

## HOMELAND

### *Three Chairs to Uncybernetic Georgia!.."*

*Nieles BOHR*

One may survive anything. There was a prisoner in one of Tbilisi's jails, who served his fifteen year sentence and they stayed on in prison. He grew afraid of freedom and had adjusted to prison life. Georgians cannot put up with foreign lands, and they have never emigrated. No one left this country of his own free will. They were banished from Georgia. But as for some Armenians, our neighbors, are everywhere. They can live in any place across the world and remain Armenians. We, however, need the land, the land which we fled recently, and startlingly, scattered all over the world. One may come across a Georgian even in Africa or Australia, as well as in America: Americans were first to discover Georgia, and John Steinbeck was one of the first to visit Tbilisi. On returning, Steinbeck was asked his opinion about his trip, but he could recall absolutely nothing, saying only that he remembered having a horn in hand and looking up at the ceiling (he wanted to write a novel "Georgian Ceiling",but did not manage to). Before Americans, Jews had come, twenty six centuries ago, and stayed. The fact that they were never troubled or killed in Georgia unlike other countries is still being marveled at. The fact surprises you as well, because neither you, nor the Israelites know that Georgians kill only Georgians because they love one another. They love one another very dearly. They adore Krasha in the morning and argue about Plato zealously and loudly in the evening. They are soft-hearted and envy only those who can never be assailed by nostalgia. They never envy travelers and the arrival of Greeks before Jews merely surprised the Georgians. But they had to honor their guests, and Georgians gave the pulchritudinous Medea, already married, along with the golden fleece to Greek lazon (Jason). They were crying and singing as they gave Tier away. They sing remarkably well to date. Georgians sing today and sang then, when they had multitudes of enemies to resist. In the end, Georgia was invaded by Russia.. When Pushkin was assassinated, one Georgian noble sold everything he had and departed to kill Dames, Pushkin's killer. The Russians conquered Georgia nevertheless, and the Georgian, though temporarily, had no destination. For a long time they had nothing to do, and that is why they know almost everything about one another. They know the kind of things they hear every day, at the table, when drinking wine, and they drink a lot and eat a little and without noise, unlike Americans in films, where one basically has to listen to jaw noises.

There are many churches in Georgia and presumably that accounts for the fact that women refrain from talking about sex. A Georgian may condescend to do many things, but a Georgian harlot won't busy herself with prurient sex out of ethical considerations. Georgians like to drink to liberty, think of poetry, football and their history, literature and the arts.

So do I . Because I am a Georgian.

## **THOUGHTS**

"It was raining outside... "

*GURAM RCHEULISHVILI*

I am a Georgian, I am dreaming of becoming a prominent Georgian artist, but my stomach aches, a thing quite out of place. It's Sunday today:: you are not going to work and we decided to engage ourselves in love-making from morning till night.

I'm joking with you about being a Kremlin or Washington agent. The difference between them is little, while the objective is the same: to ruin me in an conventional way, using a woman I could possibly fall in love with. This road wouldn't lead to a temple, as the Romans say. For some reason or other, I have never asked you where you brought the little sculpture of Christ in your room or why it stands on your cupboard looking down at me. And I envy only those committing suicide-unlike me. And I love Jesus Christ and fear love, for love is God himself, and nevertheless I think of death...

It is cold outside. It is not snowing or raining. They say that snow immensely becomes Prague. But the winter is warmer this year than it was last year, or two years ago. It is cold outside. I sit and think. I think in the place where the rest of mankind indulge their thoughts. Although some prefer reading to overthinking on such occasions. But now I am prevented either from thinking or reading. I hear your voice and explain to you out loud and with zeal that one should not be guided by reason when making love to someone, because if mankind will be spared a number of diseases, then it will lose the momentum that was necessary to taste the forbidden fruit, and if it was worth tasting then we should not retreat. That was the reason why Salvador Dali, preoccupied with the future of mankind, used to let us know his strange thoughts: to be reasonable and heedful when making love is to smell a rose with a respirator. You do not like Salvador Dali or roses, but it is common knowledge that edelweisses belong to Marika Darchia only...

