

# Narrative and war: The experience of contemporary Ukrainian literature

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DOI: 10.31577/WLS.2025.17.3.2

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## Narrative and war: The experience of contemporary Ukrainian literature

Narrative. Media. Trauma. Memory. War. Ukrainian Literature.

This article aims to determine the transformations of verbal and non-verbal codes in works about the Russian-Ukrainian War. It claims that contemporary Ukrainian literature forms: 1) a new kind of story about the war – that of the strength of resilience of Ukrainians; 2) a new type of narrative that combines verbal and visual (or multimedia) components, which emphasize documentary authenticity and deep figurative meaning in the interpretation of the Russian-Ukrainian War. Such a narrative is focused on documentation and metaphorical understanding. It is a unique combination of individual and collective traumatic experiences in a coherent text about war written in times of disaster.

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Each war has its language; more precisely, each war nullifies language, forces it to be reinvented, creates it from fragments and splinters. Writers who write a war (not about a war, but specifically a war itself – these are different approaches) work out senses: they tell specific private “non-combat” stories and thus destroy the idea of war as an abstract, non-personalized evil. Every war requires its language.

Ganna Uliura: *Pysaty viinu: 2023* (2023, 9)

These words from the preface to Ganna Uliura’s essay collection *Pysaty viinu: 2023* (To write a war: 2023, 2023) are just one example of the discussions about how the Russian-Ukrainian War has changed language and writing, narrative and reading, as well as readership habits and book publishing in Ukraine. These discussions include the voices of such authors as Oleksandr Mykhed (*Pozyvnyi dlia Yova: Khroniky vtorhnennia* [Job’s call sign: Chronicles of the invasion], 2022, Eng. trans. *The Language of War*, 2024), who writes about the change of language during the war and the vulnerability of words in the face of evil, Oksana Zabuzhko (*Naidovsha podorozh* [The longest journey], 2022), whose essays contain reflections on the origins of the war, and Ganna Uliura (*Pysaty viinu: 2023*), who reflects on how war is written in other national literatures, among others.

Contemplating on the causes of the war includes a conversation about both whether the narrative in fiction about the war has changed, as well as how the presentation of the traumatic experience of the Ukrainians is changed by textual and public practices. The study of these issues may be done on a wide range of material, because since 2014 many poetry collections have been published in Ukraine,<sup>1</sup> collections of essays,<sup>2</sup> novels and short stories collections.<sup>3</sup> The general list, which has been kept by Hanna Skorina since 2014, includes more than 200 positions as of January 10, 2023 (2023). These works are written by different authors with various writing experience and the list is updated monthly. It is with the same monthly regularity that Olena Herasymiuk updates the list of names in her project *Nedopisani* (Unwritten), which collects works and memories of writers who died in the war. The experience of the Russian-Ukrainian War is essentially featured by changing memorial practices, forming a community of memory as a powerful space for remembering those who died in this war.

These two different but shared experiences are meant to capture the war in the artistic world and to record/preserve the memory of those killed in the war. The following issues are addressed in this research: 1) how the mechanisms of individual and collective memory of the war are transformed in works of art and public memorial practices, 2) how the narrative changes, and 3) how Ukrainian literature transforms the daily war experience of Ukrainians into an artistic text.

## PURPOSE AND METHODS

Trauma studies and memory studies, which enable to describe the mechanisms of transformation of testimony or memory into an artistic text or practice, form the

