations
20 languages

awards
Big Book Award shortlist 2018
Yasnaya Polyana Award 2018
Book of the Year 2018
National Bestseller shortlist 2018
Gorky Award Italy 2012
Gjenima Prize (US) 2006-2007
Russian Booker Prize 2006

sample translation available
full english, french

other works
The Jump
The Immortal
2017
Love in the 7th Train

Olga Slavnikova

Russian literary fiction

The Bridge Protection Committee

Novel. AST Publishers. Moscow 2023. 416 pages

They were playing Minecraft, but the court believed they intended to blow up the new bridge over the Yenisei. They worked as mechanics, doctors, businessmen - but life forced them to set up a committee to save their own children. They were journalists and came across a bloody history of provocation and a Siberian cult.

This is a book about anger - fueling heroes whose children are in danger. This is a book about Siberia - the events of the novel take place in Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk and Tomsk. This is a book of hope - that the heroes might be able to resist the terrible Siberian history and the prosecutor's bloodthirstiness.

In Krasnoyarsk, an extremist organization called „Committee“ is on trial. Its seven members (mostly students from the local and Novosibirsk universities) are accused of wanting to blow up a new bridge over the Yenisei.

Nikita, an investigative journalist for an online portal, also starts researching and comes to the conclusion that the „Committee“ case is an attempt to weaken the oligarch Ruzhinsky, a prominent party official. When the oligarch's daughter suddenly disappears and Nikita is interrogated, he decides to ask the reclusive oligarch Ruzhinsky himself for help. Nikita learns from him that there is no daughter and that someone obviously made up the story on purpose.

The parents are also trying to save their children. But all in vain: they are not released, a middleman is killed in a strange way, their money is gone. There they find a strange helper Zhenya who has been gathering other parents around for some time. Zhenya convinces everyone else that the children were taken by the Winter Prosecutor, a cannibal of a Siberian legend. The only salvation would be a special ceremony - they would have to weave a magic web that alone could capture the enemy who sits in the regional administration.

“About honor in dishonorable times - and about old cliques: old-fashioned, drunk, corrupt and pointless, but which forces the heroes to become the true heart of society, which lives and beats. Until death.”

SHAMIL IDIATULLIN

Dmitri Zakharov was born in 1979 in a ‚closed‘ city in Siberia near Krasnoyarsk. After training as a journalist, he worked as a correspondent and editor for Kommersant newspaper and headed various marketing departments in the government and the private sectors. Dmitri Zakharov lives in St. Petersburg



THE AUTHOR

sample translation
english

other works
Moscow Banksy

Dmitri Zakharov

Russian literary fiction

Moscow Banksy

(Middle Edda)

Political thriller. AST Publishers. Moscow 2019. 347 pages

Suddenly, new graffiti appears in Moscow week after week with a clock-face in the corner, the painted hand creeping towards 12. The grotesque works of an anonymous graffiti artist each represent a different member of the new bureaucratic nomenklatura - each of whom dies shortly afterwards. While the graffiti artist quickly becomes a new icon for the liberal protest movement, spin doctors close to the Kremlin are frantically trying to reveal his identity.

But the power elites are divided. Some arrest well-known opposition street artists and hire teams of 'censors' who immediately paint over any new graffiti to prevent the image being distributed via social networks. When images of the cleaned-up graffiti are posted all over Moscow, other power clans interpret this as an attack from their competitors and start a violent search for the ringleader among the city administration, oil companies and oligarchs.

Meanwhile, some representatives of the corrupt power hierarchy are ready to pay huge sums for the next graffiti to depict one of their opponents. A large opposition rally in the center of Moscow turns out to be staged by people with a great deal at stake in the struggle for future power. When the demo turns into a bloody battle it serves as a welcome distraction from their political intrigue: the dismissal of the government, the flight of the speaker of parliament abroad and the long-prepared installation of a puppet candidate as deputy spokesman and formally number two in the state hierarchy. And number one, if anything happens to the president.

Everyone in Moscow is convinced that the twelfth graffiti will show the president. The city is paralysed when the presidential limousine's escort stops unscheduled in the center of Moscow. Despite the utmost security precautions, it is clear to everyone - it's the president next.