I do not like experiments like Camembert Cheese (Vazlia-Irakli Tsintsadze, my friend, and I were once traveling by lorry from Tusheti to Telavi. We lay on sacks full of Camembert Cheese. And we were avoided by everyone within a radius of four seats in the bus while traveling from Telavi to Tbilisi. The driver could stand our smell only as far as Gurjaani. On the outskirts of Gurjaani, however, he stopped the bus, swore at us and ran away. We waited for him for a long time, but he did not return. He seemed to have long endured the odor, but in the end he apparently was unable to stand it any longer. And then it was Vazha-Irakli who drove us to Tbilisi, humming)... You do not believe me, though. You smile and tell me you can never make it out whether I am joking or not. God save me from being serious-minded but still, I do not always feel up to jokes. And I think that the firmness of family ties is intertwined with mutual patience, and generally, it is better to effect a compromise with one's wife than with authorities. It does not matter what kind of wife or authorities one has to deal with: the snore you yield to the wife the more you win, and vice versa, the less you yield to authorities, the less you suffer. The biggest problem of mankind is for people to accommodate one another: people reconcile themselves even to most dreadful governments or wives sooner or later. Husbands reconcile themselves to their wives and then indulge in adultery, and there's no wife on earth who can be convinced of being responsible for her husband's adultery. The universal underlying reason is simple, though: except for few cases, there's no sex as such between consorts. There are responsibilities, however, which are not usually met. I do not meet mine, for example, pleasing with feigned ease. It may well not be feigned, because I have what I have dreamt of all my life, but I do not know what to do with the thoughts, or dreams, or feelings now that everything is all right, I still hope for something different, something I can

hardly conceive. I do know, though that longest is the night when I walk from room to room on tiptoe (in order not to wake you), smoke my hundredth cigarette and wait for the day to break with you sleeping peacefully.

You are not guilty of anything, though...

## **YOU**

*"It is better to be in Georgia -they have everything the other way round there. "*  
SERGEY DAVLATOV

I looked in the mirror in the morning. I seem to gradually resemble Veniamin Erofeyev. You are at the office and I am delighting in the sound of the rain falling on the roof of our house, though it's not easy to be in a city where the sky is always lurid. It's too hard to wait for spring when you earnestly doubt that spring may well not come. I know I'll be missing this city, and I know that for sure. I knew it for sure this morning when I looked in the mirror and it was raining. You had already gone to work and I unhurriedly packed my bags, books and brushes. The rest I am wearing. I looked in the mirror again - I wasn't agitated, at least my countenance revealed no agitation of mind, and I looked at your picture against the background of Erin that is as exquisite as you. I changed my mind about writing a letter (what could have I written!), left the key on the kitchen table, and locked the door. I took a taxi in the street, and said "airport", the only word, for the driver to hear and looked up at the sky nevertheless. It was certainly raining.

Spring will never ever come to this city...

## *Jamaica*

In summer it is terribly hot in New York. And in July when the heat becomes literally unbearable one should stay at home unless there is something very important to do. The whole week long I made the trip from Brooklyn into Manhattan all wet with perspiration and dreaming of rain and a gulp of fresh air. Indeed the air is so hot that it becomes difficult to breathe, the only deliverance was found underground where I become more or less normal looking. It is cool in the subway and ninety percent of all interesting things happening in New York take place there. I am sitting by the window watching the live festival with a smile ...

This week I am visiting my emigrated acquaintances in hope of receiving a brief letter of reference from Georgia. The letter should contain a couple of sentences saying that I am not a wrecker and assure Americans be so kind and support my efforts of publishing a book for children in the Georgian language. I shall not raid the editorial office, nor shall I explode the publishing house. That's all. It would take only a few minutes to write this letter and forward it to me, but the person who is sending it, has (already) been appointed to some important position or high rank and has been inevitably distracted with absent-mindedness...

A one-legged black man had already made his third round of the carriage collecting money when my exit stop was announced.

I put on my glasses and slowly made my way up to Times Square. I was dressed in accordance with Tbilisi traditions, which meant that I was not wearing shorts and sandals. I cannot wear shoes without socks and in this city melting with heat I seemed to be the only person with socks on.

I went up Broadway and became part of the robotic flow of people. Nobody cared about me and I roughly violated the fixed rhythm...

I failed this time too. The letter had not arrived. I gave up. It seems rendering help has become a difficult job; people are reluctant to make an effort or to be kind even in the simplest or non-onerous circumstances...

I went to visit my Georgian friends. They were going to a Chinese restaurant and invited me to join them. Though I was usually the last person to think of going to a restaurant, the offer was too tempting for me to turn down. I do took out a gun looking rather indecisively whether to take it with him or not. "What do you need it for?"- I asked laughing - "If we were in Tbilisi it would be understandable". "You never know"- he insisted and I did not argue.

