

Romanian Authors

Livia Stoia Literary Agency
&
Illustrata Agency

Translation Grants

The Romanian Cultural Institute, through the National Book Center, has two financing programmes for translations of Romanian books abroad:

- **Translation and Publication Support / TPS** (supports the translation and publication abroad of relevant fiction and non-fiction works belonging to Romanian authors in the fields of literature, arts, social sciences and the humanities);
- **Publishing Romania** (publishing albums and books showcasing Romanian culture).

Details: <https://www.cennac.ro/>

Spring 2023



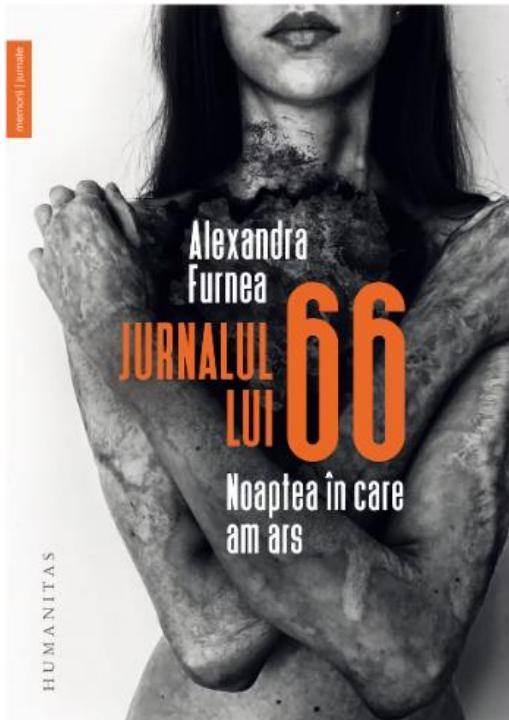
NONFICTION

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Diary of 66. The Night I Burned

Alexandra Furnea



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Pages: 256

Publication: 2022

Topic: Memoir

On October 30, 2015, a fire broke out in the Colectiv club in Bucharest, during a concert held by the rock band Goodbye to Gravity. 186 people were injured, and the death toll reached 65. It was the worst incident of this kind in post-December Romania. Alexandra Furnea was 27 years old when she was injured in Colectiv. This book is her testimony about the night of the fire, about the experience in the Burn Hospital in Bucharest and about the consequences of corruption and carelessness.

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For a Piece of Bread

Memories for Everybody to Know How Common People Lived during Communism

Liliana Nechita



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: Italian translation, English sample

Pages: 128

Publication: 2022

Rights sold: Italian

Topic: Memoir; Communism

The book starts with a short personal presentation of the Communist system in Romania and continues with many memories from the author's childhood until she became an adult, when the black period of history ended with the 1989 Revolution.

The author speaks about the long queues for buying bread or the long nights when people stood in front of the shops, even in hard winter, waiting for the bottles of milk, there are memories about the orphans and about the fear of being overheard speaking something that you should not say. Life is full of prohibitions, one can't pray in peace in the church, can't listen to the music they like, can't go dancing because it could be interpreted as a preach in favour of the condemned West. Love is useless, but many children have to be born so that the whole nation becomes stronger. Everything is settled in order to increase Socialism and Ceauşescu watches all, as his picture hangs on every single wall. Meanwhile, all children learn that he is the most beloved son of the country. Signs of dictatorship are everywhere, but the young girl doesn't know she isn't free. Like a bird born in a cage, she does not know that she could actually fly. Soon, the Revolution comes and the grey life is replaced by a rainbow-like one.

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Through all these memories, Liliana Nechita wants to present the nowadays readers how dictatorship managed to rule over everyone's brain and how common people actually lived during Communism, as she is convinced history repeating itself can be avoided by knowing how things happened.

Liliana Nechita (b. 1968) is a Romanian writer who has been living and working in Italy for more than sixteen years. After the publication of her first book, *Cireșe amare* (Bitter Cherries), she received the 2013 Woman of the Year Award for the promotion and the defense of women's rights. Inspired by her book, the national television channel TVR1 started a series called "The Mothers' Exodus". Liliana publishes her second book in 2017, *The Empress* presenting the migration of Romanian men and women who seek work in the West, abandoning their villages and families. Both books have been published in Italy and the author was invited to several international literary festivals. Liliana Nechita also published a short stories collection, *Mud Doll* (2020). For a Piece of Bread is her latest book.

Other books by Liliana Nechita:

Bitter Cherries (2013, 2014) – sold for Italian

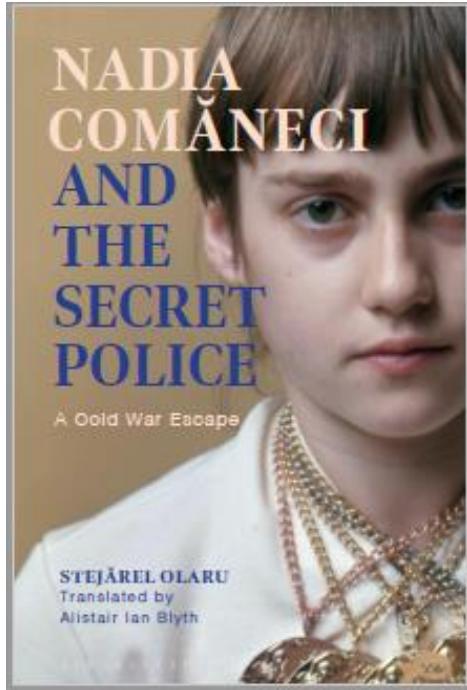
The Empress (2017) – sold for Italian

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Nadia and the Securitate

Stejărel Olaru



Publisher: Omnium

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: Full English translation

Rights sold: World English (Bloomsbury), French (Robert Laffont), Hungarian (Corvina/Lira), World Spanish (Anaya), Italian (Piemme/Mondadori)

Pages: 416

Publication: 2021

Topic: Sports, biography, history

The new book by Stejărel Olaru has at its centre of attention the greatest gymnast of all times, Nadia Comănești, the first sportswoman in the world granted a 10 at any Olympic Games.

Nadia Comănești is of Romanian origins, born in 1961 in north-eastern Romania, winner of nine medals in the Olympic Games and four in the World Championships. She currently lives in the United States of America.

For documentation, the author used 36 volumes, 25,000 pages from the Securitate Archives, the Romanian communist regime's Secret Service, with countless intelligence note and reports, as well as wiretap recordings, and summary notes presented to Nicolae Ceaușescu, the communist leader of those times, about the Romanian gymnast and her trainers, Bela and Marta Karolyi; these are documents covering an extensive period, from the beginning of the 1970s to the fall of the communist regime in Romania, in December 1989.

The book treats aspects from Nadia Comănești's life and activity, and opens with the description of the dramatic episode of the illegal crossing of the Romanian-Hungarian border, on foot, accompanied by a guide, in November 1989. It continues by showing how she reached the *Contact details*:

United States one month before the fall of the communist regime in Romania. Among many other things, we learn that the Securitate believed, but without having any evidence, that the illegal defection of the gymnast might have been orchestrated by CIA agents, acting on the secret orders of President Bush. Of course, we are presented with the furious reaction of the communist leader, Ceaușescu, and the measures taken by the Securitate's Special Disinformation Service to discredit Nadia internationally.

Then the author presents Nadia's gymnastics debut, visiting the first important titles she won, culminating with winning the title of European Champion in 1975, and then the Olympic title in Montréal, in 1976.

Stejărel Olaru (b. 1973) is a Romanian historian, writer, researcher, and Radio and TV broadcaster. He is also a doctor in Military Sciences and Intelligence, and a former lecturer at the National Intelligence Academy of Romania (2010-2019). He was National Security Advisor for the Romanian Prime Minister (2006-2008), a Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013-2014) and General Director of the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania (2005-2010). He went through a number of internships and trainings in security at Harvard, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, and in Israel.

"Stejarel Olaru, 48, discovered a large cache of reports on Karolyi's coaching operation in the archives of the Securitate, the Romanian communist regime's Stasi-like secret police."

—The Times

"Olaru lleva más de veinte años buceando en los archivos de esta temida institución e investigando sus diferentes actividades."

—La Vanguardia

"a través de miles de documentos desclasificados de la Securitate, la policía política de Ceaușescu, revela el infierno vivido por la primera gimnasta que consiguió un ejercicio de 10."

—El Mundo

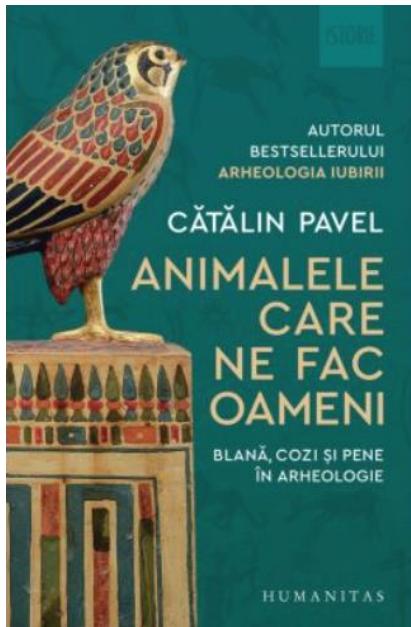
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The Animals that Made Us Human

Fur, Tails, and Feathers in Archaeology

Cătălin Pavel



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Rights sold: Turkish

Pages: 392

Publication: 2021

Topic: Popular science, archaeology, animals

In *The Animals that Made Us Human. Fur, Tails, and Feathers in Archaeology* Cătălin Pavel investigated the way humans interacted with animals – chapters on dogs, cats, horses, but also whales, hedgehogs, birds, and bears - throughout prehistory and the Classical Antiquity. The volume was awarded the Prize of the Romanian Society for Historical Sciences for 2021.

Cătălin Pavel (born 1976) is a Romanian writer and archaeologist. He is currently an Associate Professor of Archaeology at the Ovidius University in Constanța, Romania, where he coordinates PhD dissertations and directs the University's excavations in a sector of the ancient city of Histria. Pavel participated in archaeological excavations in Romania, Germany, France, Morocco, Israel, the UK and particularly Turkey (Troy, Miletus and Gordion). He held doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships at the Univ. of Oxford, the Univ. Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, the New Europe College in Bucharest, the University of Hamburg and the Albright Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem, and published a good 40 scientific articles and chapters in books.

In 2017-2019 Pavel was elected in European Union's CELA program for promoting literary talents. The EU programme Creative Europe / CELA translated some of Pavel's work and published it, particularly fragments of the novel *Portasar Not for an Instant*: Dutch by Jan Willem

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Bos, Spanish by Corina Oproae, Portuguese by Simion Doru Cristea, Italian by Maria Alampi, and also the short story "The Subway". Pavel also published some 400 articles in Romanian cultural weeklies (*Dilema Veche*) and monthlies (*Ramuri*), on topics ranging from archaeology to literature. He was offered several literary residences (FILIT, Passa Porta) and will be an official guest at the Leipzig Book Fair 2023.

"I would compare C. Pavel's writing to the music of Mozart. Apparently, the words are going easy with the Romanian archaeologist (who, it need to be said, is also a poet and a novelist). He is not afraid of joking here and there, he makes a good use of puns and the reader can guess he enormously enjoys this kind of non-academic writing. But under his easy-going style lies a tremendously amount of erudite work, which could make the reader gasp if it showed up unguarded."

- Florența Popescu-Simion

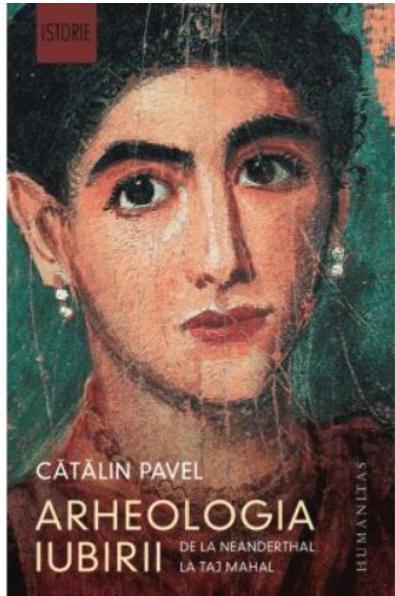
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Archaeology of Love

From the Neanderthal to the Taj Mahal

Cătălin Pavel



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: French & Italian translations

Rights sold: French (Éditions de l'Aube), Italian (Neo Edizioni)

Pages: 328

Publication: 2019

Topic: Popular science, archaeology

Archaeological case studies ranging from the Paleolithic to the Pompeian brothels, from Columbus's first city to First World War cemeteries aim to discuss the extent to which we can reconstruct feelings from material culture. Throughout prehistoric times, archaeology is the only one which can provide insights into how humans used to form relationships. This science is indeed our only chance to find out, through the study of double burials, whether anonymous Iron Age embraces have anything in common with ours. To be sure, romantic love is not an invention of the troubadours. Bones and pots can produce statements about love that we could never cull from written sources. The iconography – and tomb – of Adam and Eve, Freud's discussion of the enamoured archaeologist, and the life of the first women archaeologists wrap up this unusual experiment in cultural genealogies and erotic historiography.

“L'exercice archéologique et littéraire que l'auteur nous livre se trouve dans le décalage entre le témoignage écrit et le langage que les objets eux-mêmes, ainsi que l'analyse relationnelle, nous font comprendre des époques révolues.”