theoretical methodology of this article, which continues the discussions recorded in the volumes *War and Literary Studies* (Engberg-Pedersen and Ramsey 2023) and *Memory, Place, and Identity: Honouring and Remembrance of War and Conflict* (Drozdowski, De Nardi, and Waterton 2016). At the same time, this analysis is centered on the new experience of forming memorial practices in the public space of Ukraine via media, particularly social ones, media projects, artistic works, etc. It is worth noting the special connection between the collective memory of a traumatic event and an actual historical event, the place of the event. Contemporary Ukrainian literature is an exciting example of how the testimonies and observations of the participants in this tragic event are transformed from an individual experience into a collective one, and how a common language of symbolic images and plots is formed. This is presented in the examples of short stories built on the principle of combining documentary and fiction. In such short stories, facts that first appeared in social networks and mass media, due to the interpretation via visual images, are symbolized in the media space and become an integral part of the collective traumatic experience and social tragedy, expressed in the form of an author's narrative or a collective media project. This is a unique understanding of a traumatic event, according to the principle of the "historical present" (Nora 2014), at the time of the catastrophe, with the maximum use of facts and documentation. This trend has been recorded in modern Ukrainian literature (2014–2025) and memorial practice in Ukraine: facts, photographs, media, stories, social networks, and individual stories – all non-literary factors – are transforming literary genres.

### **CHRONICLE VS. REFLECTION**

Searching for a language and narrative that can express the traumatic experience of war, literature is forced to choose among recording events, witnessing, and reflecting on war and trauma. Witnessing is documenting what has been experienced and/or seen. The metaphorical nature of language and narrative authenticity are minimally revealed in it. Instead, truthfulness and realism are essential features of the type of narration inherent in documentary-artistic texts about war. Moreover, it requires extreme truthfulness and accuracy from the author and orients the reader to neorealism. To the contrary, reflection on war as a traumatic experience appeals to contemplation as a principle of narrative. In such narratives, figurative meaning, imagery, and symbolization of the lived experience prevail. In both types of narrative, authors' autobiographies can be manifested, as they complement their own memories or feelings with the realism of what is depicted.

In Ukrainian literature, these two types of writing – documental and fictional – have been transformed as the Russian-Ukrainian War has continued. Moreover, this is writing in times of disaster when both the author and the reader are maximally immersed in this experience and their vision is not distanced from it. However, it should be noted that from 2014 to 2022, involvement in the experience of war and traumatic experiences did not cover all of Ukraine. Actually, during this period, works written by combat participants or volunteers were prevalent (Artem Chekh's *Zero Point*, Borys Humenyuk's *Poems from War*, etc.), although occasionally there

were some written by writers without combat experience. After February 24, 2022, when the Russian-Ukrainian War covered a larger territory, a far greater number of Ukrainians became direct witnesses and participants in the hostilities. In addition, significantly more Ukrainians have experienced refugee status and/or migration from Ukraine. This was also caused by the spread of social networks and a new type of publicity inherent in contemporary society, the society of new media that focuses on the rapid dissemination of information, its maximum possible visualization, its symbolization in images and words, and a kind of “appropriation” of testimonies and impressions of an event, even if it is only read about. Yaryna Chornoguz describes this feeling as neo-existentialism:

Life in a combat zone, life while performing combat missions at the constant risk of death or survival, life in peace with war, life in spite of war, life intending to defeat the military genocide organized by the Russians, and to remain authentic, life in the end with the last views and belongings, [with] the last words of individual will – this is the basis of new Ukrainian existentialism.<sup>4</sup> (2024)

To clarify this concept, Ukrainian literature about the war formulates the principles and ideas of the narrative about the war. This is a unique formula in its way: life inside a disaster. This narrative model organically combines documental, neorealist, autobiographical and metaphorical narratives. In this narrative formula, tragedy co-exists with faith, and in the dramatic moments of war, resilience is formed as the only possible expression for survival. This approach is embodied through a combination of documentary and metaphorical elements: the authenticity of neorealist writing together with a philosophical, sometimes biblical, context.

In public spaces, this commitment is symbolized by several gestures: every day at nine o'clock in the morning, a moment of silence is held throughout the country to honor those who died in the war; a gesture of gratitude is made to all those who were killed in the war – civilians and soldiers (hand on heart); social advertising emphasizes resilience and support for Ukrainians; exhibitions in public spaces commemorate the events of the Russian-Ukrainian War; weekly actions support the captured soldiers of “Azov”; a space with yellow and blue flags is present on the Independence Square in the center of Kyiv. In addition, these practices have been linked to a shift in the military paradigm and memory strategies in Ukraine. This is reflected, in particular, in discussions about critical visual and semantic elements in military cemeteries (Drobovych 2024) or ethical boundaries in commemorating the fallen (Kotubey-Herutska 2023), etc. In these practices and discussions, a key element is memory as a form of complicity, processing/talking about the traumatic event. It is essential that this provides an opportunity to combine individual and collective experience in the perception of the tragic events of the war, and most importantly, it forms solidarity in the perception and interpretation of the traumatic experience.

An essential role in both cases is played by the circumstances carefully analyzed by Serhii Plokhyy in the monograph *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History* (2023). The researcher singles out two essential features of the Russian-Ukrainian War: 1) it is “an old-fashioned imperial war waged by the Russian elites, who

consider themselves the inheritors of grandiose expansionist traditions” (20); 2) “the current war is taking place in a new environment defined by the spread of nuclear weapons, the collapse of the international order after the Cold War, and the unprecedented worldwide revival of populist nationalism, last seen in the 1930s” (2023, 22). The former sign highlights the existential nature of the Russian-Ukrainian War as a war not only for the territory of Ukraine but also a war directed against Ukrainian identity. The latter appeals to the new international order after World War II and must also consider the impact that digital technologies and social networks have on practices of textual and public memory in the current war.

### PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

The triad “personal – someone else’s – collective experience” in the Russian-Ukrainian War is undergoing a continuing transformation. February 24, 2022, became the date when complicity in the events of the war united all citizens of Ukraine. At the same time, personal experiences and testimonies were quickly made public on social networks and became a special form of support and resilience for Ukrainians. These messages about tragedies, sympathy, fear, and resistance can be marked as a new type of publicity in recording the testimony of the events of the war. This is an important change that testifies to important aesthetic changes taking place in contemporary Ukrainian literature, which is an instant recording of events in the media space. This is a special type of documentation: a direct testimony of the emotions of the witness or participant.

The media are forming a new landscape in the Russian-Ukrainian War – the event, which, as Pierre Nora writes, has a unique power to “bundle disparate values into a bunch” (2014, 36), the event, which, as well as to record a large number of testimonies and memories of Ukrainians.

The symbolism of this experience is recorded in the media project *Shche odyn den: shchodennyky viiny* (Another day [or One more day]: War diaries) of the Ukrainian electronic media about the culture of reading and book publishing “Chytomo”.<sup>5</sup> These are 34 diaries of writers or artists along with ordinary people, which are posted on the Internet. This project includes comics, drawings, social network posts, and notebook entries, attesting to the transformation of autobiographical writing. Daily social media posts capture personal experiences and transform them from private to public. Moreover, with the help of a photo on Facebook, even handwritten diaries can greatly expand an individual’s history, as it happened with the records of Maksym Kasyanchuk from Mariupol.<sup>6</sup> *Another Day: War Diaries* from “Chytomo” testify to a new type of writing about war – a narrative in the public space, imbued with the soulfulness of both one person and a mass recipient. This is a collective documentary-artistic project with a verbal and visual component, based on the principles of a traumatic narrative about the shared experience of witnesses and participants of a traumatic event. The project describes the transformation of the narrators’ identity due to loss of home, displacement from home – and a reflection of the city’s and country’s experiences.

Another important digital project is *Unwritten*, founded by Olena Herasymiuk and Eugene Lir, honoring the memory of those whose creative careers were ended by the war. Unfortunately, the number of posts increases every week. The project captures the history, works, and memories of those who lost their lives and allows readers to hear their voices. Olena Herasymiuk comments on the idea of the *Unwritten* project:

It is the responsibility of writers of our generation to speak now with two voices. For myself and for someone else. Russia's goal is to silence us. However, we will try to do our bit for future generations so that we do not fade into history. To preserve the memory of as many of our contemporaries who were taken by the war as possible. To make it easier for our descendants so that they have no doubt about the price of Ukraine's freedom. (Horlach 2024, n.p.)