At the restaurant the girl who was with us suggested we drink hot sake to get cool. We drank it and I nearly exploded from inside. My shirt actually melted into my skin and I recalled the Tseva Restaurant when we once sat in the middle of summer around a table half-submerged in the lake with a waiter serving diligently in his underwear with the calm politeness of a true Imeretian...

The third round of sake arrived and I got to my feet. I had to see Eter Chkadua and help her move pictures. I told my friends that maybe I would stay at their place for a night if I was too lazy to go home. Then I put my glasses on and hurried away.

It was cool in the subway. I had to meet Chkadua in Greenwich Village. I arrived ahead of time. I had one cigarette, then another...

Eter arrived in a car and we drove to her studio. I was amazed, for one hour I stood in front of her pictures like a fool. I had never seen anything like them. We brought the pictures down from the fourth floor. There was no room in the car for the last canvas, so we fixed it on the top of the car and very carefully took them to the producer.

Then we had a coffee and said "good-bye" to each other. She thanked me and I told her that she had nothing to thank me for, on the contrary I had to thank her for the pleasure of carrying Chkadua's original works through New-York...

Water absorbed me and the Broadway night I visited different places and peered everywhere. I wandered restlessly until I was drained of any energy. The idea of returning home was unbearable and I decided to stay at night with my friends. I took off eastwards. It was not far and I walked down First Avenue. At their doorway I saw a man in a white shirt and a tie. I thought he did not look like a beggar and pressed the bell. I did not notice anybody except this one man and even now I have no idea where the rest of them appeared from. Several policemen first ordered me to put my hands up and searched me, then I got handcuffed and placed into the car. They took no notice of my startled face which was the only token of my protest for I know only too well the ways of N.Y.P.D. - make a slightest movement and the bullet is in your neck. On our way to the police stations calmed down a little. The first thought that came to my head was that there was some mistake. Before we passed the bridge I asked timidly:

- Where are we going to? Sure enough, there was no answer at all.

We went over the bridge and I dared to repeat the question with the same silent result after which I shut up. I was calming down and began to think "Why are we heading to Brooklyn? I was arrested in Manhattan and there are plenty of police stations there. What am I doing in Brooklyn?"..

At the entrance of the Brooklyn station I was again interrogated by other policemen. They turned out the contents of my pockets onto the table. I did not have my passport on me, but there were several dollars in my wallet. They found Nato's photo and the writing-pad and the officer looked at it.

- Who is she?

- Please tell me what's all this about - I said calmly.

- Who is she? - repeated the officer.

- Will I know what I was arrested for or not ?

- Who is she? - the officer slightly raised his voice.

- My wife.

- Is she here?

- No.

= Spell your first name and family name!

- Why was I arrested?

- Spell your first name and family name!

I spelled it clearly letter by letter. They wrote down everything and compared my data with computer ones.

- Do you have money in a bank here?

- No, not in a bank.

- Do you keep money elsewhere?

- In Kasp. In the same cave where Arsenal's seven hundred ten-ruble notes are stored, My treasure is stored under the same stone.

- Kasp... Kasp... Kasp - repeats the officer and enters this data into a computer.

I enjoy playing my joke. "I am innocent, they will clarify everything and let me out".

- Jamaica! - I hear the voice but cannot see who is speaking. "*What Jamaica! What am I to do in Jamaica? Jamaica is a jail. I do not want to be imprisoned in the most terrible and black jail!...*"

- What Jamaica! What am I to do in Jamaica? Shouldn't I know what I am being arrested for?!

I am again handcuffed and nobody is interested in answering my questions. I am placed in a car and with a deafening sound we drove through a flow of cars. I am no longer joking and inquire in a whining voice

- Where are we going?

Then again I break the silence.

- Please, tell me why you have arrested me, I am a guest here, by what right did you arrest me?

One of my guards threw a brief inquisitive glance at me and that was all.

I gave up any further attempts to receive the answer to my questions.

I was progressively getting more nervous and my breathing became heavier.

Now we were very close to Jamaica.

At the entrance I was searched again (for the third time). This time nobody asked any questions. They took my belt and laces as well as a lighter. I demanded a lawyer, they promised to summon one and smiled.

- How soon

- Soon.