- Laura T. Ilea

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Fallen from the Jungle

Stories of an Exploratory

Alexandru N. Stermin



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 248

Publication: 2022

Topic: Science, biology

He traveled from one end to the other of Siberia, the land where you can't live, but you can't die either. He dared to step on the glaciers of Iceland. It stood in the wind on the steep cliffs of Scotland. He crossed the Andes in Colombia, until he reached the Orinoco Basin. He slept whole nights in the middle of the jungle on the Big Island of Brazil, in the Atlantic. He dreamed the same dream of millions of people at the Carnival in Rio. During the pandemic, forced to stay indoors, he explored his memories and probed, as far as possible, the memory of the human species. A species subject to the mechanisms of evolution, which means, he thought, that we are rather fallen from the jungle than from paradise. That's how Alexandru Stermin wrote and rewrote these fascinating stories about Nature and Man.

Alexandru N. Stermin is a biologist and explorer. He teaches courses on comparative anatomy of vertebrates, ethology, bioethics and human ecology at the Faculty of Biology and Geology of Babeş-Bolyai University. He studied Biology and Theology, completed a Master's degree in Philosophy and a training program in Positive Psychotherapy. He participated in expeditions

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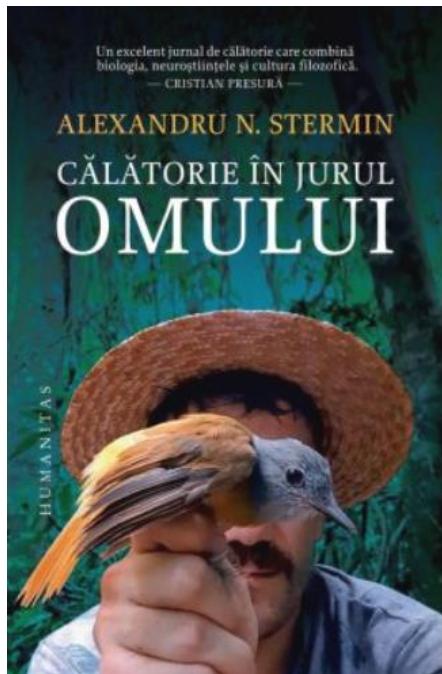
in the jungle of South America and in Siberia, he was a scholar at the University of Greifswald and at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. He is actively involved in the popularization of science and nature conservation. In 2015 he contributed to the *Fauna of Romania (Birds)* series published by the Romanian Academy. In 2017, he released his first book, *Journal of an Ornithologist*. He writes articles for *Sinteza* and *National Geographic* magazines. In 2021, he received the Excellence Award from Babeş-Bolyai University, for cultural involvement and openness to the community.

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Journey Around Man

Alexandru N. Stermin



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 180

Publication: 2021

Topic: Science, biology, travelogue

Biologist Alexandru Stermin travels around the world. What begins as a journey into the world of biology, neuroscience and psychology turns into a foray into the world of ideas and perspectives on the universe. As if on a journey on the surface of a closing hypersphere, Alexandru Stermin leaves the area where our culture puts man at the center, to paradoxically find in the distance the same man with his deepest questions. The book is an excellent travelogue that combines biology, neuroscience and philosophical culture, questioning our own concepts and beliefs about who we are and our place in nature. (scientist Cristian Presură)

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The War of Spies

The Secret Actions of the Romanian Exile in the Early Years of Communism

Lucian Vasile



Publisher: Corint

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 784

Publication: 2022

Topic: History, spies, exile, Communism

With the establishment of Communism in Eastern Europe, a handful of Romanians managed to leave the country undercover: hijacking planes, crawling under barbed wire, running on no man's land or swimming in the cold waters of the Danube. Once they arrived in the West, they got in touch with the French and American secret services, and laid the foundations of a secret structure that functioned as a true intelligence service of the Romanian emigration that fought against the new government in Bucharest, that was supported by the Soviet Army.

The main narrative thread of the volume follows the activity of this agency, officially called the Intelligence Service of the Romanian Military in Exile, which, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, trained spies, recruited agents in the country, trained teams to be parachuted and used intelligence outposts to counter possible communist agents with infiltration missions. Initially made up of former officers and soldiers who had fled Romania, over time it included any political refugee who agreed to become a secret agent.

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In parallel, there were also other Romanian operative cells that carried out secret actions against the communist regime in the country: groups trained in France, Germany, Holland and Italy that were secretly parachuted to communist Romania. Armed to the teeth and aware that they most likely would not survive, the members of those groups had their mission clear: to connect with armed resistance groups, establish secret radio stations and obtain information from within Romanian society.

The work of the Secret Service and other operative cells is a fascinating story of kidnappings, love stories, disinformation, blackmail, recruitment and betrayal. Clandestine missions, risks, twists and tragic epilogues. It was an unequal cat-and-mouse fight, in which the Romanian exile faced the communist regime in Bucharest.

And the actors of these stories were not only professionals, but also simple people - teachers, officials or ex-girlfriends - caught in espionage actions. An unknown and unforeseen, yet dramatic silent war, with hope and disappointment, risks and borderline situations where those who fought were not fictional characters, but real people, whose lives changed radically overnight.

Lucian Vasile was born in 1989, in Ploiești. He is a graduate of the Bachelor's and Master's programs of the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest, during which he benefited from an Erasmus scholarship at the University of Warsaw, and a doctorate in history with a thesis defended at the "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History of the Romanian Academy. In 2013, he founded the Association for Urban Education and Development (AEDU), an NGO that runs educational, publishing and research projects, especially dedicated to urban history. Under the auspices of AEDU, he published seven volumes (authored or edited) and collaborated on five others. Between 2013 and 2019 he was a researcher at the Pitesti Prison Memorial Foundation, contributing to the realization of the permanent exhibition in the Memorial, but also to the one in the Museum of Communism for Children. Since 2014, he has been working at the Institute for the Investigation of the Crimes of Communism and the Memory of the Romanian Exile, where he publishes studies, holds conferences and workshops and organizes summer schools and exhibitions.

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ILLUSTRATED NONFICTION

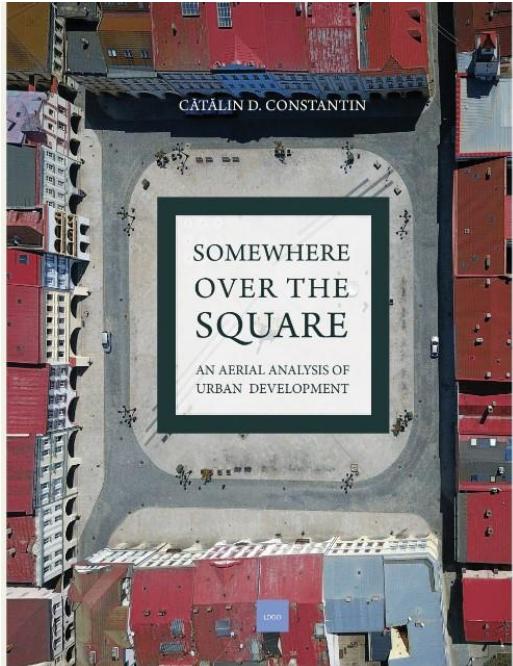
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Somewhere over the Square

An Aerial Analysis of Urban Development

Cătălin D. Constantin



Publisher: Peter Lang

Original language: English

Pages: 242

Publication: 2021

Topic: Architecture, anthropology, urbanism

squares in a number of historical European cities.

One particularly interesting thing about this concept of a book is that now it is illegal for one person to photograph with a drone in certain areas of a city, so a book like this would be possible only with a special permit and a well-organised crew which would of course require more money and time. The European Squares showed in the book are from: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Greece, Turkey, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania

Catalin D. Constantin is a book publisher and anthropologist. He teaches Anthropology at the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest. For over five years he has coordinated a series of weekly museum education conferences at the Suțu Palace in Bucharest, Bucharest City Museum. He has also organized multiple photography exhibitions in Romania, Spain, Turkey, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Poland, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Portugal.

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FICTION

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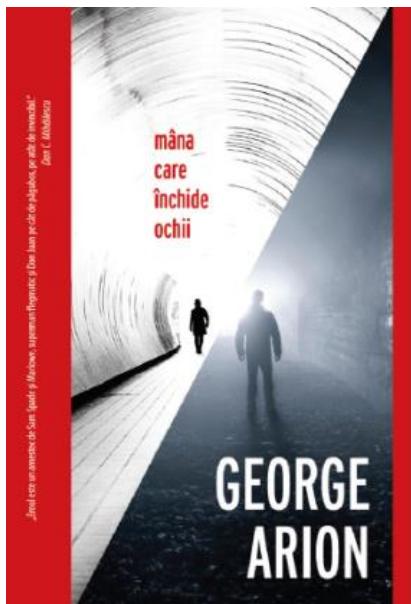
Spring 2023



The Hand That Shuts the Eyes

The latest novel in the Andrei Mladin series

George Arion



Publisher: Crime Scene Press

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 480

Publication: 2020

Genre: Crime

During the full-blown Covid pandemic, Andrei Mladin is invited to write a short story for a collection that will be published in France. In theory, nothing could be simpler. The conditions are ideal. Not for long.

As no good deed goes unpunished, while trying to peacefully help out a friend with his bookshop Andrei finds himself in the middle of a devious plot to kill the President. As bullets fly over their heads, the two of them take refuge in an underground tunnel, where the hero finds a mysterious etching on the wall.

Having saved the President, Andrei now looks to find a connection between a hidden letter he found in his friend's bookshop and the writing on the wall. What he discovers is shocking: the bodies of two girls who had been killed over 50 years prior. The protagonist finds himself caught between a rock and a hard place, having to manage the investigation, the threats from his nemesis, the former head of the Securitate, and his writing.

The short story slowly becomes a full-fledged novel inside a novel, with all its intricacies, as we, the readers, witness the creative process from its very beginning. But as the pressure starts taking its toll, putting words on paper becomes increasingly difficult and the boundary between reality and fiction is blurrier. The distress of the characters becomes the author's own distress –

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haunting, tempting, unnerving. How can you escape your own mind? Where does reality end and where does imagination begin?

A literary *tour de force* written by the most beloved Romanian crime author.

George Arion (born April 5, 1946 in Tecuci) is a Romanian crime writer. He is also a poet, essayist, librettist, journalist, translator, playwright and screenwriter. He lives in Bucharest, Romania, and is honorary editorial director of Crime Scene Press.

His literary debut came in 1966, when he published a collection of poems. But it is in 1983, with the release of *Attack in the Library*, that his fiction writing career really kicks off. Thanks to his first novel, George Arion quickly became known as the initiator of the revival of the Romanian crime novel. He effectively gave a new life to the genre by raising its literary standards at moving it away from its mostly propagandistic use at the time.

His prose stands out through an alert rhythm, short phrases, the use of colored language by his characters, a good dose of humor and witty irony.

Since 2006 he has been writing a weekly column where he reviews mystery & thriller novels. He is the winner of three Romanian Writers' Union awards, of the 2017 Book of the Year prize awarded by the Writers' Association of Bucharest and of numerous other foreign awards.

Other novels by George Arion:

Attack in the Library (Andrei Mladin series)

The Fortress of the Mad (Andrei Mladin series)

The Shadows of Ada Kaleh (Andrei Mladin series)

The Companion of Jesus – sold for French

Endless Yesterday – sold for French

The Island of Books

The Devil of Colga

Sophisticated Murders

The Chameleon

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And in the Morning the Russians Will Arrive

Iulian Ciocan



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Rights sold: Czech (Dybbuk)

Pages: 251

Publication: 2015

Genre: Literary fiction; dystopia

Other titles:

On June 26, 2020, Nicanor Turturică, a Latin professor on the verge of retirement, flees Chișinău by car after Russia invades the Republic of Moldova, a tiny country sandwiched between Romania to the west, Ukraine to the north and south, and Transnistria, a kleptocratic, Russian-controlled breakaway buffer zone, to the east. Unable to enter Romania because his passport has expired, Turturică returns to Chișinău, where he finds the airport under siege. With the country thrown into violent chaos, before Turturică's very eyes, a MiG fighter shoots down an airplane packed with Moldovan politicians trying escape the country and save their skins. Before long, Turturică is arrested by Russia's Transnistrian proxy regime, which, with the support of the country's Russian minority, is stoking rabid nationalism and a brutal purge of Romanian speakers . . . The story of Nicanor Turturică forms the plot of *The Final Liberation*, a novel written by Marcel Pulpure, a Moldovan student who returns to his native Chișinău in 1995 after failing to complete a philology degree at a university in neighboring Romania. In Iulian Ciocan's *And in the Morning the Russians Will Arrive*, chapters from *The Final Liberation* alternate with the story of its fictional author, as he struggles to find work in a post-Soviet society mired in corruption and riven by ethnic tensions. Pulpere finally finds a position in the university system,

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but after trying to place his apocalyptic novel of Russia's final 'liberation' of Moldova with a small publishing house he is arrested on charges of treason and fomenting attitudes hostile to the state. In a grotesque echo of the fate that befalls Turturică in *The Final Liberation*, Pulpere himself is placed on trial by a corrupt, Kafkaesque system whose only purpose seems to be to crush the spirit of its subjects lest they ever rise up to challenge the Russian-supported system of kleptocratic oligarchy.

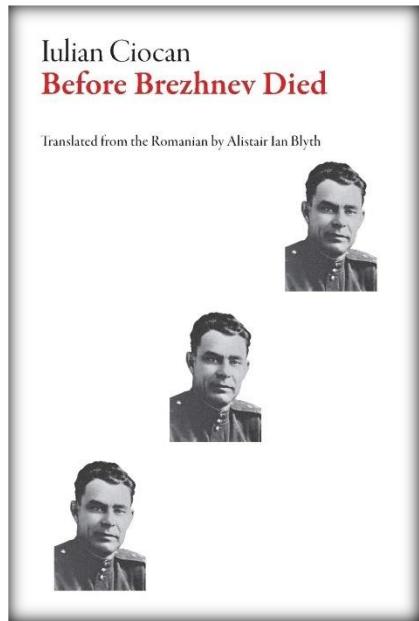
Iulian Ciocan was born on 6 April 1968 in Kishinev, the capital of the then Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia. He is the author of five novels and the presenter of a long-running Radio Free Europe broadcast about everyday life and current affairs in the Republic of Moldova. Translations of his fiction have appeared in magazines and anthologies in the United States, Germany, China, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Belgium, and Brazil. He has been a guest of the PEN World Voices Festival, New York (2011) and Amsterdam Literature Night (2016).

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Before Brezhnev Died

Julian Ciocan



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation

Rights sold: English (Dalkey Archive), Czech (Dybbuk), Serbia (Sluzbeni glasnik), Italian

Pages: 176

Publication: 2007

Genre: Literary fiction; USRR & Republic of Moldova history

The time is the twilight of the decrepit Brezhnev regime, the place, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova: the “Latin periphery of empire.”

A pensioner seeks justice for his dead wife, crushed by a falling crane--the very symbol of the “construction of socialism”- but comes up against hostility from a cynical system at best indifferent, at worst contemptuous of human life. With a keen, Gogolian eye for the grotesque, often squalid, details of everyday life in the USSR, Julian Ciocan paints darkly humorous but compassionate portraits of Homo sovieticus, from crusty war veterans and lowly collective farm workers to venal Party bigwigs, as each comes to the disturbing realization that the lofty ideals of Soviet society were lies all along. And for idealistic young pioneer Julian, the biggest disillusionment of all will be the abrupt revelation of Brezhnev’s mortality.

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The Queen of Hearts

Iulian Ciocan



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Rights sold: French, Bulgarian, Dutch, Czech

Pages: 208

Publication: 2018

Genre: Literary fiction; allegory; Republic of Moldova history

The monotonous life of Nistor Polobok, a corrupt official who works for Chișinău City Hall, takes a dangerous turn after a crack appears in the tarmac next to his majestic villa. Unobtrusive at first, the crack grows wider and wider, finally becoming a huge crater that swallows everything in its path. A sin from Polobok's past will turn out to be to blame for this ravenous pit, a sin that only a "queen of hearts" can absolve. A sinister mystique comes to surround the pit, which inexorably swallows houses and neighbourhoods: a pensioner dies immediately after the first appearance of the crack; another pensioner, who has been trying for years to obtain Romanian citizenship, is engulfed on the eve of his permanent departure for Romania; Chișinău's corrupt mayor ends up in hospital in a serious condition after people left homeless by the crater attack City Hall; and a librarian living in terror of the cataclysm allows himself to be taken in by a conman politician, the founder of the Anti-Pit Party. The Queen of Hearts is a disturbing novel that explores the underbelly of a corrupt system, revealing the ugly hidden face of the political scene.

Other novels by Iulian Ciocan:

The Realm of Sasha Kozak (2011) – sold for Slovak, French

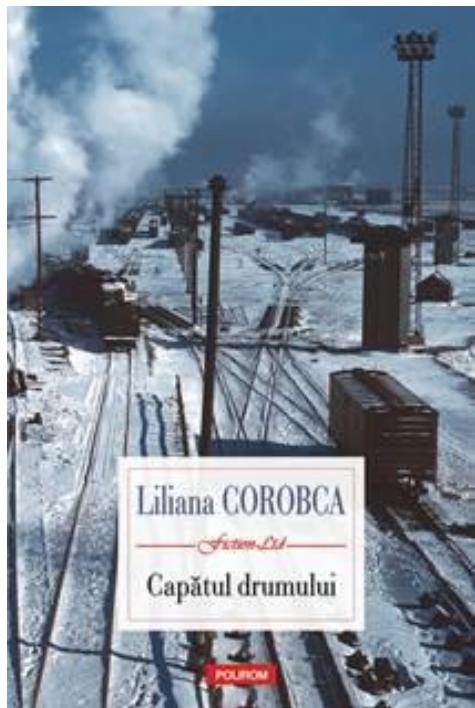
The Clown (2021) – sold for Czech

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The End of the Road

Liliana Corobca



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English, Romanian original

Pages: 344

Publication: 2018

Rights sold: World English (Seven Stories), Hungarian (Metropolis)

Genre: Literary fiction; deportations; Communism

Ana Blajinschi is almost 90 year old woman. When her family decides to take her to an old-age home, a grand-grand daughter receives the complicated mission to convince her that this would be the best for her. But the visit has an unexpected turn when the old lady starts telling the young woman his nightmare youth, when she was deported in Kazakhstan's steppe. Following a tough travel in crowded cattle wagons, during which she thought she had found her true love, Ana spent 10 years in war and famine. Her faith and trust in her survival were the only ones who kept her alive. Based on true facts and documents, Liliana Corobca's novel is a travel in the darkness and only at the last minute will the reader discover what lays at the end of the road.

Liliana Corobca was born in the Republic of Moldova. She made her debut with the novel *Negrissimo* (2003), winner of the Prometheus Prize for a debut, awarded by the România Literară magazine; the Prize for Prose Debut of the Republic of Moldova Writers' Union and The Character in Interwar Romanian Novels (2003, translated into Italian and German). She is also

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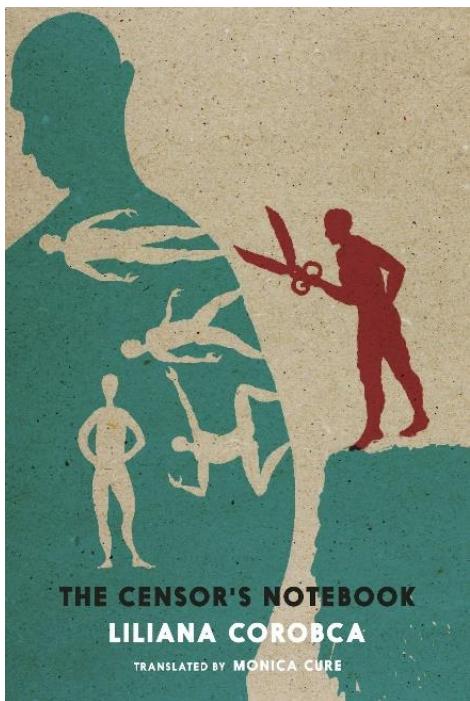
the author of the novels *A Year in Paradise* (2005), *Kinderland* (2013, translated into German and Slovenian), which was a bestseller of Cartea Românească Publishing House at the Bookfest Book Fair 2013, a recipient of the Prize for Prose awarded by Radio România Cultural, and winner of the Crystal Prize at the International Festival in Vilenica, Slovenia, in 2014; and *The Old Maids' Empire* (2015). She has also written a three-act monologue, *Censorship for Beginners*, published in 2014 in Austria. She has received grants and artists' residencies in Germany, Austria, France, and Poland.

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A Censor's Notebook

Liliana Corobca



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation

Pages: 360

Publication: 2017

Rights sold: World English (Seven Stories)

Genre: Literary fiction; censorship; Communism

A Censor's Notebook opens with an exchange of letters between Liliana Corobca and Emilia Codrescu, long the female chief of the Secret Documents Office in Romania's feared State Directorate of Media and Printing—the government branch responsible for censorship.

Codrescu had been responsible for the burning and shredding of the censors' notebooks, viewed as State secrets but, prior to fleeing the country in 1974, she had stolen one such notebook.

Now, forty years later, she makes the notebook available to Liliana for the newly instituted Museum of Communism. The work of a censor—a job which is forbidden to talk about—is revealed in this notebook, which discloses not only the structures of the institution of censorship but also the life behind the scenes for one of those deciding the fate of books, with their distress, outrage, humor and guilt. It's just five months in the life of censor Filofteia Moldovean, but they are so tightly packed with events that they give a sense of this mysterious institution as a world unto itself.

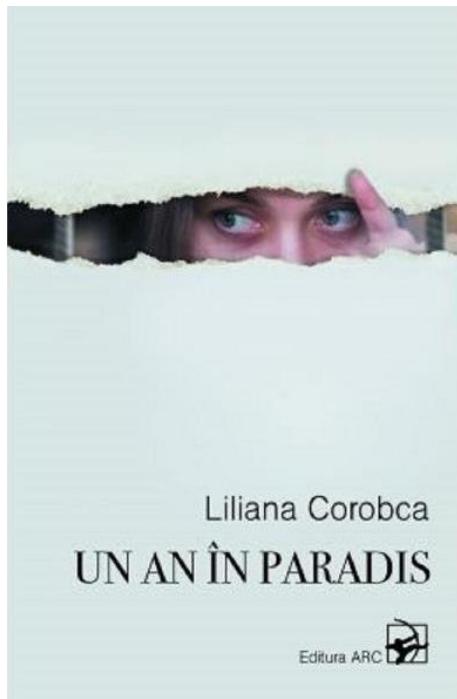
Professional readers and ideological error hunters, beset with hundreds of manuscripts, strict deadlines, and threatening penalties, the censors lose their identity, and, often frazzled by neuroses and other illnesses, seek healing, sometimes through writing. *A Censor's Notebook* is a window into the intimate workings of censorship under communism, steeped in mystery and secrets and lies, confirming the power of literature to capture personal and political truths.

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A Year in Paradise

Liliana Corobca



Publisher: Arc

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: Italian translation, German sample

Pages: 200

Publication: 2005; 2022

Rights sold: Italian (Zonza Editori)

Genre: Literary fiction; human trafficking

After finding out that she failed the exams for getting to college, a young girl named Sonia meets Pavel, a man who promises to help her. Hoping for a fair job in the Czech Republic, the girl finds herself left without documents in a bar/brothel called "Paradis", where she spends a year. The book shows how human trafficking is seen through the eyes of a naive, yet confident girl, how she manages to survive, how she evolves and how she grows up. Refusing to believe that the world can be that cruel, Sonia and her colleagues seek shelter in their home stories and hope they will escape the terrible Paradise as soon as possible.

Other novels by Liliana Corobca:

Negrissimo (2003, 2022) – sold for Serbian, Italian, German

The Old Maids' Empire (2015)

Ladybug (2019)

Ionesco. Elegies for the New Rhinoceros (2020)

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How to Make Your First Million

Bogdan Costin



Publisher: Cartea Românească / Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English samples

Pages: 283

Publication: 2013

Rights sold: French (Autrement Editions), Macedonian (Prozart)

Genre: Upmarket fiction

“This story is mine but it’s not my signature on it. I prefer to stay here and enjoy my money than to have the IRS after me”. This is how the novel starts, introducing the 35 year-old author who has isolated himself somewhere in Thailand to spend the million he earned. Because he preferred to remain unknown but did not want to refuse his experience to be shared with the public, he paid 20.000 Euros to Bogdan Costin, a common, introverted middle-class man, who accepted to sign the novel on his behalf.

The real story of the first million starts with the narrator, a young man who works in advertising, quitting his job and starting his own project, based on this simple but extraordinary idea: death sells. With the help of a former high school colleague, now a driver on an ambulance, he creates a human network made of doctors, medical assistants, policemen, and journalists, to whom he offers smaller or bigger bribes in exchange for their services and loyalty. On the other side, he convinces some businessmen, entrepreneurs having their businesses affected by the 2008-2009 crisis, to invest their money and promote their brands through the means he invented. After mastering a no-room-for-error plan, the protagonist manages to include these brands in the context of various deaths and thus they benefit from the huge PR generated from the tragedies around them.

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But the big hit comes later. The young man finds out about an actor in his late 50s, Toma, who is suffering for an inoperable brain tumor. The narrator also knows - from his friend who owns a film company – about a mediocre American movie that will be shot in Romania, starring Tim Roth. Putting these two together, he comes with this great idea. Replace Roth with the Romanian actor. Shoot the movie. Convince Toma to commit suicide (he's dying anyway) a couple of weeks before the launch of the film. Thus, the C category movie will benefit from the buzz around the leading actor's death and become a blockbuster. The millions Tim Roth would have earned are to be split between the narrator, the production company owner and the actor. And everybody wins. Except that things are not as smooth as all imagined.

Starting from this point forward, the story follows the complicated and full of humour relationship between the two characters - the cynical narrator and Toma, the actor who accepted this devil's bargain because he wanted to leave his long abandoned daughter a proper inheritance. Guilt overwhelms Toma not only because he left his family many years ago, but also because his daughter suffers from a genetic disease. Knowing none of these details, the young man soon gets involved in a weird love story with the actor's daughter, a perfect-looking independent young lady. Apparently, everything goes as planned.

The final twist of the plot shows the narrator accidentally finding out that the actor – who will eventually commit suicide to promote the movie – wasn't suffering from any tumor. It was just an old error of diagnosis which Toma takes advantage on. In the end, everybody seems to have received what they expected: their first million.

Born in 1975, **Bogdan Costin** is one of the few Romanian writers who can make a living from their writing. That's because, besides his novels and plays, he also writes for advertising.