So far, the project has published excerpts from works or memories on the Instagram page, and the authors promise to expand the project. Both projects *Another Day: War Diaries* and *Unwritten* demonstrate society's demand for forming a new landscape of memory – one in the digital space. It is filled with new symbolic senses on another level: the value of an individual's view of the event and the importance of individual and collective memory of the deceased. Such formats combine the documentary and sensory experience of the audience, which receives information as well as experiencing new emotions. In the public space of Ukraine, such practices create a system of images and iconic symbols that fix the memory of the Russian-Ukrainian War, establish landmarks in the space of memory, fill it with symbolic meanings, and search for ways to transform memories into life practices.

### VERBAL VS. NONVERBAL

The principles of the narrative about the war in contemporary Ukrainian literature include both testimony, based on documentary evidence, and metaphorical understanding, symbolizing a traumatic experience. In *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (1999; Eng. trans. *Air War and Literature*), W. G. Sebald points out that

survivors' stories are usually characterized by a certain discontinuity, some special inconsistency, these stories are so incompatible with normal memories that they easily create the impression of fiction and complete nonsense. Some untruthfulness in eyewitness testimony also arises from the stereotypical expressions they often use. (2023, 37)

However, if we analyze the stories of survivors and witnesses of the tragedy of the war in Ukrainian literature, we can observe distinctive features. Narratives about the Russian-Ukrainian War symbolize the traumatic experience of the participants (witnesses) of the events. For example, in *Slovnyk viiny* (The dictionary of war, 2023), edited by Ostap Slyvinsky, the compiler relied on the thesis that the war “did not only fundamentally change the lives of those affected by it. It changes the meaning of words, and they must be carefully explained” (2023, n.p.). The book presents readers with 76 laconic story-reflections or “words” collected from 21 people, presented as dictionary entries. On the one hand, lyrical story associations are individual because they are written by specific individuals; on the other hand, they demonstrate the collective experience. The illustrations for *The Dictionary of War*

by Katerina Gordienko form the visual component that complements the stories of various Ukrainians who have lived through traumatic experiences. The strategies of such stories are primarily based on autobiographical narration combining the author's experience with a metaphorical and symbolic understanding of tragedies. Notably, readers often share the same experience as the author does.

Serhii Zhadan's short story collection *Arabesky* (Arabesques, 2024) includes twelve works that first appeared on the writer's Facebook page and then were published as a separate book, whose title alludes to Mykola Khvylovy's short story "Arabesky" (2024). However, the strength of the collection comes from its interweaving of episodes from the life of the city of Kharkiv and the lives of its inhabitants, the geometry of their meetings, and the broken lines of their destinies. The focus is on dialogues between characters, apt and concise urbanistic pictures of the city at war, and reflections in which the voice of the author-narrator and the character's voice merge. An essential component of the collection is comprised of the author's concise etudes-sketches, which provide the work with documentary authenticity, combining verbal (text itself) and non-verbal (painting) codes. As Sebald wrote, the text reveals the fragmentary nature of the memories of witnesses to a traumatic event. These are paintings in which

everything is visible behind the generous greenery, everything remains close, visible, but something is missing, is lacking, some emptiness stands out behind it all. Moreover, there is also emptiness, a kind of discontinuity, simplicity behind what he says. As if, he is talking about things that do not exist. He speaks convincingly, but things do not become more real because of this. (Zhadan 2024, 61)

These characters strive either to be silent or to speak out, but are united by silence:

She spoke out, sat, was silent, realizing that it was necessary to leave, that it was better for him to be alone, that all this, by and large, does not make sense: and her stories, and her flowers, and phone calls. [...] This does the darkness in him. The darkness she could not see but felt. She just physically felt it. That made sense. It moved him, it spoke with him. (70)