I was walked down the corridor and then we turned to the left. On the right, behind window glass I saw the jail yard which was surrounded by several stories of prisoners cells. We turned to the left. "They are not taking me to the jail". At the grated door I was handed to another guard and we went down a small staircase. It looked like the preliminary detention cell but it was not. An iron wall separated the prisoners from the policemen. An open wall. You could put your hand through the bars but could not reach the policemen. There were quite a few policemen. They were sitting at a round table watching TV. The number of prisoners was three times higher than the number of policemen but no one took much notice of me. One or two who were stretched out near the door looked me over quickly. The smell of cigarettes was added to perspiration and urine. Most of prisoners were lying down. Some were sitting, but the room was so crowded that I did not even try to find a place. I looked around in the hope of finding a white face, but in vain - I was facing an absolute majority of black-Skin inmates. I bade farewell to my hope of a white face and tried to move towards the grating, I was very careful not to step on anyone. Though my eyes had already become accustomed to the darkness, I managed to stomp on a body. The man raised himself up and murmured something, swearing. In America, as in Russia, they swear on any occasion. I did not get what he said - it was slang. I swore back at him, first in English then in Georgian. This action somehow encouraged me and lent me spirit. I called a policeman. At my back I felt a wave of discontent-for disturbing the prisoners' sleep. The policemen stared at me and one of them got to his feet. He came closer with a rubber truncheon, ready to be on the safe side.

- I was arrested for nothing!

- None of our concern.

- Whose concern is it?

- They will come in the morning and investigate your case.

- Who will come? - Whose concern is it?

The policeman returned to his place. An American smile on his face disappeared as he left, or to be more precise it turned into a false, artificial gesture.

"What shall I do until morning? I will have to endure it. If I have to I can stand up the whole night..."

And I did. I did not like the smell of their skin. Negroes have a specific smell. I never experienced any hostility or disgust towards them... And now I felt these things. I began to think and remember.

Last year I spent one night - one unforgettable night -in a police station in Istanbul. We had had a good time at a street restaurant, dancing on the tables and I did not want to return to the hotel. I was wandering along the streets when I heard the sound of shooting. I could not miss this chance considering my state of drunken revelry, and ran in the direction of the shooting. I loudly asked a policeman what it was all about. First he ignored me but then when I repeated

my question, several policemen caught hold of me. There was no place on my body left free from their hands. The police station was a few steps from my hotel. Immediately upon arrival, I loudly and very proudly (of course) began to talk in Georgian. I did not stop all night long. Considering my ear for music and vocal capabilities, I think I sang several songs quite well. Half of the people at the police station, especially the policemen thought I was mad. I did not explain that I was Georgian. I knew they would eventually release me and I was unhurried. With a smile I encouraged those who were detained with me saying that I knew Roman Gventsadze very well and very soon we all would be set free.

It was only in the morning, as I became sober, that I told the policemen that I was part of the Rustaveli Theater delegation from Tbilisi.

They saw me to my hotel with many apologies. The chief of the Istanbul police is a Georgian and Turks in general have an amazing respect towards Georgians (at least they had at that time...).

I was tired from standing up. I was trying not to be nervous because I knew it would tire me out, and to add to my misery I did not even have a cigarette. And had I asked for a cigarette there they would only smile. I felt in my pockets (hope can sometimes be an awful beast). Then I call to a policeman.

- I am a guest here and know nothing of your jails. Can I buy a cigarette? Is there a place...

He smiled exactly in the way I had expected. Then he returned to his place and I again called over to him. I felt the discontent behind me (but I did not care). The policeman got to his feet and again walked over. Though it is dark I can see an expression of nervousness on his face.

- I do not know why I was arrested. It must be some misunderstanding. I am a guest, I am writing a script for Jessica... Jessica Lange, you know, specially for her. I have not the slightest idea why I was arrested, I have not stolen anything, neither did I kill anybody... and I do not have cigarettes..

- Do you know Jessica Lange? - interrupts the policeman.

- I do...

- The policeman calls somebody and another policeman appears in the darkness.

- He knows Jessica Lange.

- Do you? - the other policeman's eyes sparkled -Have you seen her? How is she?

- She is well. Can you give me one cigarette? .

- Tell me about her...

- I want a cigarette.

The other policeman nearly rushes for the cigarette and waits for my answer with evident eagerness. He is very excited as I calmly ask for light. - How is she? I mean in life. How many times have you seen her?

I lit the cigarette and enjoyed a long, significant inhale...

- Where have you met?

- What time is it?

- It will be morning soon and my shift will end, please tell me everything.

How I shall begin?

- She looks better on the screen-as you know her life has been full of dramatic events (I am telling the policeman placidly) and she is not very young. Though as a woman she is much better than many younger ones...

