

THE   
GRIFFIS ART CENTER

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-in-RESIDENCE PROGRAM – MAISON des ARTISTES  
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT USA

## Vladimir LEVCHEV

2015 International Writer-in-Residence  
Bulgarian-American Creative Society  
Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria

# LOVE

You are beautiful  
like a sea in the warm fall:  
the ripe quince of the sun,  
the horizon swimming with haze.  
Your movements are shadows  
on the flaming sand. . .  
You are beautiful.  
And a swift smile passes:  
the shadow of a gull on the water.

You take possession of me  
like the solitude of white dunes  
under the thorns, the wind, the sunset.  
You take possession of me  
like the calm instant before sleep:  
like a ride in a stroller  
under the golden poplar trees of the first  
year.

Untouchable!  
You are untouchable, like yesterday.  
(Now that dreams rush on and startle  
me:  
a swelling sea in the cold night.)  
You are untouchable like the past  
of the man without a future.

Nothing else is left for me,  
but to imagine we are together  
and kiss you in the cold  
under the solitude of stars.

I love you,  
because you do not exist.

1993 *translated by the author with Henry Taylor*  
(From "Love on the Public Square) 2014

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## VLADIMIR LEVCHEV

2015 Griffis Art Center's International Writer-in-Residence  
*from* Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria



Vladimir Levchev was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1957. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia in 1982, and from the MFA program in Creative Writing at American University, Washington, D.C., in 1996, as a Fulbright scholar.

His poetry collections include *The Rainbow Mason* (Charlottesville, VA: Cornerstone Press, 2005), *Heavenly Balkans* (Washington, DC: Argon House Press, 2002), *Black Book of the Endangered Species* (Washington, DC: Word Works, 1999, translated from Bulgarian by the author with Pulitzer-Prize winning poet Henry Taylor), *Leaves from the Dry Tree* (Merrick, New York: Cross-Cultural Communications, 1996, translated with Henry Taylor). Last year, Janet-45 Publ. in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, published his book *Who Is Dreaming My Life: 1977 – 2007*, a selection from the 13 poetry books he has published in Bulgarian in the past 30 years.

Levchev is also the author of the novel *Krali Marko: The Balkan Prince*, many essays and articles. He founded the first Bulgarian independent magazine *Glas*, which was banned by the Communist authorities before November 10, 1989. He has worked as poetry editor with *Narodna Kultura Publishers*, journalist and editor with *Democratsia*, and *Literaturen Vestnik*, general coordinator of *Free Poetry Society*.

Between 1994 and 2007, Vladimir Levchev resided in Washington, DC, where he has worked as a university professor of literature, high school teacher, translator, mailman, and book seller. Currently he is an Assistant Professor of Writing and Literature at the American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad.