

Zaza Burchuladze

title

Instant Kafka

Novel. Ad Marginem. Moscow 2008. 70 pages

INSTANT KAFKA is a short road movie through Tiflis by night. Driven by boredom, the young heroes appear to have just one thing in mind: badgering the bourgeoisie! At the end of all the provocation and pranks, however, it becomes clear that Tiflis' screwed up young generation is driven by nothing more than the quest for love and happiness.

Zaza, the author, is Tiflis' "official" heartthrob, the town's "official" intellectual columnist, and the guy with whom the young female narrator bounces over the potholes in the empty night time streets of Tiflis on the back seat of an old VW Golf. Past the closed McDonalds where only the domed roof shines yellow, analogue to the red M of the Rustaveli metro station. Past the dead Club Berlin with its trash metal music and disco lasers where she first met Zaza. He hadn't been interested in dancing in Berlin, wanting only to look into her eyes. It was in the VW Golf that he first swallowed one of her eyelashes. She has since lost track of the number of eyelashes now. Drawn by the call of the night, the narrator tries to memorize every moment with Zaza. In order to know what he wants. In order to finally find out what she wants for herself.

One thing she does want, however, is to get out of the area behind the Moskovsky Prospekt, which she calls the black hole of Africa. Yet going to the real Africa, to a husband with an Audi A6 to whom she has been promised, is not what she wants either. She wants Tiflis and she wants Zaza. Zaza, however, has a new plot in mind, one in which the hero unearths Kafka's remains and puts them through the coffee grinder so that he can dissolve a spoonful of them every morning like instant coffee.

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awards

Best Georgian Novel 2011
Ilia State University Award 2011
Bakur Sulakauri Award 2008
Tsinandali Literary Award for Best Novel 2003

other works

Adibas
Mineral Jazz
The Inflatable Angel

press reviews

"Zaza Burchuladze has written a touching, amusing as well as a rather sad book." – VLADIMIR SOROKIN

"Anyone who is a fan of rather fantastic yet down-to-earth and astoundingly vivid characters will thoroughly enjoy reading this novel." – EVGENY GRISHKOVETS

"Burchuladze, contrary and absurdist, writes in the imaginary tradition of Eugene Ionesco and Venedikt Erofeev." – KIRILL RESHETNIKOV

biography

Zaza Burchuladze, born 1973 in Tiflis, started writing after graduating from the Tiflis National Academy of Arts and has since published ten books and screenplays. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors. Zaza Burchuladze lives in Tiflis.

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