

DANIEL BĂNULESCU



Biography

Daniel Bănulescu was born in 1960 in Bucharest. He was studying to be an engineer – now he is a professional journalist and writer. He caused a stir right away with his first collection of poetry because of the stong sexual charge of the poems. His first novel, *I Kiss Your Ass, Beloved Leader* was published in 1994 and with this Bănulescu became irrevocably known. The book won the prize of the Romanian PEN Club and was reprinted in 2005. The works of Bănulescu were translated into many languages (e.g. English, Italian; Serbian; Dutch).

He is member of the Romanian PEN Club.

He will be attending the Writer in Residence Pécs event in April.

I Kiss Your Ass, Beloved Leader

There are only a few books which are able to avoid clichés when talking about dictatorships. Daniel Bănulescu is not onl yable to do this but he chooses the most suitable manner to do so: laughter. The secret of his politico-social satire is to mix parody, grotesque, the absurd and the fantastic perfectly with realism.

We are led into fabulous, yet sombre world: Bucharest is the city of political and metaphysical conspirancies – just like in a piece of 19th century crime fiction. This Bucharest of the state celebrations and processions, speeches blared from podiums, spies and almighty agents of Securitate is filled with mythical figures: Median, the false prophet, doing evangelist work amongst the pickpockets; Arvinte and Sucu Marcel, "engineers of the suites of Bucharest", infamous and awed burglars.

A similarly mythical figure, Ironwort is planning to assassinate Nicolae Ceaușescu, this dark and comical Faustian and Mephisto-like anti-hero. Ironwort is the terror of the city, a kind of modern outlaw. But the Beloved Leader is not only protected by a goblin, there is also his loyal hound, a state security officer in the guise of a Labrador dog...

Bănulescu is a like a Balkanian Bulgakov, who, because of the small-time quality of the region cannot lend the kind of metaphysical dimension to his novel the way Bulgakov does, by the lost manuscript of his hero, the writer: Bănulescu' talking Labrador is not Satan, just an accessory in a dog's skin for a

megalomaniac politician. In this world not even the fantastic can take wing from reality – but this is not flaw but a feat of the author: a precise literary transcription of narrow horizons.