Notably, in all the short stories, although quietness and silence are key images, spoken, unspoken, and forgotten words are also emphasized – like those the priest pronounces in the church, eulogizing the deceased:

No one listens to words in particular. Something about mercy and memory, somehow – mercy and memory. That is what he is trying to voice, explain. Yes, so we all understand that all this has some meaning. His voice is quiet; next to this death, he completely fades and loses himself. Death is huge, it casts a cold heavy shadow and covers everyone with darkness and dampness. Everyone is standing, looking at the yellow face of the deceased, breathing the air in which melted wax smells of military pea coats, thinking about the sun in the yard, behind the wall, about the dry grass, about the empty tram tracks, thinking but not understanding anything at all – neither of mercy, nor of memory. (39–41)

This communication gap, when words are heard but do not fill the space, lose their original meanings, and people lose the ability to hear words, is one of the essential experiences of the war. The symbolic embodiment takes place primarily through

the concept of word/language/silence/narrative/quietness/remembrance/forgetting/memory. The symbolic embodiment of this war is manifested through the episode/moment as a duration that the traumatized memory of the narrator/reader can capture – mostly in the form of a short story: “War is when there is no other life except of this – a measured, cut off short piece. A heightened sense of mortality and understanding that it is no longer possible to live a postponed life that will come sometime later. There is no such thing as ‘sometime later’” (Mykhed 2023, 328). Obviously, this feeling affects the prose by making its syntax rhythmic, almost verse-like, and making chapters short and concise. Therefore, contemporary Ukrainian literature is dominated by collections of short stories (*Arabesques* by Zhadan, *Monolith*, *Hunters for Happiness* by Puzik, etc.) or novels in short stories (*Zero Point* by Chekh). The fragmentary nature of narratives about the war in Ukrainian prose is also revealed in works combining multimedia and textual discourse, which can be seen in two representative examples. The first one is Oleksandr Mykhed’s fairy tale, *Kotyk, Pivnyk, Shafka* (Cat, rooster, cupboard, 2022), which transforms media images into a therapeutic parable story, and Valeriy Puzik’s collection *Hunters for Happiness*, which links video into the text via QR codes.

Mykhed’s work *Cat, Rooster, Cupboard* features fairy-tale characters in a story about a family experiencing an invasion. The title comes from photographs released after the shelling of Borodianka in the Kyiv region (BBC Ukraine 2022) of a cat (Kotyk) who survived and a rooster-shaped jug which remained intact in a kitchen cabinet. These real images have become symbols of resilience and invincibility, and are also reproduced in the works of Oleksandr Grekhov and Olena Pavlova (Fig. 1 and 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2

The key idea of this story is the power of resilience and the importance of realizing the origins of individual identity. Like the photo from Borodianka, which went viral in all media in Ukraine and became the subject of memes, posters, paintings, etc., it embodies the idea of resilience, unity of Ukrainians, and strength of spirit in the confrontation with the enemy. This educational and philosophical story has therapeutic

power (see also Romanenko 2023). In parable form, the author talks about the identity crisis of the characters, their loss of language, and overcoming fear and trauma, embodied in visual images and artistic text that complement each other. Such a synergy of visual and textual elements symbolizes a traumatic event in a broad context (Ukrainians can easily recognize the well-known media story in visual images) and as a collective experience of all recipients (in this case, the audience reads the symbolic meanings of the media narrative and the plot from Mykhed's story). Such a transformation is a typical example of how, as the author himself wrote in his monograph *Bachyty, shchob buty pobachenym: realiti-shou, realiti-roman ta revoliutsiia onlain* (Seeing to be seen: Reality show, reality novel, and online revolution? 2016): "facts of life undergo transformations and reincarnations in new media. [It is] [a]rt that distances and at the same time brings life and reality closer" (306). Moreover, as Mykhed states, this is a part of a broader phenomenon in modern creative practices: "Literary genres are transformed and adapted under the influence of extra-literary factors. Artists try to reflect the current situation, but modern art becomes obsolete almost instantly, and only a small part remains in history. Mass culture and the media grind the history of culture, subordinate it to their matrices" (337).