Bogdan Costin has been working as a copywriter since 1999, collaborating with agencies like D'Arcy, BBDO, Leo Burnett, Tempo Advertising, 23 Communication Ideas. He has won many awards at both national and international advertising festivals, among which Golden Drum, AD'OR, Effie. In 2013 Costin won the title *Copywriter of the Year* at ADC Awards, the main advertising festival in Romania. Proving an incredible intuition on how the future will look like, Bogdan Costin abandoned Computer Science studies at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj, starting over at the Faculty of Sociology at the same university. During all this time, he never stopped dreaming becoming a full-time writer. In 2007, Bogdan Costin wrote his first play, *Traffic Jam*, which won the First Price at FESTCO, a national theatre and playwright contest and was staged in 2009 at Teatrul Foarte Mic in Bucharest. In 2011 he won the same prize for *Why We Hate Women*. Two years later, Costin wrote *The Attempt*, and after winning another playwriting contest, it was staged at the National Theatre in Cluj.

Costin's second novel, *The End Was Near* was published in 2016.

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The Great Joys and the Great Sorrows

Augustin Cupșa



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English samples, French samples

Pages: 320

Publication: 2013, 2021

Rights sold: Serbian (Partizanska Knjiga)

Genre: Short stories

Written in a cold, almost authoritative tone, the stories of *The Great Joys and Great Sorrows* create, with a lucid eye, a veritable anthology of contemporary loneliness. The stories, harmonized in a unity of concept and style, are placed within the Romanian society of today, so that the trajectory of the characters is imbued with the paradoxes of this society in transition, as in a recording "in direct catch", where background noise guarantees the authenticity.

Each story in the collection spins around a visual metaphor: a bogged car wheel, where there is an impasse between a father and a son who travel from a provincial town to Bucharest to read the file that the old man had at the Securitate, a captive moth in a hotel room, where a maid lures a married man into a game of seduction, or the dresser dismantled by two half-brothers who no longer have nothing in common apart from this heritage, etc. The images appear dazzlingly and have no symbolic value, but rather construct a cinematic language with references to Kieślowski 's *Decalogue* .

The author, also trained as a screenwriter, affirms that the title of the collection comes from a rule of good conduct from Transylvania, the place of origin of his family where it is said that „great joys and great sadness do not manifest not in public". In his stories this formula acquires

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ontological proportions, the author surprises the reflexes of post-totalitarian society: loneliness, distrust, passivity, all said in a low voice.

Augustin Cupșa (born 1980, Romania) studied Psychiatry in Bucharest and served as a psychiatrist in Bucharest and Paris.

His first novel *Perforatorii*, published in 2006, won him the Opera Prima Prize awarded by the Romanian Union of Writers at The National Patronage Gala and granted him a place for at Jeux de la Francophonie, Beirut 2009, section Littérature, representing Romania. Afterwards he published two volumes of short prose – *Profesorul Bumb și Macii Suedezi*, nominated for Best Prose at the Young Writer's Gala 2011, and *Marile bucurii și marile tristeți*, translated into Serbian (Velike radosti i velike tuge) within Traduki translation program and nominated for the Fiction Award at Gala Bun de Tipar 2014, 4th edition. In 2013 he benefited of a residence for writing at International House of Authors in Graz. Some of his short stories were translated into English, German, French, Hebrew, Albanian, Hungarian, Swedish, Turkish, Slovenian and Serbian, included in anthologies or published online www.theshortstoryproject.com

In 2017 his novel, *Așa să crească iarba pe noi* (So May Grass Grow on Us) earned him nominees for European Union Prize for Literature, for PEN Romania Awards, for "Nepotu' lui Thoreau" Club for Literature, for Cărturești Bookstores Readers' Prize and for "Constantion Țoiu" Prize of Romanian Writers' Union.

As a screenwriter he won the HBO Romania Prize for short script at Transilvania International Film Festival in 2006 and later on the European Alliance for Television and Culture bursary for screenwriting in Geneva 2006/7. He collaborated with HBO to adapt the original series Be Tipul in Romania (În derivă, 2010-2012). He co-wrote the short film Ceată (Fog, 2017) which won the Grand Prix at Festival Premiers Plans d'Angers, Sankt Petersburg Message to Man International Film Festival and the Special Mention of the Jury at Brussels International Film Festival. He also co-wrote the short film *Fructe necopate* (Unripped fruits, 2020)

In 2021 the revised and completed edition of "Marile bucurii și marile tristeți" was published at Humanitas Publishing House.

In 2022 he earned the literary residence supported by BMEIA/Q21 at MQ Vienna and immediately after the Petőfi Literary Fund residency in Pécs where he completed his work on his new short story volume *Străinătate* which was released at Humanitas Publishing House at the end of the year.

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So May Grass Grow on Us

Augustin Cupșa



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Pages: 199

Publication: 2017

Genre: Literary fiction

Short-term friends, Edi, Cat, Drum, the Mânzu Brothers and Tomi, live at the periphery of Craiova, a small city in the south of Romania. They are involved in a poaching business - catching mocking birds that they sell on the black market to Italy, a phenomenon still present in today's Southern Europe. Recounted by Cat, the most fragile and sensitive of the children, events take on dramatic dimensions that in turn reveal the book's profound themes: the feelings of guilt and of

abandonment, obsessive relationships and the discovery of eroticism. In a Salingerian atmosphere, with a sense of tension and violence that floats in the air, ultimately erupting with such force as to definitively alter the life of every character, Augustin Cupșa's novel constructs a complete world, with unwritten but immutable laws, a deceptive paradise of innocence, with superb landscapes that, in truth, conceal evil in its most subtle forms.

Seen as a bildungsroman of our days, the novel comes to put indirectly into discussion the ontological exercise of finding the truth. Starting with the impression of the confusion of the young narrator who studies a blurred photo of his father, this confusion becomes even bigger leading the reader to the final question – was is it or was it not a crime? What is the reality that matters? - an idea which reminds the work of Antonioni in *Blow-up*, in a different key of the today world.

The book was acclaimed by the critics, being shortlisted for the Romania PEN award, European Union Prize for Literature and for *Constantin Țoiu* Prize held by The Writers' Union of Romania.

"this book is worth a read just to get a feel of unfortunately the lives of many young people in Romania, forced to grow up before their time."

- *Reading Badger*

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The Black Butterfly

Radu Paraschivescu



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Pages: 328

Publication: 2010

Rights sold: Serbian

Genre: Literary fiction; Medieval art; Caravaggio

Nothing is taken for granted in seventeenth century Rome. Beggars, swindlers, card players, vendors, whores, penniless poets and drunkards fill the streets of the city. Rich cardinals pull strings, councilors ingratiate themselves with the new Pope, artists fight for commissions. Rome is not only the center of the world, but also a place where scores are settled by sword. The city gives off hope and lust, richness and ambition, despair and murderous envy.

A young painter from Lombardy sets foot in Rome in 1592, eager to make a name for himself and change the art of painting. His name is Michelangelo Merisi and his ego is only equaled by his audacity. Once in Rome, the young painter sets fire to prejudices and becomes the talk of the whole city. Some envy him for his impudence and his stormy philanderer's life. Others can't stand the sight of him and want him out of the city. And there are some who'd rather have him imprisoned in Tor di Nona or hanging by his neck on the scaffold.

Merisi, better known as Caravaggio, has to come to terms not only with Roman life, but also with his inner demons and with his plan to turn his art into a poetics of horror. His dreams are

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increasingly haunted by Acherontia, a splendid black butterfly whose mere sight is bad news. Funnily enough, the butterfly only appears in Merisi's dreams when he paints a scene of death. In an attempt to exorcise this evil, Merisi starts to paint Acherontia in what will hopefully become his most surprising work. Yet, his room catches fire and the painting is destroyed just as, a mile away, the painter kills one of his rivals in duel.

The Black Butterfly is a colorful novel about passion and sin, about guilt and love, about glory and doubt, about sin and redemption, about light and chiaroscuro. The two finely interwoven plans of the book – life in Rome around 1600 and Caravaggio's letters to Simone Peterzano, his mentor – bring into focus a fascinating city and an extraordinary artist. Caravaggio was called "the painter of eternal night" or "the Antichrist of painting". However, he left an indelible trace upon Rome, while his sprezzatura distinguished him of all the other artists of his time. Violent and generous, always in love and on the run, ready to draw his sword and raise his glass, Caravaggio was the black butterfly of the Italian baroque. The novel follows his life and deeds until his death on a Tuscan beach, after years of fame and illness, of inspiration and penitence, of love and hatred.

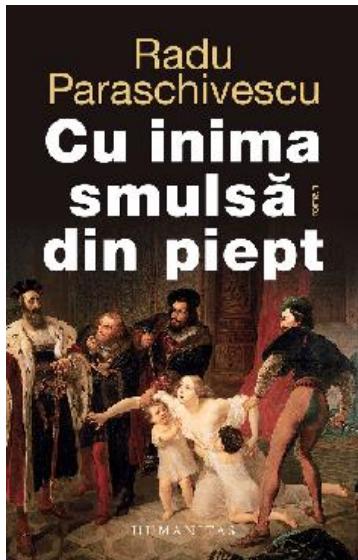
A writer and a translator, **Radu Paraschivescu** (b. 1960, Bucharest) is the author of six novels, among which *A Heart Torn from the Chest*, *Today is the Tomorrow You Were Afraid of Yesterday*, *The Black Butterfly* and *The Gold Needle* and *Gloriana's Eyes*. He also wrote short stories books (*The Weirdos' Fair*, *Waiting for You to Kick the Bucket*, *I Used to Be an Honorary Woman*, *The Man Who Moves the Clouds*), an essay on loutness, a book on clichés, another one about the lack of fair play in sports, a family memoir (*A Merry Requiem for My Dad*) and a number of books about life in present-day Romania. He wrote over 3000 pieces for Romanian newspapers and magazines and translated over 115 books from authors like Salman Rushdie, Julian Barnes, Jonathan Coe, John Steinbeck, Nick Hornby, David Lodge, Kazuo Ishiguro etc. Radu Paraschivescu writes for the *New Money* magazine and has radio contributions for two stations: Rock FM and Digi FM. He lives in Bucharest.

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A Heart Torn out from the Chest

Radu Paraschivescu



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 216

Publication: 2008

Rights sold: Portuguese

Genre: Literary fiction; history of Portugal

If you are a prince in XIVth century Portugal, you marry because you're supposed to. Because this is what your royal father Afonso IV orders you to do. Marriage is a matter of political alliance where love plays no part. And you don't even need to know your bride-to-be; you'll meet her on your wedding day. Pedro's marriage to Constancia de Penafiel is the seal of a political friendship between Portugal and Castille. Both kingdoms prepare for the Sarrazin threat that has been looming over them for a long time. But come the wedding day, the groom falls in love with the young girl near the bride, her confident and best friend, Ines de Castro. Prince Pedro takes them both to bed: Constancia because the royal family needs a successor, Ines because he is mad about her. Ines is sent into exile by king Afonso, while Constancia dies giving birth to a heir, Fernando, one year later. Pedro brings Ines and her brothers back to the Portuguese court and this triggers off the king's deadly anger. Afonso IV orders the killing of Ines and pays three men to dispose of her. Her death plunges Pedro into a deep rage and makes him start a civil war against his father. A war at the end of which the killers are caught and punished in a way suggesting that tearing somebody's heart out of his chest is not a mere figure of speech.

Other novels by Radu Paraschivescu

The Gold Needle and Gloriana's Eyes (2021)

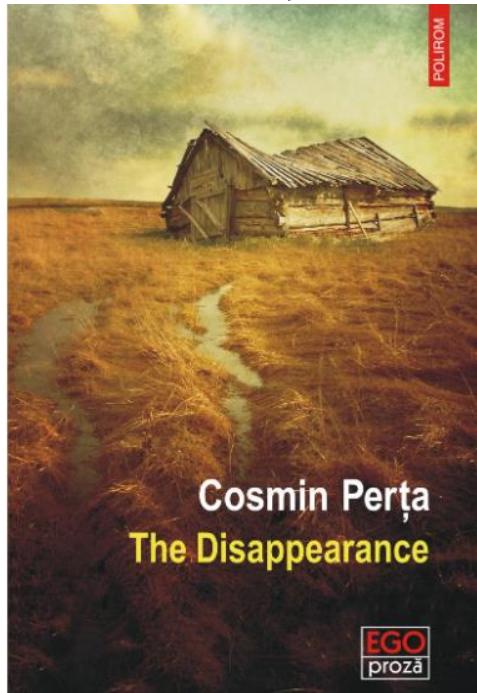
The Devil's Bridge (2022)

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The Disappearance

Cosmin Perța



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 144

Publication: 2021

Rights sold: Serbian (Prometej)

Genre: Literary fiction

All the inhabitants of a village disappear inexplicably overnight. The news draws the attention of the press and is surrounded by a lot of speculation. As the authorities investigate the case without success, interest is eventually extinguished. After a while, a team of reporters from a central newspaper is determined to reopen the investigation and travel to the village to try to find out the truth. However, their attempt turned out to be much more difficult than expected, and the discoveries made were of a different nature than expected.

The mayor, the priest or the relatives of the missing are just some of the people to be interviewed. But each of them seems to have a completely different explanation for what happened. Above all, the reporter leading the investigation is starting to have some strange dreams.

Trying to reproduce a fresco as faithful as possible to the Romanian society, the Disappearance brings to the fore current issues such as economic migration, corruption, excessive bureaucracy, toxic collective mentalities and their manifestation in a rural setting in Transylvania. At the same time, through incursions into the biographies of the characters, a broader context is created that offers a perspective on the evolution of society in the last years of communism, going through the 90s transition, until a present deformed by the strengths of a dysfunctional system perceived as tradition.