"It is not us that are like that, it's life and the novel too. The book of a generation, the death knell of a decade, and quite simply a novel of its time- bitter, angry and at the same time full of hope."

SHAMIL IDIATULLIN

"Exactly the novel about here and now that we have been missing for so long. Chamber play and global epos at the same time; an emotional story about living people, an exciting thriller, a razor-sharp, socially critical drama."

GALINA YUZEFOVICH

"A political crime thriller, an anti-utopia, a Russian Dogville, a saga about the battle of the Norse gods ... But above all a searching and relentless diagnosis of the generation of the Russian 2000s, painful and timely."

ALEKSANDR GAVRILOV

Dmitri Zakharov was born in 1979 in a 'closed' city in Siberia near Krasnoyarsk. After training as a journalist, he worked as a correspondent and editor for Kommersant newspaper and headed various marketing departments in the government and the private sectors. Dmitri Zakharov lives in St. Petersburg



THE AUTHOR

sample translation

english

Dmitri Zakharov

Russian literary fiction

Moscow Banksy

(Middle Edda)

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

"The book is definitely fantastical, but underneath all the layers of the author's imagination lies the unfailingly recognizable daily life of Russia. The bloody battle on Tverskaya and the predetermined 'public hearings' are portrayed with both detachment and a high degree of drama, like battle scenes in the movies. The contemporary slang scattered across the pages and the mentions of real people bring about a terrible realisation – that here – slightly blurred – is our reality."
THE VILLAGE

"The author was said to have described the Moscow protests from last summer particularly well – and yet the novel was finished six months before these events. Bizarrely, the book even reflects the story of the shaman walking to Moscow, although nothing was known about the shaman when the author was working on the text ... Middle Edda calls to mind the best early novels by Victor Pelevin - Generation P, Chapaev, and Void – this is a book in which we recognize a cynical image of ourselves."
POLIT.RU

"The behind-the-scenes plotting generates fury. But the novel also shows something of value in our times. Love, the pursuit of justice – the very thing that tends to slip away behind the blinkers of political media hype."
PSYCHOLOGIES

"It couldn't be more of the moment! A masterful cocktail of intrigues of power, opposition struggles, mysticism and more than appropriate swearing and slang. A mass of hidden motives, manipulat-i-on, provocation, and kickbacks."
LIVELIB

"Middle Edda has just one purpose: to portray the present. Whether blindly feeling his way, applying genuine skill or simply getting straight to the point, Zakharov assumes the stark responsibility of leading contemporary Russian literature into the field of political pronouncements – at the very least this is not only a seductive, but also an encouraging endeavor."
PROCHTENIE

"The author manages to tell a lively and consistent story, to convey both subtle psychology and battle scenes. And this has a very unexpected effect: the further you move away from the novel, the more interesting and clear its contours become. In that sense, Middle Edda is an impressionist novel. This effect is also achieved by the fact that the readers have a lot to do for themselves. The author does not lead them by the hand, but presents what initially appear to be unrelated pictures and scenes from life, and then the reader must finish the job, must think and join the dots, in order to complete the text in his head. But the thin line between meaningless clutter and deliberate device is not crossed."
DENIS EPIFANTSEV

Dmitri Zakharov

true story
memoir

Russian true story | memoir

Sugar Child

A story of a girl from the last century as told by Stella Nudolskaya

Memoir. KompasGide. Moscow 2013. 160 pages with photographs
With a preface by Lyudmila Ulitskaya

Publishers: Arabic - Arab Scientific Publishers , Belgium - Clavis, Bulgaria - Tochitsa, France - Editions des quatre vivants, Germany - Aufbau, India - Saikatham, Latvia - Janis Roze, Netherlands - Clavis

Autobiographical memory of Stalin's repressions and experience of surviving exile true story, coming-of-age, survival experience, mother/daughter relationship, historical drama

What is it like to be a „public enemy“ from one day to the next, to be exposed to Stalin's repressions - the Great Terror? Stella Nudolskaja experienced it with her parents in the Soviet Union of the 1930s.