This conclusion captures the general converging tendency of media and artistic text, but it needs to be clarified in the context of those narrative practices that have changed in Ukrainian literature under the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian war. They are influenced by: 1) the situation when works about the war are written as the conflict continues; 2) fragmentation as a particular type of worldview in times of disasters; 3) peculiarities of the functioning of mechanisms of remembrance in artistic practices during wartime. These factors are united by an essential feature of contemporary Ukrainian literature – to record the atmosphere of the constant presence of Death and Life in the everyday lives of the whole society (soldiers, refugees, migrants, volunteers), the abyss of the Unspeakable (in feelings, emotions, observations), which arises from the daily contemplation of traumatic events. Between these two strategies, documenting and knowing the language that can express it, there unfold the relevant practices of text creation as reflected in Valeriy Puzik's collection of short stories *Hunters for Happiness*. The author is a Ukrainian artist, director, writer, and soldier of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, whose stories are full of documentary accuracy and tender lyricism: "In the meantime, go and look: / at the smashed houses, / at the cars in the planted roadsides, / at the shoes scattered along the roads, / at the human bones gnawed by dogs, / at the graves in the gardens and yards, / at the unharvested crops, / at fire" (2024, 43–44).

The laconic syntax, individual lines that can be interpreted as rhymed prose, is complemented by QR codes incorporated into the text. Dmytro Zozulia concludes that the incorporation of such codes into an artistic text is aimed at "a well-thought-out strategy of additional influence on the recipient, and not just a kind of PR campaign to attract the attention of the modern reader, who is often in love with virtual space" (2024, 254). Thus, in the short story "Kherson Studies", Valeriy Puzik describes how he creates his paintings on boards made of shell crates and how he strives "not to paint war. To paint beauty. Birds, healing flowers, sky and earth, sky

and sea, giant fish, dawn and evening, dreams about home, dreams about Crimea, dreams... these are my motifs... and the war will be painted by other artists who live far from the front line, where a siren sounds like an air alarm signal” (2024, 28–29). As the author writes, this is his connection with home: “I love the road for the opportunity to escape from the everyday life of war. I love sending pictures because it is a connection to home. I paint, in particular, in order to feel this connection. All dreams here are about home and relatives” (34).

This is the textual finale of the short story “Kherson Studies”, but the multimedia finale is hidden behind the QR code, located after the quoted paragraph. This is a link to a separate essay about how the author creates paintings and to a gallery of his canvases created in the midst of the war, but not about the war. In addition, in other short stories, the writer also places QR-codes: either with the author reading passages from selected short stories (“Bezodnia” [The abyss], “Mizh troma kadramy brativ Liumieriv” [Between the three frames of the Lumière brothers]), or with his video about the character (“Buryi” [Brown]), in which the documentary video is supplemented by the author’s reading of the story. Such works are based on the combination of verbal, visual, musical and video codes, which not only emphasizes the interaction between different types of art but also enhances the recipient’s perception of the artwork.

Recent Ukrainian literature about the Russian-Ukrainian War is an example of how the testimonies and observations of the participants of this tragic event are transformed from individual into collective experience and how a common language is formed with symbolic images and plots. This is a particular type of understanding of a traumatic event – according to the principle of the “historical present” (Nora 2014), “here and now”, at the moment of the Catastrophe, with the maximum use of facts and documentary. All these examples, as well as works written about the war before February 24, 2022, are stories about the transformation of the identity of the characters through overcoming silence and creating (“voicing”) an individual story inscribed in a collective history.