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Cosmin Perța was born in Viseu de Sus, Maramures, in 1982. He is a poet, novelist, drama writer and essayist. He graduated from the Literature Faculty of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj. He went on to take an MA in Contemporary Literature at Bucharest University, followed by a PhD with a thesis about the fantastic in East-European literature. His works have been translated into sixteen languages. In 2012 he was elected as the Best Young Romanian Prose Writer. In the Romanian and foreign press there are more than five hundred reviews and references to his work. In the last ten years he has been awarded some of the most prestigious Romanian literary prizes. He is currently freelancer editor and professor of comparative literature at the Hyperion University in Bucharest.

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Scorching heat

Cosmin Perța



Publisher: Paralela 45

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 132

Publication: 2019

Rights sold: Serbian (Partizanska Knija), Hungarian (Tiszatáj), Polish (Anagram)

Genre: Literary fiction

In a city besieged by the colonel's army, the monk Teofil tries to save two children, Viorica and Marcu, whom he brings from the mountains to Dr. Wolkonski's safer house. The doctor, shocked by the atrocities of the soldiers on the front (rapes and murders), which he had attended as a military doctor, is now a cynic who has fallen into the passion of alcoholism. Sentenced to death, people no longer leave their homes, they live with the imminence of death in mind. Corpses of people and animals lie on the streets and a strange purple mist floats over the whole disaster, bringing with it new dangers. But there is hope, a possibility of escape, hidden deep under the doctor's house. Will they be able to save themselves in time or is it just another scam?

Works by Cosmin Perța:

There is nothing left behind (2015, novel)

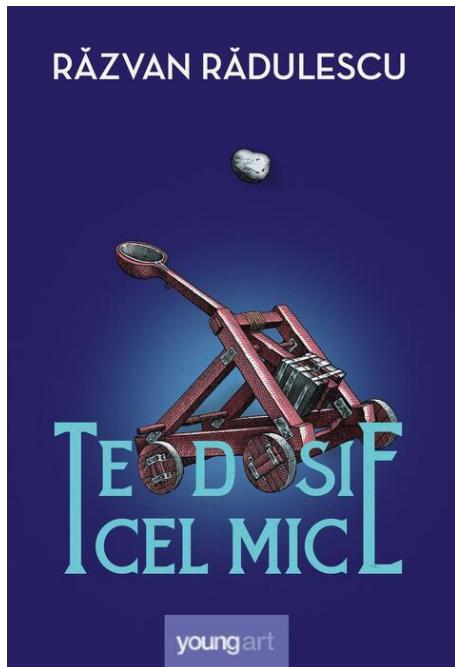
Lullaby for my generation (2018, poetry)

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Theodosius the Small

Răzvan Rădulescu



Publisher: Art

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Pages: 464

Publication: 2006, 2023

Rights sold: Italian (Mimesis), Serbian (Sezam), Albanian (Toena), Macedonian (Bata)

Genre: Literary fiction; fantasy; allegory

Winner of European Prize for Literature (2010)

Răzvan Rădulescu's novel *Theodosius the Small*, a fantasy that wraps social concerns in fairytale attire, contains a range of characters that would not be out of place sitting at the same table as today's politicians, strategists or media personalities. In Rădulescu's world, the geography of Romania is transformed: borders are jumbled in such a way that new historic roots are formed in the resulting territories. Within a fantastical version of Wallachia, we find miniature kingdoms, containing both familiar contemporary localities, such as Bucharest, Filiași and Petrila, together with places established by the narrative, such as the Mushroom Fields, Strawberry Fields and Mushberry Valley. The backdrop appears to be historical but, nevertheless, the story has many elements taken from the contemporary world. Although the novel concerns childhood as seen through an adult's eyes, it is not about childhood itself. Rather, it is about its fantasies, about the way in which the events of today's world are transformed by the vision of a child into a fantastical madness containing comic horrors and sad comedies.

Răzvan Rădulescu (b.1969) was born in Bucharest. As a student, he became a member of Letters, one of the most important training centers for young writers at the time, led by another famous

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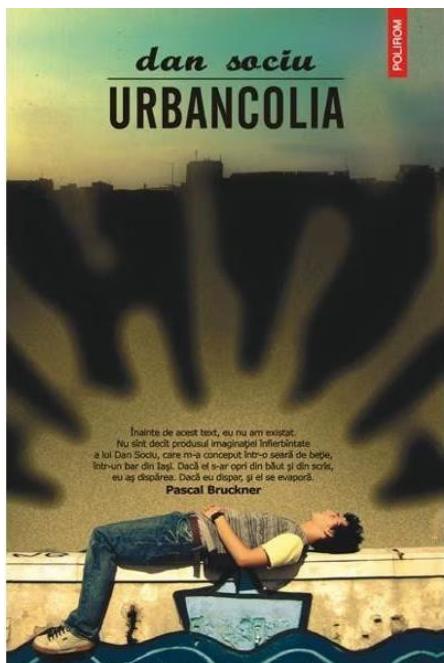
author, Mircea Cărtărescu. Rădulescu's text was published in the anthology *Tablou familie* in 1995. His critical reception included winning the Romanian Writers' Union prize. His second novel, *Teodosie cel Mic*, was received with enthusiasm by many commentators. He has also written screenplays and collaborated with various magazines.

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Urbancholia

Dan Sociu



Publisher: Polirom

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 208

Publication: 2012

Rights sold: Serbian (Plato)

Genre: Literary fiction; irony; humour

In the north of Romania, known as the Moldavian region, is the town of Botosani, distinguished as the birth place of many of Romania's best known cultural figures, the national poet Mihai Eminescu, the illustrious composer George Enescu, the internationally acclaimed avant-gardist Isidore Isou, etc. The town is equally *notorious* for leading the country's rates of poverty, alcoholism, infant mortality, domestic violence, and a general lack of hope. Dan Sociu, the novel's hero, is the natural product of his environment; a virgin poet who, at 27, has never ventured beyond the pale of Botosani, Dan still lives with his mother and has spent every day, for years on end, in the same way: reading, drinking, watching TV, masturbating and following his mother's every gesture, petitioning quietly for the vaguest signs of her affection. The little pocket change he has he earns by inventing stories for the magazine *True Stories*, whose readership consists primarily of single, suburban women, for whom the most exciting event of the year is the annual pilgrimage to the monasteries in the north of the Moldavian region.

One night our hero meets two people who will divert him definitively from his diurnal routine: Derrin, an American anti-terrorist agent working for the CIA, dispatched to Romania to survey territory intended as a military base, near the Prut River; and Miss H, as she is named in the novel, the 26 year old Romanian journalist with whom Derrin has fallen madly and recklessly in love. To occupy his mistress while he ventures to the far, dusty corners of the world on one dubious mission or another, the American agent buys a modest television station and a local newspaper, putting her in charge of both. And to help her run these enterprises, they recruit our hero as her assistant. This

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singular event transforms Dan's life into a story stranger and more thrilling than anything he's seen on television to this point, not to mention that she naturally becomes the object of his impoverished affections upon first sight.

Conceived in the form of a letter to the French writer Pascal Bruckner, *Urbancholia* is a comic and bitter story about an innocent belatedly coming of age in a country whose citizens don't love themselves, each other, and least of all, their children.

Dan Sociu belongs to the so-called poets of 2000, who are often called representatives of "Miserabilism" by Romanian literary critics. This expression defines both a tendency to take on the pose of anti-hero and biographical writing which puts an emphasis on the banality of everyday life, allowing itself to be influenced by American popular literature. He worked as a journalist for the ecological oriented magazine totb.ro and wrote over 300 articles, translated 27 books, novels, books of poetry (by authors such as Charles Bukowski, Seamus Heaney, e.e. cummings), nonfiction and thousands of scientific and ecological texts, a few theatre plays. In 2013 and 2014 he won the Romanian Cultural Radio prize for two books of poetry and in 2007 he was voted "Most Prominent Young Writer" at the Younger Writers' Colloquium in Cluj. In 2006 *cântece eXcesive* (eXcessive songs) was awarded Best Book of the Year by the Romanian Writers' Association. In 2006 The Award of the Magazine 22, granted for achievement as the "Most Talented Young Writer of the Moment". Some other grants - Omi, New York, Baden Baden. In 2008 he was recommended by Herta Muller to be invited to the Literaturfestival in Berlin. In 2008 he was recommended for a three month residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany, by Mircea Cărtărescu (novelist, poet). He lives now in Romania and UK, London. He wrote 9 books of poetry and 4 novels (one novel, *Urbancholia*, was published in Serbia and a book of poetry, *Mouths Dried with Hatred*, at Longleaf Press, University of Virginia).

"Avant ce texte, je n'exista pas, je ne suis que le produit de l'imagination enfiévrée de Dan Sociu qui m'a conçu, un soir d'ivresse dans une boite de Iasi. S'il cesse de boire et d'écrire, je disparaîs. Si je disparaîs, il s'évanouit également."

— Pascal Bruckner

"Sociu is a captivating story teller: you can't wait to hear what he says next, and because his characters are fresh, he can afford to let them have a past, the exact one we were reading so eagerly about only a few minutes (18 years?) ago, which makes his perspective the natural sequel to all those Kundera novels we were sorry to see end."

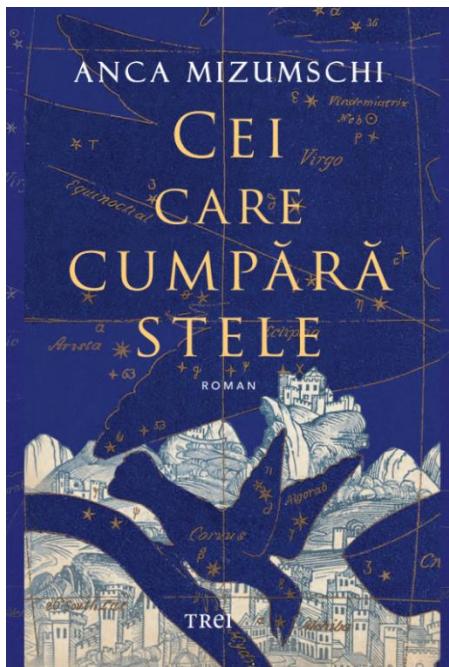
— Andrei Codrescu

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Those Who Buy Stars

Anna Zimsky



Publisher: Trei

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample, Spanish, sample Turkish sample

Pages: 336

Publication: September 2022

Genre: Literary fiction, historical

A story straight out of "One Thousand and One Nights," Anna Zimsky's new novel is set in the 16th century, its action unfolding on three continents. An alcoholic nun in love with wine, a bulimic sultana, an opium dealer, a textile magnate, in fact, a fashion designer *avant la lettre*, a jeweler tormented by anxiety, and an Arab mathematician who invents horoscopes, are just some of the characters in this fast-paced and colorful novel. Filled with portraits of powerful women, this true book of the senses is constructed like a merry-go-round, in which each protagonist comes before the reader in turn and tells a fragment of the story, then retreats and makes way for the next character, only to return in later pages. In the end, the narrative's fabric is closing all the circles of the characters' destinies, in an unexpected, subtle way.

The central story is based on a legend that stones that have fallen from the sky, fragments of meteorites, can help the wearers acquire immortality. The search for the meteorite fragment takes us from the Great Bazaar of Constantinople to the other end of the Silk Road in China, or the Malaysian islands full of rare spices, and then from the heights of a Tibetan monastery in Lassa to the walls of Genoa and the sharp cliffs of Cinque Terre. Christians, Jews, Muslims, and

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Buddhists link their destinies in this search for the meteorite's fragment, and their lives intertwine and unfold with their daily worries, impossible, overwhelming loves, and announced or unexpected deaths. In this opulent universe where the aromas of spices mix with the woolen threads of fabrics of Anatolia's carpets and the healing vibrations of gemstones from India, almost every character is endowed with heightened senses: smell, sight, hearing, touch.

A veritable cavalcade of images and sensations, Anna Zimsky's novel fascinates the reader, addicts him, and finally liberates him from this labyrinth of words with an impactful message: though we are trying to buy fragments of shooting stars in an attempt to become immortal, though we try to outlast our passage on this planet and build empires, fleets, cathedrals, minarets, and Chinese Wall, in the end, the most powerful thing is our life here and now, moment by moment, seemingly fragile, but so powerful through the common, universal, human core that binds us all.

Anna ZIMSKY (pen name of Romanian writer Anca MIZUMSCHI) is an author, essayist, public speaker, and cultural broadcaster, who lives in the USA since 2016 and writes in Romanian and English.

Since 1989, the year of her debut, the author has published several works: *Far from Hemingway*, short stories (1989), *East*, poems, (1993), *Letter of Discharge*, poems, (1995), *Paper Guillotine*, poems, (2008), *Anna of Noah's Ark*, poems, (2009), *Beyond*, poems, (2010), *In the Softness of the Sky*, poems, (2012), *My Suspended Land*, essays, (2018), *Those Who Buy Stars*, novel, 2022.

The author's poems have been included in two anthologies – *Madugrada - Songs of Love and Fury*, (2013), *Metropolitana* (2018) - as well as in numerous Romanian and international anthologies: (selection) *Strong Romanian-Polish Anthology* (1997), *27 Romanian Poets* (Stockholm, 2011), *Mujer en la aduana - 10 poetas rumanas contemporáneas* (Madrid, 2022). Her articles and poems have been published in several cultural magazines and her poems have been translated into Spanish, Swedish, German, Italian, French, Hungarian, Czech, Albanian, and Chinese. She has received several literary awards in Romania.