Separated from their father, who was killed by the Soviet regime, mother and daughter Elia were deported from Moscow to Kyrgyzstan in 1937, where they were humiliated, marginalized, hungry and suffering. Their lives resemble an odyssey from one labour camp to the next, from one foreign environment to the next; uncertainty and fear as constant companions. Nevertheless, mother and daughter maintain an independent and dignified attitude to life. And: they take back home with storytelling and singing.

Elia and her mother are released when the construction of the camp is completed. But they are then forced to stay in the region and, above all, to find work and housing on their own. When her mother coughs and gets sick ending up suffering lying on the ground near a barn, they have nothing left. Elia does not lose courage, and knocks on the door of a farm that houses a very large family headed by a good, courageous and taciturn man, Saveli Yuzhakov. He takes Elia and her mother in and treats them well. They call Elia „kant bala“ (Child of sugar in Kyrgyz), because of the whiteness of her skin. 1941, Russia enters the Second World War and her mother is forced to leave her job. She finds a job as a German teacher. 1946, Elia and her mother are allowed (thanks to a falsified document) to return to Moscow and some time later they are rehabilitated. They learned many years later that the father died at Magadan camp in 1940.

This novel of the deportation narrated by a little Russian girl is a great lesson in humanity for all. Protected by a mother whose courage does not leave her, she asks the legitimate and just questions that children ask themselves. Her mother never fails to show her the path of dignity, to look forward, while avoiding the unspeakable. This novel is also a novel of solidarity and kindness, when men are subjected to the torments of history. As she herself says, Elia has forgotten the bad people she met, she only remembers the good ones, despite the wounds inflicted. And throughout her exile in the Kyrgyz lands, solidarity and mutual aid will allow her to escape the most difficult moments when illness and poverty make her foresee death. „Sugar Child“ is full of scary and cruel scenes, but none of them overcome its overall light and inspiring tone.



THE AUTHOR

translations
8 languages

awards

2015 Russian Children's Choices
2015 Leo Tolstoy Prize short-list
2014 V. Krapivin Prize Diploma
2014 Children's of Saint Petersburg
and Region choice
2013 Knigooroo Prize Longlist

sample available
full french

Olga Gromova

Russian true story | memoir

At a time of global antagonisms and differentiation of all kinds, this story shows that man is still man, when life is at stake. And that different peoples, languages, cultures are able to coexist and support each other. A story about love, and yet about dignity and freedom. As in Roberto Benigni's film „Life is Beautiful“, a father manages to get through the horror of Nazi concentration camps with a smile on his son's face, in this book a mother guides her daughter with great dignity and perspective through deportation and misery. A beautiful educational novel, a love story about the strength of the heart and freedom leaving the reader moved to tears and stronger. As Elia's mother says: „Slavery is a state of mind. Free man can't be made a slave.“

In 1988, Olga Gromova, active librarian and editor-in-chief of the specialized journal „Biblioteka v shkole“, met her neighbour, Stella (nicknamed Elia) Doubrova (Noudolskaya - which is her mother's maiden name), who gradually tells her her personal story. Olga Gromova turned it into a strong and tender book for young people, in which the reader accompanies the girl Elia through all her impassable life.

First published in a newspaper in the form of four short stories entitled „Ne pozvoliaï sebe boyatsia“, the text immediately found its young audience. Stella continued her writing work, then left Olga to finish and publish the novel. In the 1980s, Stella Doubrova (Nudolskaya) participated in demonstrations against political repression in Russia and worked as a volunteer for the Memorial Association.

„Sugar Child“ is not a pure memoir, but also a literary novel: despite the story on behalf of little Elia, the author does not give any „children's look“ at the history of the 1930s-1940s, does not play with readers by a pretended „retransformation into a child“: On the contrary, behind the story of the girl the adult is clearly visible. Perhaps this is the reason why the story, which was originally aimed at 12-16 year old readers, is no longer perceived as „young adult“, but has become part of the great Russian literature.