This does not only allow conveying the dramatic and tragic reality of the Russian-Ukrainian War but also reveals how literary genres are transformed through all extra-literary factors like photos, media, stories, and social networks. This enables the emergence of original ways of telling about traumatic events and overcoming their consequences in order to express the space of recovery, in which there will be “a life that will keep the memory of evil alive. A life that will preserve the memory of goodness, love, and friendship” (Mykhed 2016, 306).

## CONCLUSIONS

Among the ways Ukrainian literature has dealt with the traumatic war experience are the development of the autobiographical narrative, the actualization of neorealism trends, the functioning of the literature of fact, the literature of the personal document as a method of self-knowledge and presenting the idea of personal transformation. Symbolization of trauma, autobiography, appeal to the collective experience, fragmented narrative, and combination of oral history and documentary

narration are some features recorded in works about the Russian-Ukrainian War. This does not only indicate a change in the type of narrative about traumatic events, but also demonstrates how the war is commemorated in the public space of Ukraine and in works of art. This research offers an interdisciplinary perspective on the study of works of art dedicated to the Russian-Ukrainian War and its memory in shaping everyday collective memories. At the same time, the article demonstrates fundamental changes that take place in creating works about war. They involve going beyond the text itself, creating semiotic complex multilevel constructions that combine verbal and non-verbal components. Verbal appeals to traditional text, non-verbal appeals to media text, video, images, digital technologies, etc. Such projects as *Another Day: War Diaries* and *Unwritten*, the works that contain QR-codes, intertextual references to media texts, etc., present a new type of narrative about the war – a complex hierarchical narrative with a non-linear order of verbal and visual (or multimedia) texts, which emphasize documentary authenticity and deep metaphorical meaning in the comprehension of the Russian-Ukrainian War.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Victoria Amelina *Svidchennia* (Testimonies, 2024), Maksym Kryvtsov *Virshi z biinytsi* (Poems from the loophole, 2024), Kateryna Kalytko *Liudy z diieslovamy* (People with verbs, 2022), Artur Dron *Tut buly my* (We were here, 2024), Serhii Zhadan *Zhyttia Marii* (Life of Mary, 2015), Yaryna Chornoguz *Yak vyhynaietsia voienne kolo* (How the war circle bends, 2020) and *[[dasein: oborona prysutnosti]]* ([[dasein: defense of presence]], 2023), Olena Herasymiuk *Tiuremna pisnia* (Prison song, 2020), Borys Humenyuk *Virshi z viiny* (Poems from war, 2014), etc.
- <sup>2</sup> Ostap Slyvynsky *Slovyk viiny* (Dictionary of war, 2023).
- <sup>3</sup> Tamara Horikha Zernya *Dotsia* (Daughter, 2019), Serhii Zhadan *Internat* (Boarding school, 2017) and *Arabesky* (Arabesques, 2024), Valeriy Puzik *Monolit* (Monolith, 2018) and *Myslyvti za shchtiyam* (Hunters for happiness, 2024), Oleksandr Tereshchenko *Zhyttia pislia 16.30* (Life after 4:30 p.m., 2014), Artem Chekh *Tochka nul* (Zero point, 2017), Igor Mykhailyshyn *Fuha №119 v tonalnosti polonu* (Fugue No. 119 in the key of captivity, 2020), Vitaliy Zapeka *Tsutsyk Tsutsyk* (Puppy, 2019), etc.
- <sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Ukrainian are by the present author.
- <sup>5</sup> This editorial project was prepared in cooperation with the #ZMINA\_2\_0 program of the INSULATION fund and the financial support of the European Union.
- <sup>6</sup> The handwritten diary of Maksym Kasyanchuk from Mariupol covers the period from the first day of the escalation of the war to the day of the author's evacuation (April 18, 2022, day 53). In concentrated everyday observations and stories, through observations of the bombing, allusions to other disasters, the “transformation of the familiar world into ruin” is revealed.

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