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The Side Effects of Life

Vlad Zografi



Publisher: Humanitas

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 468

Publication: 2016

Rights sold: Czech (Havran), Serbian (Knjževna radionica Rašić)

Genre: Literary fiction, science, philosophy

Four characters tell a story, each from his/her perspective: a psychiatrist (Andrei Cricoveanu), a journalist (Nadia Vornicescu), a person with autism (Robert Aldea) and his sister (Teodora Aldea) who works in advertising. Aside from these voices which intertwine there are fragments from the Acceptance speech to the Romanian Academy of a mathematician (Eugen Papadopol) whose area of expertise is Artificial Intelligence. The action takes place in the immediate present, against the background of social unrest in Romania and of a European continent shaken by terrorist attacks.

The mathematician's idea is that, as it looks today, a computer is similar to an autistic person. Consequently, in order to create artificial intelligence, he should follow what happens when a person with autism is healed. Therefore he seeks the help of a neurologist, Visarion, who claims to have a cure for autism. Visarion in his turn suggests to Andrei Cricoveanu to use Robert Aldea, his patient, as a guinea pig.

For the characters of the novel, sex is a trauma: Andrei Cricoveanu is in love with Nadia Vornicescu, but his relationship with her is an impossible one – Nadia is a terribly ambitious and almost frigid woman, tempted by anarchism. Teodora Aldea, scarred by an unhappy love

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affair in her past, can only find harmony in her life by having two lovers at the same time. And Robert who lives most of his life in front of the computer, falls in love with a porn actress. What the title of the novel means, is disclosed to us in Eugen Papadopol's speech: life's side effects are the feelings – they have emerged as merely side effects during the evolution of living beings. Eventually the treatment Visarion, the neurologist, administers Robert has devastating effects on the latter and we witness the decomposing of his mind, a horrific spectacle. The novel is polyphonic, in the sense that it provides a world view which is philosophical, psychological and social at the same time.

Vlad Zografi was born in Bucharest in 1960. He studied Physics at the University of Bucharest, and in 1994 he obtained a PhD in Atomic Physics at the University of Paris XI, Orsay. He debuted in February 1990 in *Romania Literară* magazine, with a story. He published prose (*The left knee or the right knee*, 1993 and *The New Man*, 1994), then theater: *Isabela, My Love* (1996, Writers' Union Award), *Oedipus at Delphi* (1997), *The King and the Corpse* (1998), *America and Acoustics* (2007, Writers' Union Award), *Petru* (2007, containing revised versions of some previously published pieces), *All Your Minds* (2011). *Petru* was the first Romanian play staged after 1989 at the Bulandra Theatre, and the show (directed by Cătălina Buzoianu) was invited to the Bonn Biennale in 1998. In 2012 he published the essay *The Infinite Inside. Six stories about man, society and history*. In 2016, he published the novel *The Side Effects of Life* (Observator Lyceum Prize, 2017), published in Czech (translation by Jiří Našinec, Publishing House Havran, Prague, 2019) and in Serbian (translation by Đura Miočinović, Publishing House Knjževna radionica Rašić, Belgrade, 2020). In 2018 he published the novel *October Seven* and in 2021 *Survival*.

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Spring 2023



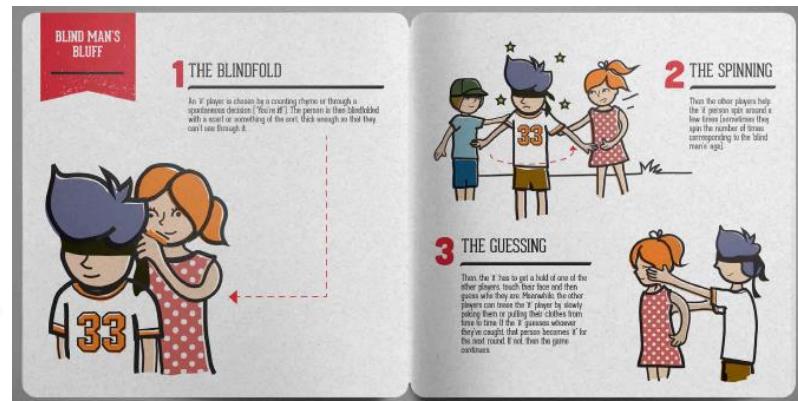
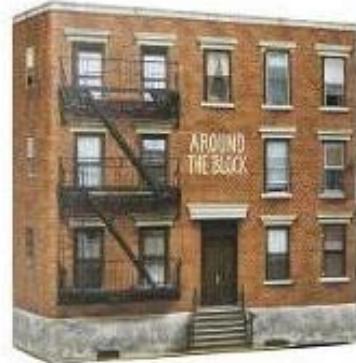
CHILDREN

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Around the Block

A Collection of 55 Timeless Games to Play Outside



Rights sold: Netherlands, Russia, Germany, Georgia, Czech, Poland

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English

Around the Block is a box with games children played in the 70s, 80s, 90s, but which are also slowly coming back to the kids and parents' attention. It's a set of games, but it can also be perceived as a journey through and a reminder of one's childhood. The authors are copywriters at a Romanian publicity agency and know their stuff when it comes to design and meeting public's expectations.

Each edition has a custom made illustration for the box. Also, each publisher adapted the activity-cards to their market and cultural background. The box contains 55 outside games, but the authors have more than 100 illustrated cards with outside activities around the world. To these, each publisher contributed with their own ideas.

The book is a proud finalist in the Design section of Cannes Lions 2015. The event is the world's most important festival celebrating creative communications and the positive social impact of each project.

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Nter's Story

Julia Burlac



Publisher: Signatura

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample (tbc)

Pages: 36

Publication: 2021

Age: 4+

Nter lives in the City of Robots, doing the same repetitive job day by day, next to his colleagues. Once he gets home, he only recharges his battery and reads the instruction manual. One day, he tries to escape the monotony, but reaches an isolate neighborhood. He has no battery left when he finds the old recharging tree. But in order to connect, he needs to download a file. A peculiar file. A book. That he reads on and on, until his supervisors consider he was infested with a virus and permanently delete the file. Nevertheless, the tree planted in him the seed of knowledge and storytelling and Nter soon starts to spread around his tales on kindness, love and courage.

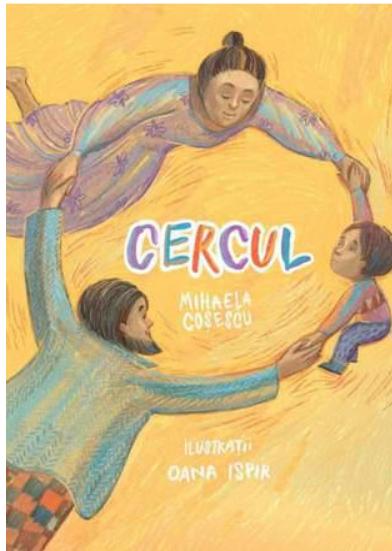


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The Circle

Mihaela Coșescu, illustrations by Oana Ispir



Publisher: Anglitira

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation

Pages: 38

Publication: 2019

Age: 3+

The Circle is a story about the children left at home by their parents, who are cast off to remote countries by the financial needs of the family. It is a story about unconditional love, about the children's need for their parents' presence, a story about longing and suffering, but also about hope, and reunion. Ionut, the boy whose mother works in Spain, cannot celebrate his birthday without her. However, he finds a gift in the pile of scrap metal that his father gathered. A seemingly common metal circle to play with.

It is, at the same time, an interactive book, an object book. Readers are either invited to give life to the circles on the flyleaf of the book using the power of their imagination, or to scan the QR codes embedded in the illustrations and listen to songs which complete the story.

I am **Mihaela Coșescu**, a Romanian author of children's books. I have always been passionate about education and pedagogy because I believe that our chance for a better future is to raise empathetic and autonomous children. I studied Political Science for my bachelor degree and I attended master's courses on education and theater. I have been working in education for 15 years and I am currently teaching storytelling at Romania Gifted School.

I am the mother of two wonderful children and I started writing when I faced the first adventures of motherhood. That is also when I founded my blog, Raising Humans (Crestem oameni).

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I have organized storytelling workshops and reading events with over 10,000 children and adults in order to encourage the habit of reading from early childhood. I was supported in this initiative by people who share my concern for education: Hans Klemm, the US ambassador to Bucharest, Maria Gheorghiu, president of the Association Ovidiu RO, Brandi Bates, founder of the movement "Reading together Romania", and many others.

"Mihaela Coșescu's *Circle* [...] teaches the children, and reminds the adults, that we are born in a circle and in a circle we return. There is a playful meditative lesson which comes out of the book like a spirit out of a bottle. Or from a circle. And Oana Ispir masterly illustrates this lesson."

- Florin Bican



Second volume:

The Other Circle is the story of Ioana, Ionut's mother, who had to leave home and work abroad for a better future for her family. It is a mirroring of the story of Ionuț, revealing the mother's perspective, her suffering and longing for reunion.

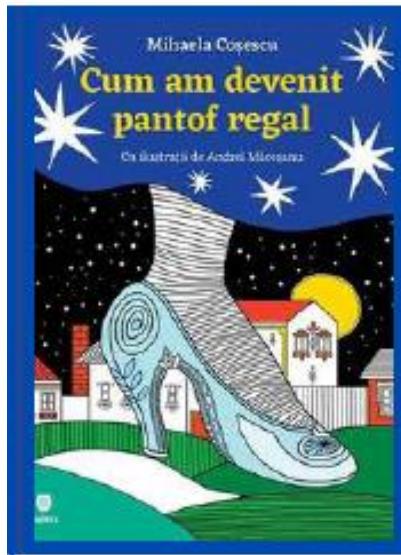


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How I Became a Royal Shoe

Mihaela Coșescu, illustrations by Andrei Măceșanu



Publisher: Anglitira

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: French translation

Pages: 40

Publication: 2020

Age: 3+

How I Became a Royal Shoe is the story of a shoe stuck in tar on the steps of a palace on a ball night, when he is separated from his twin brother. The reader follows step by step the shoe's enthusiasm for the ball nights and for dancing together with his brother, the disgust of the shoe when it is tried by dirty or smelly feet and rejoices together with it when it becomes a royal shoe. The joy of the shoe is not for the life that awaits him at the palace, but for finding his brother. A shoe cannot dance alone through life.



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A Leaf's Lunch

Marina Debattista



Publisher: Frontiera

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation

Pages: 32

Publication: 2020

Age: 4+

White Ravens Award 2021

Humorous and tender children's verses that mingle science with pun words and silly tales. The freshness of the language and the visual playfulness of illustrations recommend it to children and adults alike.

The book demonstrates how charming, refreshing and entertaining it can be to observe scientific phenomena when they are incorporated into children's poetry.

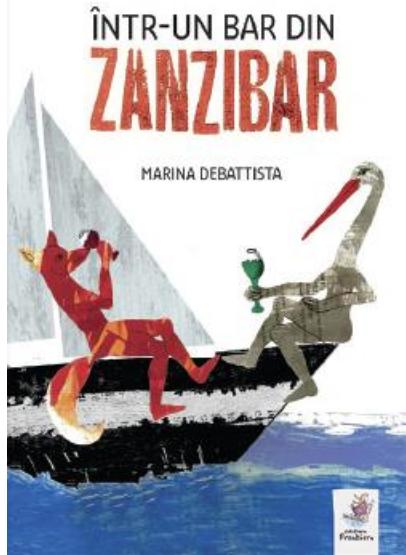
Marina Debattista is a Romanian scientist, artist and writer living in Oxford, UK. She has a PhD in Physics and is interested in the interconnections between art, literature, and physics. While pursuing her MA in Publishing, Marina learned the art of typography and used the centuries-old letterpresses at the Bodleian Library in Oxford to complete her *rst hand-pressed book* in 2014, an original translation into Romanian of the poem The Hunting of the Snark, by Lewis Carroll.

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In a Bar from Zanzibar

Marina Debattista



Publisher: Frontiera

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 40

Publication: 2023

Age: 5+

What did the stork and the fox do after that embarrassing lunch they had together some hundred years ago? Well, Aesop didn't tell us. Neither did La Fontaine. But Marina Debattista met them in a bar in Zanzibar and here are her witty retellings of their classical fable. Linocut & collage by the author.

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The Marquis's Tales

Brad Florescu, illustrations by Matei Alexandrescu



Publisher: Frontiera

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

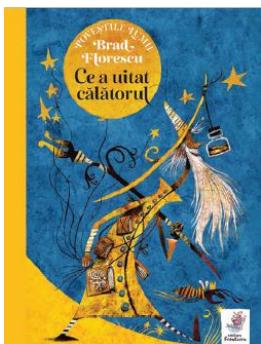
Pages: 88

Publication: 2021

Age: 7+

The sausage died, the cat cried, the door squeaked, the tree waved and... what image what the marquis did! Humorous and absurd tale around the world retold in a modern language and delicate watercolor illustrations.

Brad Florescu is a traveler and journalist. He has written travel pieces from around the world and has been awarded numerous prizes for photography and journalism. This series of tale retellings is modern, witty and extremely attractive for today's children.