„„Sugar Child“ is the documentary fact of a miracle – the education of a human personality under inhuman conditions. At the same time it is a guide through the vanished camp world, which enables us to see in detail both the anthropology of the state crime and the hidden secret of the emerging resistance.“ *Sergei Lebedev*

„This true story full of light about Stalinist oppression, seen through the eyes of a child sent into exile in Central Asia in the 1930s, makes a significant contribution to the fragile memory of contemporary Russia, where exploration of the period is increasingly marginalized.“ *Le Monde*

„The experience of our long history shows that even under the most tragic circumstances, parents have succeeded in raising morally upright children. To convince us of this, a literature helps that does not report on politicians and commanders, but on the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people in their everyday lives.“ *Evgeni Yamburg*



Olga Gromova

narrative
non-fiction

Russian narrative non-fiction

Man in Jail

Narrative non-fiction. Alpina Publishers. Moscow 2019. 269 pages

Foreign rights: Poland/ Czarne

The heroes of this documentary book are convicted Russian prisoners with varying degrees of ability to survive physically and morally under conditions of total deprivation of liberty, constant humiliation, hunger, slave labor and separation from relatives. All first and last names were changed. Yet these are true stories of people in camp confinement.

The author tells from his own experience about the years he spent as a prisoner, first in a remand prison and then in the Tagil penal camp for former law enforcement officers. The reader is immersed in a world of lawlessness in which prisoners want to survive and the guards try to squeeze as much as possible out of them.

The book is not a protest manifesto, but a factual report. Neutral in its basic tone, in the fates described sometimes bitter, sometimes funny, sometimes philosophical, but always honest and touching.

The accompanying text to the book written by Olga Romanova, TV and radio journalist and director of the NGO „Russia in Jail“, who emigrated to Germany after being threatened by the Russian authorities:

„Clever and not very honest and real criminals, rich and poor, prison authorities and servants - none of them can leave the camp. They are all forced to learn the hard and unwritten rules of another life. One can endure it, another cannot. Despite the lack of references to the Bible, these stories can be considered biblical. Instructive without preaching, exciting without a crime plot or melodrama, written in the very precise language of a person who has lived, experienced and understood all this himself.“



THE AUTHOR

other works

Sfumato

Agami - the sequel to Sfumato

Aleksei Fedyarov was born in Chuvashia in 1976. After studying law, he worked as an investigator for the public prosecutor's office for ten years. In 2007, he started his own business. In 2013, he was suddenly arrested and convicted of 'particularly serious fraud' – a fate shared with many Russian entrepreneurs. He served a three-year sentence in a camp in the Urals. While still in custody, Fedyarov began filing appeals on behalf of other prisoners. Today he is not only a human rights activist, he is now head of the legal department of the Rus Sidyashchi Charity Fund, the only fund that helps Russian prisoners and their families. At the same time, he is the managing partner of a law firm. Fedyarov lives in Moscow.

Aleksei Fedyarov

narrative non-fiction

Man in Jail

PRESS REVIEWS 1

"The book ... is less about prison than about Russia and the relationship between government and society."
RADIO LIBERTY

"As you read this book, it becomes very clear that we are in danger. It's very easy to be fooled. And our justice system will not disappoint us... It's an informative report on the inner workings of the prison system. And it seems somewhat well known. Which adds to the effect that our quiet, sated life is approaching an existence behind the barbed wire."
LIVELIB

"One reads in one breath, in one day, although sometimes a lump in the throat rises. Convoy, SIZO, SHIZO - these words rise in your memory, you push them away and tell yourself that it will certainly never happen to you, but then you remember the stories you read and understand that nothing in this life and in this country is certain. And when you get out of jail, that's it, you're a different person. Yes, someone may have been waiting for you, but you are still branded, society looks at you differently. This book is about the broken destinies of various men, supported by the warmth of their mothers and wives. It's not just about the harshness of the prison walls, but also about the management that exists in this system, if you can call it that, an algorithm of bullying and humiliation."
LIVELYB

"The book is not about ordinary convicts, but about former employees of the institutions. Who, like everyone else, are behind bars, without much advantage. Fedyarov writes in such a way that one feels both the fateful and the repulsive. Yes, a perpetrator must go to prison, nobody denies that. And if he is not a criminal? Or if he has committed a less serious crime, but was convicted according to a completely different paragraph? There are more than one such cases in the book."
LIVELIB

