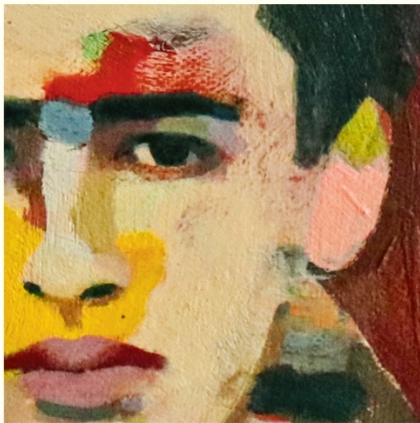


# Diogenes

Sasha Filipenko  
*The Ex-Son*

Published by Diogenes as *Der ehemalige Sohn*  
Original title: *Biwschij Sin*



After being trampled at a mass panic in his Belarusian hometown, 16-year-old music student Zisk falls into a coma. Most people give up on him, his girlfriend, his mother, his doctor. Only his grandmother Elvira Alexandrovna stays by his side and sees to it that he is taken care of - for days, months, years. Zisk's mother falls in love with the doctor and has a baby with him. After ten years, at the very moment when Zisk is told that his grandmother has died, he wakes up. He realizes that his family has moved on to another period in their lives, that they don't want him anymore. The country as a whole, however, is still governed by the same authoritarian president, the general brain drain persists, the police quickly smother any kind of protest. Will Zisk find his place in Belarus?

## Book factsheet

General Fiction  
320 pages  
11.6 x 18.4 cm  
April 2021

World rights are handled by Diogenes  
(except Russian rights)

### Rights currently sold:

Dutch (Meridiaan)  
French (Noir sur Blanc)  
Italian (Edizioni E/O)  
Japanese (Shueisha)  
Slovak

### Award

2021 »Writer in Residence« bis Juli 2021:  
Fondation Jan Michalski, Montricher,  
Nähe Genfersee, Schweiz

### Praise

*The Ex-Son*

»It seems to me that a cult writer of the first twenty years of the 21st century has appeared in Russia, replacing Viktor Pelevin.« – Mikhail Davidson

»Despite its brevity and Belarusian style, you are holding a really big Russian novel – perhaps the one that literature has been awaiting for years.« – Mikhail Idov / GQ Russia, Moscow

»If we leave out Svetlana Alexievich, who is already a classic, today the leaders of the literary course are Algerd Bakharevich in the Belarusian-speaking segment and Sasha Filipenko in the Russian-speaking segment.« – Nikolai Khalezin / (Playwright and director of the Belarus Free Theatre)

»The book is extremely lyrical. I don't think I've ever read anything better about a grandmother's love for her grandson.« – Alex Dubas / (Russian author)

»A powerful, dense, surprisingly sincere text.« – Natalya Sindeeva / (Founder and CEO of Rain TV)

»When I had opened the book by Sasha Filipenko, I saw a great novel about the events taking place today in Belarus.« – Sergei Chuprinin / (Literary critic and jury president for the »Russian Prize«)

»Perhaps the most moving and shocking release of spring 2021: Sasha Filipenko's prophetic debut novel *The Ex-Son*, available for the first time in German, depicts the hell of the Lukashenko regime.« – Dagmar Kaindl / Buchkultur, Vienna

»And yet *The Ex-Son* envisions the end of this dictator: almost a Good Bye, Batka!« – Peter Zander / Berliner Morgenpost, Berlin



Sasha Filipenko, born in Minsk in 1984, is a Belarusian author who writes in Russian. After abandoning his classical music training, he studied literature in St. Petersburg and worked as a journalist, screenwriter and author for a satire show. *The Ex-Son* is his second novel to be published in German. Sasha Filipenko is a passionate football fan and lives with his family in St. Petersburg.

### Praise (cont'd)

»Highly topical, skilfully narrated and deeply moving.« – Dagmar Kaindl / Buchkultur, Vienna

»*The Ex-Son* couldn't have appeared at a more fitting time than the Lukashenko twilight in Belarus.« – Jens Uthoff / taz, Berlin

»In this novel, humorous and bitter in turn, Filipenko depicts a country living in a state of paralysis, beneath a blanket of fear.« – Kristian Teetz / Sonntag, Hannover

»In this novel, too, the young author impresses with his considerable imaginative talents and stylistic force. A must read!« – Lilo Solcher / Augsburg Allgemeine, Augsburg

»A brilliant novel that undermines the facts with humour.« – Peer Teuwsen / NZZ am Sonntag, Zurich

»Filipenko's novel is emblematic of the wound which, even six years on from its first appearance, continues to bleed heavily.« – Bernadette Conrad / Aargauer Zeitung, Aarau

»Filipenko's metaphor is impressive: it's as though it wasn't Franzisk in a deep sleep, but the world around him.« – Jutta Sommerbauer / Die Presse am Sonntag, Vienna

»*The Ex-Son* was published in Russian back in 2014; a significant detail, because the novel has lost none of its topicality« – Nora Zukker / Tages-Anzeiger, Zurich

»The Belarusian author Sasha Filipenko depicts all this and more in his new, witty, acerbic, combative and outstanding novel.« – Volker Weidermann / Der Spiegel, Hamburg

»Sasha Filipenko made us more closely acquainted with Belarus and its history. The fact that his book remains topical even seven years after its publication shows how dire the situation is« – Uli Hufen / WDR 5, Cologne

»This literal irony of history is densely narrated, with humour and bitter solemnity.« – Cornelia Geißler / Berliner Zeitung, Berlin

»*The Ex-Son* is proof that Filipenko is one of the most exciting Russian-language authors of our time.« – Meike Schnitzler / Brigitte, Hamburg

»Filipenko describes the rebellion of his people against dictator Lukashenko with enchanting humour, full of wit and yet full of grief.« – Lerke von Saalfeld / Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt

»Filipenko's style captivates with its subtle irony and bitterly serious black humour.« – Karlheinz Kasper / Neues Deutschland, Berlin

»One of my favourite books from this year's spring releases.« – Helmut Zechner / ORF, Vienna

»A bold, ink-black reckoning with the Lukashenko regime.« – Werner Krause / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

»This novel is first class, narrated with drama and suspense.« – Freie Presse, Chemnitz

»Filipenko's style is clean and unadorned.« – Marco Kefting / Münchner Merkur, Munich



Red Crosses  
288 pages  
2020

Bestseller