

Jonathan Vidgop

Israeli Writer

BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Vidgop was born in Leningrad in 1955. He was systematically expelled from every Soviet institution he entered: school, the Institute of Culture, VGIK film school, the Theater Institute, and multiple theaters. He was stripped of Soviet citizenship in 1988 and repatriated to Israel. In the USSR he served as an army private beyond the Arctic Circle, worked as a cattle drover, locksmith, sailor, stagehand, and screenwriter-director of 21 plays, 12 of which were shut down by the authorities.

In Israel: director and researcher. Author of twelve books. His primary genre is magical realism; critics have compared his prose to Borges, Kafka, and Bruno Schulz. His novel *Testimony* was published by Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie (NLO) in Moscow in the prestigious series *Khudozhestvennaya Slovesnost*. His prose and poetry have been published in English translation in literary journals across more than 30 countries worldwide.

He has published scientific articles on chaos theory in *Physical Review E* and *Physica A*, and on the intergenerational transfer of identity traits in Jewish families (theory of metaclans) in the journal *F1000 Research*. He is the founder of the Am haZikaron Institute, supported by a committee of 55 Nobel Laureates.

"We would see the genetic kinship of the Israeli prose writer's novel with Kafka's texts even if the author had not provided the book with an epigraph taken from him."

— Olga Balla, *Jewish Panorama*, on the novel *Testimony* (NLO, Russia)

"The novel was written ahead of its time. Its true readers are probably only now appearing."

— Gasan Guseinov, Doctor of Philology, RFI

"To evoke horror through the written word is an exceptionally difficult task, within the power of very few writers. Vidgop accomplishes it virtuosically."

— Alina Chelnokova

"The metaphors of oblivion directly concern the Holocaust — never mentioned in the novel, yet present as a giant figure of silence."

— Evgenia Ritz, *Jewish.ru*

"Vidgop's novellas are a captivating blend of satire, absurdism, and existential commentary. They read like a Kafkaesque nightmare intertwined with the grotesque humour of Gogol."

— Lunar Review, Nigeria

AWARDS

- 2022 Meridian Editor's Prize in Prose — annual award from the literary magazine of the University of Virginia (USA). For the story "Nomads."
- 2025 Proverse Poetry Prize — international poetry competition (winning entries published by Chinese University of Hong Kong Press). For the poem "Trees in an alien wood..."
- Grant from the President of the State of Israel for writing the book Birdfall (1999).
- Zeiti Yerushalaim Prize in the "Jewish Thought" category and medal "For Contribution to the Development of National Spiritual Heritage of the Jewish People" (2007).
- Grant from the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress for writing The Apocryphal Chronicles.

BOOKS

- Birdfall — novellas (Moria, 1999)
- A Brief Encyclopedia of Sexuality (Mainstream United, 2013)
- Testimony — novel (Mainstream United, 2020; NLO, Moscow, 2023)
- Hymn of Schlimazels — heroic epic (Mainstream United, 2020)
- Russia: The Three-Year Pogrom — testimonies (Am haZikaron, 2023)
- The Ethnos of Millennia (Am haZikaron, 2023)
- The Apocryphal Chronicles (Am haZikaron, 2026)

Five more books are in preparation for publication.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Journals:

Israel

Dvoetocie • Nota Bene • Neveroyatnye Evrei • Sonar

Russia

Mecenat i Mir • Literatura • Kommentarii

International publications (in English)

USA: Meridian (University of Virginia), The Los Angeles Review, Pembroke Magazine (University of North Carolina). UK: Litro (Editor's Pick). Ireland: The Galway Review. Sweden: Two Thirds North (Stockholm University). Croatia: The Mad River. Plus journals in Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Japan, India, Singapore, China, Nigeria, South Africa, Australia, and other countries.

TRANSLATORS

Leo Shtutin (principal translator) — DPhil, Merton College, Oxford. Author of Spatiality and Subjecthood in Mallarmé, Apollinaire, Maeterlinck and Jarry (Oxford University Press, 2019). Rossica Young Translator's Prize (2010).

Reilly Costigan-Humes — winner of the 2022 EBRD Literature Prize for the translation of Serhiy Zhadan's The Orphanage (Yale University Press).

Nina Kossman — poet, author, translator. NEA fellowship recipient. UNESCO/PEN Short Story Award. Founding editor, EastWest Literary Forum. Translator of Marina Tsvetaeva (three volumes).

CONTACT

Press inquiries and business proposals:

itzhak8@gmail.com

Website: vidgop.co.il

Facebook: facebook.com/alexanderjonathan.vidgop.3

Literary representation: Prof. Itzhak Fouxon / Am haZikaron Institute, Tel Aviv

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