"The first book in a long time where I couldn't get away from reading. I cried and laughed. He writes simply and interestingly about what seems absurd, about what is sad and very scary. In some places it reminds me of Ilf and Petrov, in others it reminds me of Victor Frankl, Bulgakov and Stephen King in *The Shawshank Redemption*."
LITRES

"Many people in today's Russia are threatened with imprisonment in camps. Those who are being imprisoned. And those who imprison. And it will always be like this until something changes in our consciousness. Only then will there be justice, elected and responsible authorities, honest police... But for now, these are just wishful thinking."
LITRES

Aleksei Fedyarov

narrative non-fiction

Man in Jail

PRESS REVIEWS 2

"The book is incredibly valuable. In simple language, the author tells of the wonders and horrors of the Gulag in the 21st century. One unknowingly remembers the stories of Shalamov and thinks about how similar Fedyarov's stories are, and one involuntarily feels confusion and sadness: Why has almost nothing changed for so long, for so many dozens of years – neither in the organization of the prisons nor in human nature? Reading this book, I have experienced the whole range of emotions, and despite the incredible and sometimes very terrible events that the author carefully documents, one still has the feeling that justice – will come, that light at the end of the tunnel - will certainly appear, that the human soul – is the most important thing we have, and is so easily in danger of being lost."

BOOKVOED

LONG REVIEW by Mikhail Shevelev

"War, hospital and prison were and are one of the main sources of Russian literature. With regard to modern wars, the late Vladimir Makanin said more than anyone else, in my opinion, with the novel *Asan*. The hospital was described by Maxim Osipov in his notes *In the Homeland*. And the prison now came to us in the form of a book by Alexey Fedyarov: *Man in Jail*.

The author is a former public prosecutor from Cheboksary who left the public service and went into business and was then sentenced under the *Fraud Clause*, after which all our entrepreneurs have been imprisoned and will still be going to jail.

Man in Jail is a story about today's Russian camp, its inhabitants – prisoners and guards alike – and their relations with the free world.

The tradition of camp prose in Russian literature is rich – from Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn and Razgon to the current, youngest authors: Oleg Navalny, the notes of Mikhail Zakharin, who was sentenced to life imprisonment. In this tough competitive environment, Alexei Fedyarov's stories cut a very good figure. In many respects they even maintain the level of the honourable predecessors. In terms of love of life and the ability to find something cheerful about the most tragic circumstances, they are comparable to Dunskey and Frid's *Notes of a camp idiot*, and through the attention to detail and accuracy of language, they are comparable to Dovlatov's *Zone*.

But there is one characteristic of *Man in Jail* that distinguishes it from the others – both historical and contemporary examples. His stories are not only and not so much about prison, which once again threatens each of us at every corner. It is about the ability not to bend, to survive and to win – not against prison, but against something further above – the state. The author is once again in freedom and not only got back on his feet, but also began to help others who found themselves in a similar situation. Meanwhile he is a successful lawyer and head of the legal department of the charity foundation *Russia in Jail*, one of the founders of the children's camp *Terra Nostra*, where children whose parents are innocently imprisoned are admitted free of charge..."

Aleksei Fedyarov

non-fiction

Russian non-fiction

A Recent History of Russia in 14 Bottles of Vodka

How the Number One Russian Drink Draws Together Business, Corruption and Crime

Non-fiction. Individuum. Moscow 2021. 352 pages

Vodka is one of the most iconic symbols of Russia, a drink that's synonymous with its people. A drink that is even hard to understand. It's also an incredibly profitable business. Where there is money, there is blood, power, dizzying ups and downs and, of course, silence. This book speaks up about these super-lucrative assets and universally known brands.

A Recent History of Russia in 14 Bottles of Vodka opens the public's eyes to the events of the past thirty years and shows them from an unexpected and thrilling point of view.