Second volume of the series: *The Traveller's Tales* (ill. by Stefan Georgescu, 2022)

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Spring 2023

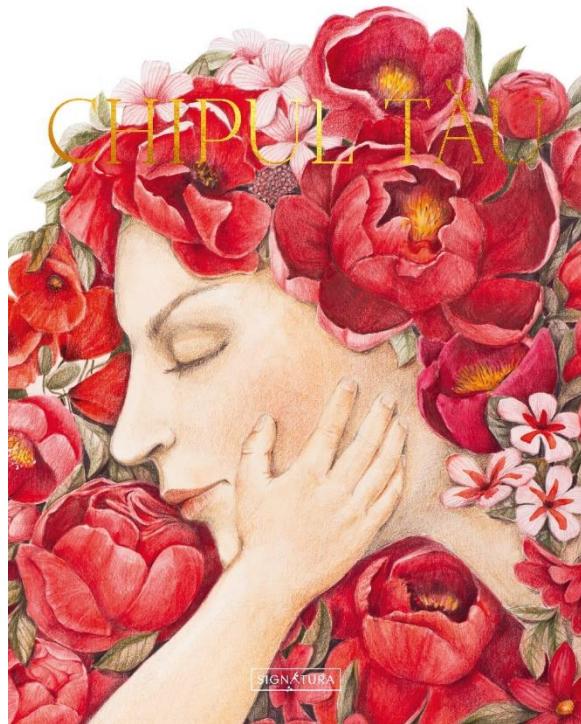


Your Face

Bianca Mereuță, illustrations by Oana Hajos

Bianca Mereuță

Oana Hajos



Publisher: Signatura

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation

Pages: 40

Publication: 2022

Age: 3+

A poetic dedication to mothers from all around the world. Through gentle words and emotional illustrations, the book reveals the feelings and values that are the foundation of the child-mother relationship: love, kindness, protection, caressing, respect and peace.

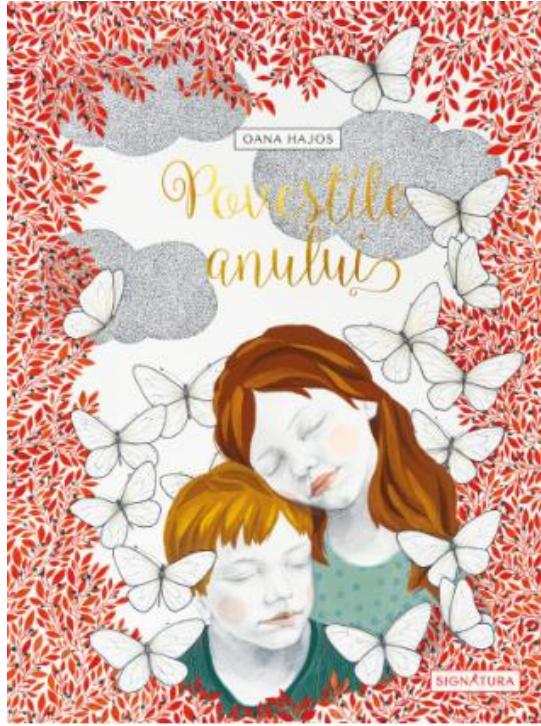


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The Stories of the Year

Oana Hajos



Publisher: Signatura

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 64

Publication: 2021

Age: 3+

12 stories dedicated to each month of the year, accompanied by vivid illustrations and four poems, one for each season. Each story develops around the characteristics of each month and builds thoughtful characters and narratives through which the children can learn about natural elements like Earth, rain, Sun, forest or the sea. Based on modern language or on fable-like tone, the book brings together parents, educators and kids.



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Olguța and the Million Dollar Grandpa

Alex Moldovan, illustrations József Vass



Proprietor: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Rights sold: Macedonian (Bata)

Pages: 280

Age: 7+

Other volumes in the series:

Olguța: Operation Jaguar

Olguța and the Big Show-Down

30 000 printed copies combined

Olguța is a twelve-year kid like any other. Well, not quite like any other: she is clumsy, impertinent, always looking for trouble, does not have many friends and her family is so divided that she doesn't recognize her own aunt when she pops at the door. No wonder that Olguța does not like it when she is forced to spend a whole weekend with an aunt who she barely knows. Moreover, Constantine, her grandfather, is determined to see her. And won't take no for an answer. Luckily, she is accompanied by her dog, Farid, her beloved pet. When she meets a boy who lived on the streets and was rescued by Nina, her aunt, things get a little more exciting. Next we find Olguța wandering through the city, trying to escape her grandfather's insistent henchmen and searching for answers regarding her family. The meeting with her grandfather, in the book's grand finale, clears some things up and opens up other. The book addresses children from 9 to 14. It is written in a realistic and very alert style, with short intermissions approaching the likes or dislikes of the main character and is richly illustrated by József Vass, a

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Cluj-based illustrator. The topics of the book are friendship, the few things one needs in order to survive and how things are not always what they seem. This is the first in a series of books tracing Olguta's adventures.

Alex Moldovan was born in 1977 in Cluj, where he lives. He is passionate about children's literature, jazz and is a volunteer at an animal protection association. He studied Philosophy and has a Master's Degree in Philosophy. Among other things, he worked as a bookseller and is currently a literary translator, having translated about 40 books for several major publishing houses in Romania. He has a cultural blog and writes for Romanian cultural magazines on different topics. He has also written a poetry book which he has later disowned. Olguta and the Million Dollar Grandpa is his debut novel and one of the finalists of the Arthur Trophy.

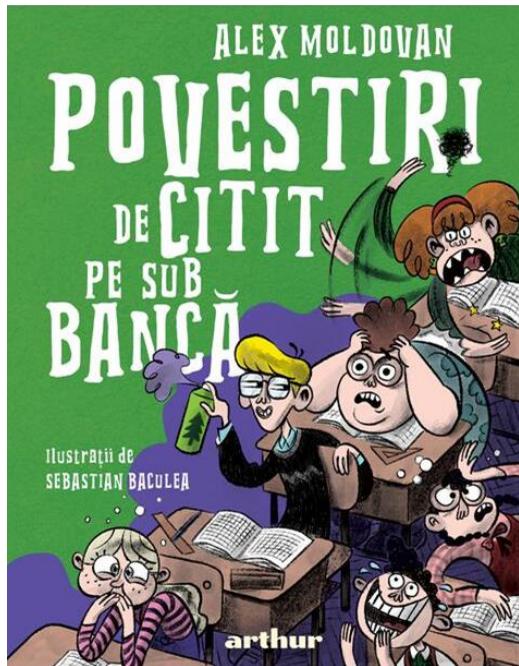


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Stories to Read under Your Desk

Alex Moldovan, illustrations by Sebastian Baculea



Proprietor: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Pages: 200

Publication: 2022

Age: 10+; short stories

33 short stories to read under your school desk.

Finally, here is a book for all those who are not exactly keen on school. Please meet the 5th graders from E class, whose main concern is to go out in their break. A lot of mysterious things happen to this class: all kind of things get animated, teachers become students and the other way around, classrooms strangely disappear, and Golden Fish run through the bathroom pipe. Also, there's a new girl whose name nobody knows. There is also a missing story. And it's better not to mention what happens in classroom number 26.

Also by Alex Moldovan:

The Little Boy Who Could Bite His Nose (2019; picture book; ill. by Irina Georgescu)

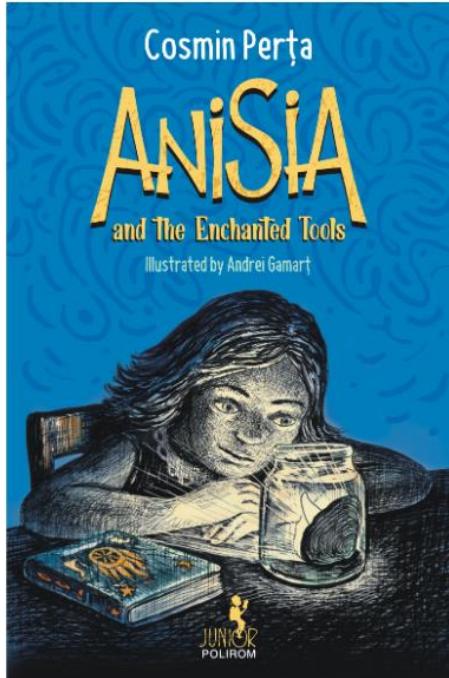


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Anisia and the Enchanted Tools

Cosmin Perță, illustrations by Andrei Gamarț



Publisher: Polirom Junior

Original language: Romanian

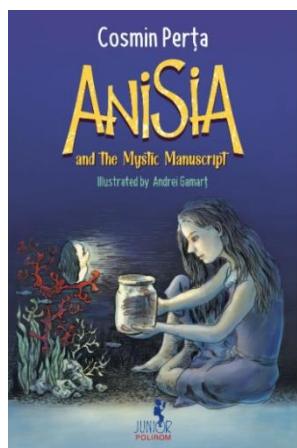
Pages: 112

Publication: 2021

Age: 8+

In a world where no one believes in anything anymore, Anisia, an orphaned thirteen-year-old girl, decides to embark on an unusual mission. Having the power to understand animals, she steals from the aquarium of the children's home where she is raised and educated a quahog shell and escapes in an attempt to find her younger brother, abducted from the same place a few years ago. What she doesn't know is that her mission is far

more important than she imagined. Along the way, she discovers that her powers are not limited to understanding animals, and with her philosophical quahog shell and her Down Syndrome friend, she begins a saga not only of finding her family, but also of saving the planet by fighting against the toxic Lords of the Mist.



„Travel and adventure novel, *Anisia and the enchanted tools* has everything: story, humour, imagination, educational value, even a little magic. Cosmin Perță creates a mythical-medieval atmosphere, as in the great books of adventures and quests dedicated to children, which, together with the well-held plot, makes this volume a very valuable literary piece.”

Luminița Corneanu – Literary critic

Second volume: *Anisia and the Mystic Manuscript* (2022)

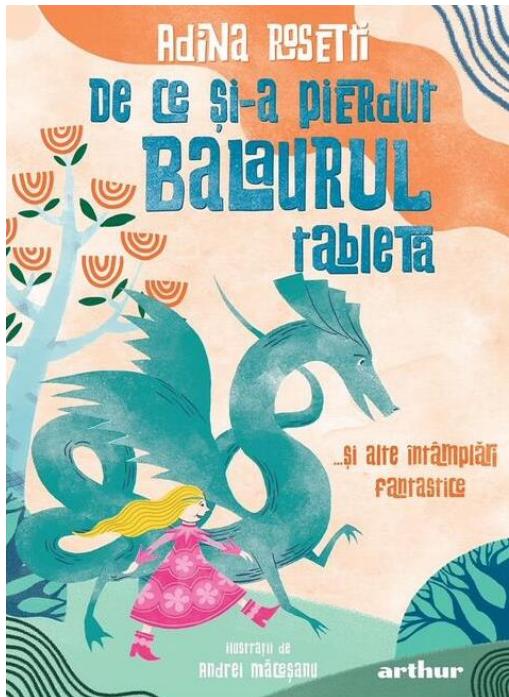
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Why the Dragon Lost His Tablet...

And Other Fantastic Tales

Adina Rosetti, illustrations by Andrei Măcesanu



Publisher: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Pages: 112

Publication: 2022

Age: 9+

Dissatisfied with the way her story ends, the Princess abandons her pink bedroom and sets off to the Enchanted Forrest to find out what happens next. Once there, however, she learns that things have gone berserk: the Dragon has lost his tablet, The Great Monster has misplaced the love poem, and Prince Charming is being held prisoner by the Big Ogre!

Each of the characters has something to fight for (or against), and craves for their happy ending – even the frog, in search of the magical kiss that will turn him into a prince.

As a bonus, a tremendous recipe from the Big Ogre's famous cookbook, on how to prepare Pea Soup – the dietary, non-fat version (no Princess added)

Adina Rosetti is a Romanian writer and journalist, Founder & president of DE BASM – Romanian Association of Children and Youth Literature Writers. In 2007, she was awarded “Young Cultural Journalist of the Year” by Freedom House. As a writer, Adina Rosetti participated in international book fairs, literary festivals and public reading events in Bucharest, Berlin, Bologna, Beijing, Madrid, Perugia, Budapest, Iasi, Istanbul, Leipzig, Paris, Praga and Torino. She currently lives in Bucharest with her two kids, teaching creative writing for children and developing literary projects. She is interested in fiction for adults, children and Young Adults.

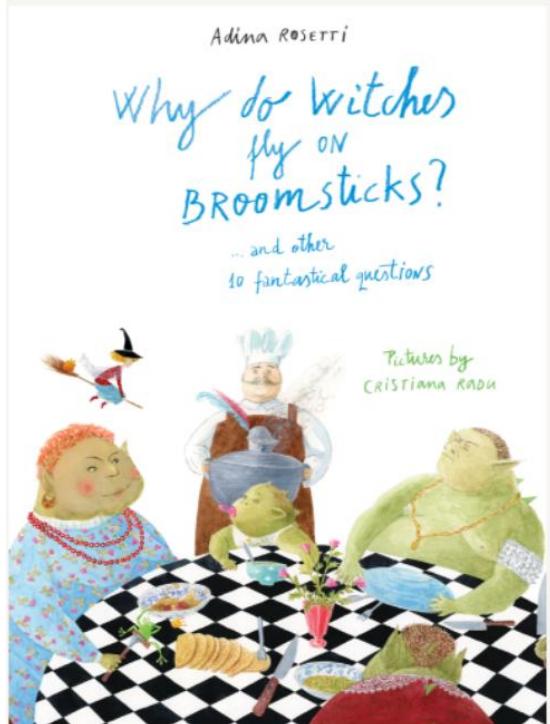
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Why Do Witches Fly on Broomsticks?