THE AUTHOR

"Puzyryov's book is true Russian non-fiction."
MEDUZA

"It's a real mine of plots for new movies and TV series. It's hard to believe that we witnessed such fantastic events."
MITYA BORISOV

Denis Puzyryov is an alumnus of the SPbU faculty of journalism. He has been in business journalism since 2010: he was the head of consumer market department and then the investigation department of RBC. Denis focused on professional sports, alcohol beverages and the tobacco market. He works as an editor at Sports.ru.

Denis Puzyrev

belorussian
literary
fiction

Belarusian literary fiction

Paranoia

Novel. AST. Russia 2009. 382 pages

Publishers: Finland - Like, Germany - Volland&Quist, UK/US - Northwestern University Press, Sweden - Ersatz

A totalitarian regime in Eastern Europe. The young author Anatoli leads a relatively unnoticed life – until he meets the mysterious Yelisaveta and begins a passionate affair with her. Slowly though, Anatoli has increasingly the feeling that Yelisaveta is leading a double life: apparently she also has a relationship with the head of the intelligence service. The ménage à trois explodes when Yelisaveta becomes pregnant. All of a sudden she disappears without a trace, and Anatoli is summoned to a meeting with the all-powerful intelligence service. After several interrogations, the boundary between apparent reality and intelligence-service-speak becomes blurred. And Anatoli has to accept that every breath is monitored and recorded, that every smile is registered, that the one and only function of the walls around him is for eavesdropping, and that in the streets there is no such thing as a chance meeting. Paranoia takes over.

An electrifying political thriller and a tragic story of love and betrayal, which if nothing else shines a spot-light on the methods of Big Brother in the 21st century. As Martinovich himself says: "One does not need to write a new '1984' anymore, one just needs to look around."

"No political novel could be more up-to-date or oppressive."
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

"PARANOIA is an excellent novel that has to be read: on the one hand, because it exposes the mechanisms of a paranoid state-apparatus in a most thrilling way. And on the other hand, because it is a love-story with an intensity that is rarely to be found in modern-day literature. And a damned tragic love-story at that ... His use of language, his feeling for rhythm and his inventiveness are overwhelming. You don't just read this chronicle of paranoia foretold, you get steamrolled by it."
Deutschlandradio Kultur

"PARANOIA has an energy and a nerve of its own – a refreshing sign that cultural life in Belarus has not been defeated."
The New York Times



THE AUTHOR

translations
4 languages

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

sample translation available
english

other works
Lake of Joy
Mova
Revolution
Night

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.

Viktor Martinovich

Belarusian literary fiction

Revolution

Novel. Manuscript 2017. 268 pages**Publishers:** Germany - Volland&Quist**Theatres:** Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Volkstheater München

He, a professor at a private Moscow university; she, a waitress in a bar; for both it is a case of love at first sight. But one day he leaves their apartment near the Moscow television tower never to be seen again. And now Martinovich's nameless hero begins to explain to his beloved Olya in a long letter why he has not been in touch all this time. He wants to tear down the wall of lies he has erected piece by piece between himself and Olya.

An unknown organization, which knows everything about him, including his financial debts, blackmails him into carrying out small favours. Why is anyone interested in him at all? As a professor at the university he turns free-thinking minds to a perfect fit for industry and government use. Knowledge is power. And his will to power is the only rational means by which the chaos in the nation might be controlled. That is the situation as presented to him by the godfather of the organization. He feels intellectually flattered, and carries on. The favours become more demanding. His doubts are eased by frequent, unexpected privileges, which confirm the influence of the secret organization.

As he is offered promotion within the organization, but only on the condition that he leaves Olya for ever, he decides to quit. But it seems to be too late. His attempt to flee abroad across the border fails, as his friends, who he now sees as his enemies, are always one step ahead. Slowly he realizes that he has to overcome a different sort of boundary. Freedom lies in a flight forward. There has to be a revolution from within. He plans his own revolution down to the finest detail. Anticipating his opponent's every move and ruthlessly applying terror and violence, he manages to overthrow the organization. But on the day of his coming to power, he finally understands that he has now reached the position where the former godfather always wanted him to be.

While Martinovich's debut novel PARANOIA explores subjugation to an autocratic state-service, his recent novel REVOLUTION shows the other side of the coin: subservience to the corruption of power.