And Other 10 Fantastic Questions

Adina Rosetti, illustrations by Cristiana Radu



Publisher: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation

Pages: 56

Publication: 2016

Age: 5+

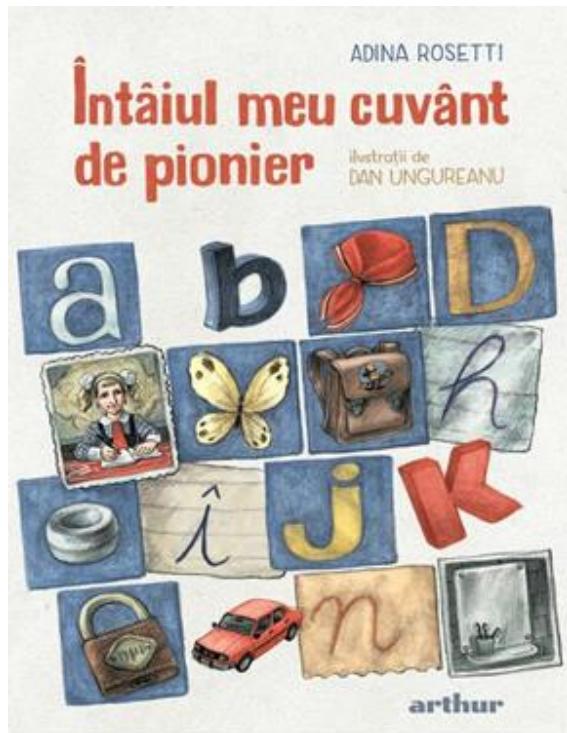
Children like to ask funny questions, so they deserve the most imaginative answers. Why do witches fly on brooms? Why do monsters do not like sweets? What if Prince Charming would give up his magical horse for a car? What if elves would go to schools and study... math? What if dragons would try to themselves in a block of flats? What happens to a frog who doesn't get kissed by a princess? Magical characters from classical tales are reinvented and reinterpreted as contemporary characters in a funny way. The result is a witty and interactive book in which children are encouraged to answer funny questions, to write and draw.

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My First Word as a Pioneer

Adina Rosetti, illustrations by Dan Ungureanu



Publisher: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample, Full summary

Pages: 104

Publication: 2021

Age: 7+

It is the autumn of 1989 and the communist regime in Romania is on its last legs – its fall is a matter of months. Ada is 8 and she can't wait to join the Pioneers and finally get the red scarf, her very own "pledge of loyalty", as everybody calls it! The world that the grown-ups around her inhabit is rather gray and tastes of powder milk and – on rare occasions – of oranges obtained after a few good hours' queuing. The flats are bitterly cold and every day begins with the same old propaganda songs on the radio.

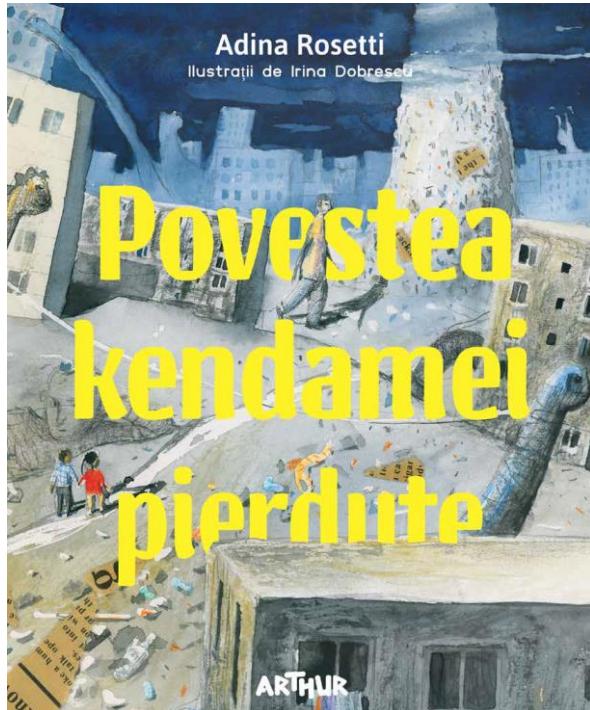
As for the children, their universe is as funny as it is cruel. On the most important day of her life as a pupil – the day she is to become a Pioneer – Ada learns that the world surrounding her is not what it seems. A stupid, senseless prank can change your destiny forever, and what lies behind the official portraits of rulers and pompous pioneer slogans is a complete and utter lie.

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The Story of The Lost Kendama

Adina Rosetti, illustrations by Irina Dobrescu



Publisher: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: Italian translation

Pages: 72

Publication: 2018

Rights sold: Italian (Cisla Editore)

Age: 8+

Part of the project The New Storytellers, launched in March 2017 by "Cu Alte Cuvinte" Association. It is also the title of the first book of Romanian fiction for children featuring Roma characters.

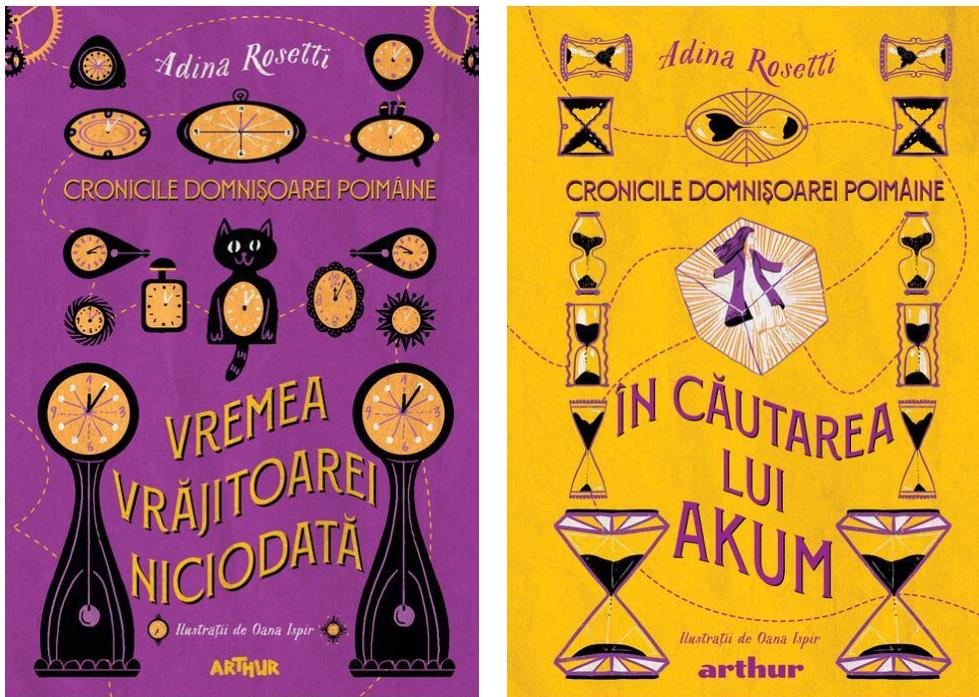
It was inspired by a series of twelve storytelling workshops for a group of children living in Ferentari, one of Bucharest's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. The story follows Ionut and Diana, two children who take a break from their homework to go out to play in the street. There they meet Leo, a bully with mysterious powers who steals Ionut's kendama. The two kids go after him on the Spirits' Alley, a most frightening place, where everything has lost its colours and the garbage is rising as high as a mountain. Will Ionut and his friends summon the courage to challenge Leo and free the Spirits' Alley from under his spell? A story with fairies, wizards and kendamas, but mainly about children that can change the world.

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The Chronicles of Miss Overmorrow

Adina Rosetti, illustrations by Oana Ispir



Publisher: Arthur

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English sample

Pages: 296; 328

Publication: 2019; 2021

Rights sold: Macedonian (Prozart)

Age: 12+

Volume 1: *The Times of Witch Nevermore*

Volume 2: *Looking for RightNow*

Volume 3: *The Mystery of Monfriday* (to be published)

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At first glance, the trilogy *The Chronicles of Miss Overmorrow* seems to plunge its readers into a magical kingdom where pirates, witches and other fairy-tale characters go through various adventures. Upon closer inspection, however, the story talks about the consequences of toying with time, about the mistakes of an unruly youth, forgiveness and change, the thrills of falling in love for the first time and how it is the little things that can change the world.

Miss Overmorrow made her debut in a children's book, but then, just like her readers, she grew up and she has now become a rebellious teenager, ready to challenge norms and conventions.

In the first volume, Witch Nevermore, alongside her alter-ego, Madam NeverNever, embodies the power-thirsty boss whose ambitions are well hidden behind self-help texts. On an island amidst temporal whirlwinds, far away from family and friends, with music as her sole companion, Miss Overmorrow dreams about turning the tables in The Kingdom of Time.

In the second volume, the haunting past of Tempus the First, the dark prophecies of Bad Omen and other such misfortunes befall the noble family in the Kingdom of Time. While everybody is wondering where Miss Overmorrow's son has vanished to, another mysterious lady makes an appearance, from a strange place that does not even feature on the map — The Forrest Beyond Time. We get to meet Witch Nevermore here, too — full of surprises, as ever.

The third volume offers a closure to each of the characters' storylines. The narrative follows two main themes. One focuses on the Kingdom of Time, which seems to have fallen prey to an unexpected epidemics: a mysterious virus, quite similar to sadness, has taken hold of the dwellers' lives. The other tells the story of the City of MonFriday, where the newly-elected ruler has banned Saturdays and Sundays, confining children to all and only online activities (in terms of school, leisure, or socializing). Everything is decided and supervised by an Almighty Server, controlled by this same ruler, himself a victim of an unhappy childhood dictated by ambitious, yet unsympathetic parents.

All these topoi, alongside many others (such as friendship, forgiveness, making choices, finding a special skill or talent) make for an enchanting story where fantasy meets suspense, a story that children can relate to and learn a great deal from.

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Spring 2023



POETRY

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Come With Me I Know Exactly Where We Are Going

& other selected poems

Dan Sociu

Foreign editions: English (Longleaf Press, University of Virginia)

Original language: Romanian

Reading material: English translation; also available: *Sleepwalking. 5 short stories*

eXcessive song #1

I still happen to believe
that soon my superpowers will awaken:
flight, invisibility, time travel,
superelasticity, walking through walls,
your love—
At twenty-six,
at the midpoint of life expectancy in Romania,
at the beginning of December,
at the top of the steep stairs in Green Hours,
I tried to kiss you &
you drew back I almost fell—
The last time you touched me, at the museum,
for a second you pressed your ear against my arm
so that the girl you went there with wouldn't see you,
and it was so good,
as if you had touched me the first time—
As if you had touched me that summer
when I goofed up
and you stayed beside me
and tried to console me, without knowing I liked you,
it was good, as if you had touched me then—
When I was in need
at the museum but in fact all summer, it's hard to explain,
and some future time, perhaps tomorrow
when you'll lean your ear on my arm
it will be as if you're doing it right now
while I look for you in the streets
because I'm in need.
I'm short exactly one leu
to go somewhere warm,
I'm too shy to beg
and not lucky enough to find some change,
I've no phone, no phone card to call you,

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I won't be lucky enough to run into you by accident
because you're at home with him.
I love you but right now
I'm no longer willing to look for you in the streets.
This damn Bucharest blackens my fingernails
which I trim every morning for you
because I might meet you somehow.
I shave for you,
I use deodorant for you,
I borrow clothes for you—
I'd sleep anywhere just to be in the same city with you
because I don't have my own place,
but I'll get my own place for you, I'll kill
the loser inside me for you and I'll make money—
I'll learn to act cooler than he can,
I'll learn every lyric, all the songs and albums
of the bands you like or I'll hold you in my arms
when you cry—
The buses that don't lead to you
are of no use to me.
The buses that do lead to you
are of no use to me.
One night I'll jostle the black car
in front of your building; I'll set off its alarm to wake you
and you'll get out of bed, leaving him annoyed.
Lately I can only see you in hallways
having a cigarette, you smoke three, one after another,
and your morbid appetite thrills me.
Someday we'll both have lung cancer and I long
to wind up in the same support group, you know,
like Bonham Carter & Norton,
Tori Amos & Kafka—

Dan Sociu belongs to the so-called poets of 2000, who are often called representatives of "Miserabilism" by Romanian literary critics. This expression defines both a tendency to take on the pose of anti-hero and biographical writing which puts an emphasis on the banality of everyday life, allowing itself to be influenced by American popular literature. He worked as a journalist for the ecological oriented magazine *totb.ro* and wrote over 300 articles, translated 27 books, novels, books of poetry (by authors such as Charles Bukowski, Seamus Heaney, e.e. cummings), nonfiction and thousands of scientific and ecological texts, a few theatre plays. In 2013 and 2014 he won the Romanian Cultural Radio prize for two books of poetry and in 2007 he was voted "Most Prominent Young Writer" at the Younger Writers' Colloquium in Cluj. In 2006 *cântece eXcesive* (eXcessive songs) was awarded Best Book of the Year by the Romanian Writers' Association. In 2006 The Award of the Magazine 22, granted for achievement as the "Most Talented Young Writer of the Moment". In 2003 *borcane bine legate, bani pentru încă o săptămînă* (well sealed preserving jars, money for one more week) was awarded the national prize to foster talent, the "Mihai Eminescu" Prize. Some other grants - Omi, New York, Baden Baden. In 2008 he was recommended by Herta Muller to be invited to the Literaturfestival in Berlin In 2008 he was recommended for a three month residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany, by Mircea Cărtărescu (novelist, poet). In 2007 Sociu was invited to participate in the Festival of Poetry and Wine, organized in Medana, Slovenia. He lives now in Romania and UK, London.

He wrote 9 books of poetry and 4 novels (one novel, *Urbancholia*, was published in Serbia and a book of poetry, *Mouths Dried with Hatred*, at Longleaf Press, University of Virginia)