THE AUTHOR

translations
4 languages

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

sample translation
english

other works
Lake of Joy
Mova
Paranoia
Night

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.

Viktor Martinovich

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.

„In fact, Martinovich is trying to do for Belarus what Gabrielle Garcia Marquez has done before. He brought the village of Makondo into world literature. And in it, as if in a nutshell, all Colombia, and even all of Latin America, with its mystical thinking, the belief in God and at the same time the dead, and endless military coups.“
BELARUSSKI ZHURNAL

„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



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

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.

Viktor Martinovich

Belarusian literary fiction

Mova

Novel. Logvinau. Belarus 2014. 238 pages

Publishers: Germany - Volland&Quist, Latvia - Prometejs

Minsk in the year 2044, a provincial town in the north-west of the United States of China and Russia. Family and love are considered to be out-dated concepts, spiritual needs are fulfilled by consuming and advertising. Despite draconian punishments a particular drug somehow and repeatedly manages to get into the country: mova. Anyone who reads the mova note, hardly understands a word, but experiences a wonderfully euphoric high. Chinese triads, Belarusian underground insurgents and the national narcotics control office are tangled up in a drug war. Or is there more to it than meets the eye?



THE AUTHOR

translations
5 languages

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

sample translation available
english
full german

other works
Lake of Joy
Paranoia
Revolution
Night

"MOVA is funny. MOVA is sad. MOVA is full of surprises. It is bizarre, it is a thriller, a nightmare – and intoxicating. A powerfully un-cut drug in the form of a book, a fix of which can only be heartily recommended." *Deutschlandradio Kultur*

"Using the techniques of pop literature MOVA lays bare both the power structures of authoritarian systems and of the supposedly meaningless consumer society. A hilarious barrage of absurd incidents and unexpected twists." *literaturkritik.de*

"... a masterpiece ... The author's power of language and richness of ideas create a captivating atmosphere. And thanks to this skill the novel develops into a fascinating literary trip." *WDR 3*

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.

Viktor Martinovich

Belarusian literary fiction

The Good always Wins

Novel. Novel. Manuscript. Minsk 2023. approx. 320 pages**Publishers:** Germany - Volland&Quist**ATTENTION:** Only backup copies of this text exist in the West. In order not to endanger the personal safety of the author and his family in Belarus, a translation should not be published until 2025 at the earliest.

Summer 2020. Mass protests against Lukashenko's regime out on the streets of Minsk. Inside the State Theater the rehearsals for a contemporary play about the Inquisition process against Joan of Arc. Matvei has only a small supporting role. The big role in his life awaits him elsewhere.

Matvei has to save the cat of his beloved former teacher from her apartment, because she was sentenced to prison for a critical social media post. He manages to take home Heidegger the cat, who meows his pitiful hungry "Daazain". Feeding him becomes more important to Matvei than the protests on the streets or the long theater rehearsals. While buying cat food Matvei gets caught in a raid and is sentenced to prison. A punk poet, Lady Di, who is also on trial, manages to convince the judge to acquit her by speaking boldly. She wants to make the world a better place, her weapon is words. She promises Matvei to take care of Heidegger during his arrest.

Released after 40 days Matvei finds out that the judge resigned. Also the ranks of the best-known TV propagandists gave up their jobs – due to Lady Di's powerfully eloquent persuasive skills? Only one last chief propagandist keeps rushing. The theatre premiere is banned by the censors, moving it to an exile stage in Vilnius brings no attention. The depressed theatre diva commits suicide. It seems that the dead Belarusian culture can no longer be brought back to life, even in exile.

Matvei is blacklisted in Belarus and remains unemployed for 16 months. His savings are gone. He has nothing to lose and decides to kill the still agitating chief propagandist. Arriving at the hater's apartment he finds Lady Di murdered by secret service agents and the hater writhing in remorse, and begging for forgiveness. Instead of murderous hatred, Matvei starts feeling empathy with him and understands: before having been murdered Lady Di had managed to convince this last hater to renounce the deadly poison of propaganda. In the end, the good always wins.



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
Night

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 somewhere in the backcountry of Belarus.

Viktor Martinovich