- Does she have a boy-friend now - interrupted the policeman.

- Well, I think she still has some feelings towards Barishnikov, though there were others in her life after Barishnikov. Jessica is born for love (I enunciated this word with special intonation).Perhaps that is why she gives her consent to producers Can I have one more cigarette?

The policeman again rushes for a cigarette. Now I feel hunger. I light the cigarette.

- What was I talking about?

- That is why she gives her consent to producers.

- Yes, she gives her consent to producers to participate in their films... Sorry, when do they serve breakfast here?

- Soon, the day is breaking. What is she working on now?

- On Broadway in "Streetcar". Do you know this play? "The Streetcar Named Desire", by Tennessee Williams?

- Of course I know, we learned it in school. Where are you from?

- You would not know.

- Still?

- From Georgia but not the state of Georgia.

- Ah, I know, the former Russia.

- Now it is independent.

- I know. My shift is finishing.

He turns his head away and goes over to the table.

- See you. .

- I don't think so. They will let me out the morning...

He says something but I do not hear what it is. The light is switched off and the cell becomes full of noise of awakened prisoners ...

... After breakfast I declare a hunger-strike (for the first time in my life). With a very simple demand - I want to know why I was arrested. I have already been in a new cell since noon when I was moved here, to an exact copy of cells I have seen in American movies. Our cell houses four prisoners and I can see the internal prison yard from our floor window. In front of my cell is a corridor but the floor is a metal grill through which I can see everything going on below. The yard has two basketball courts and the whole day long I can hear the voices of the players and their spectators. I do not want to mix with these people and I am not in the mood for playing basketball. The local criminal world lives by other, different laws than ours, or to be more accurate it lives without any laws. In America they do not even have the "legal thieves" system and my friendship with them is of no use to me...

The most respected people in American jails are the dealers- the sellers of the drugs. The majority of prisoners have been arrested for this crime and American law, in general, is particularly strict toward smugglers. Americans try to take care of their youth, though it should be admitted without any substantial success. Committing other crimes in America is very difficult. Nobody keeps money at home or in their pockets. Everything is stored in banks and credit cards are almost the only way of paying, so as much as one might desire it, nobody can be robbed or stripped of money.

There are four of us in the cell. Two Negroes and one Italian. The Italian's name is Rino and his nickname is "Little Gotti". Big John Gotti, the boss of the Gambino family clan, has been arrested like us, but he is being kept in a high security jail outside New York. However the Mafia's long hands reach into our jail too. "Little Gotti" Rino is a candidate for the membership of the Gambino family and carries a substantial authority in the prison. He is treated with respect and his benevolence towards me gives me hope, which I am in need of, because I know, life here can become difficult...

At noon I did not eat anything. My dinner was divided between the Negroes. The policeman shrugged his shoulders and brought an officer.

- I declare a hunger-strike until somebody tells me what I am accused of!

The officer shrugged his shoulders and went away. The Negroes also shrug their shoulders - they are happy that I am on a hunger-strike, one would think they do not receive enough food. Rino smiles and tries to persuade me that there is no sense in hunger-striking;.

- I thought America was a democratic country., I insist.

- It might seem so - Reno's smile becomes broader, killing my hope. But I am still clinging to some shard of hope in the evening when an escort comes for me. Rino winks.

We are passing the prison yard, making our way to the reception block. I am beginning to be filled with the hope that everything has been cleared up and I will be released.

I am sitting in front of a screen in a small room. I cannot see what is going behind tile screen. Five minutes pass, ten minutes.. I am told to stand up and we are returning back to the jail by the same route through the prison yard. I roared and cursed everything, beginning with the escort and finishing with the President of America, using the dirtiest expressions I know. I roared very loudly and continued to swear at the astonished prisoners in Georgian and English...

Rino repeated that it did not make any sense, but I stubbornly refused to touch my supper which was again happily divided between the two Negroes. Thought I have to admit that late in the evening I was very hungry and dreamed about the dinner at Rodonaia's - a fabulous last summer dinner in Zugdidi. There was everything, and nothing in excess -hot corn porridge, wine in horns and the disappointed faces of my Megrelian hosts who failed to get me drunk...

I did not sleep during the night or if I did it was only for a very short period of time as I alternated brief naps with vigilance. The hunger became almost unbearable (What tortures hunger-strikers endure!). At the same time I was happily anticipating the morning because I decided to stop my hunger-strike. I was smoking cigarette after cigarette (Rino supplied me with them). I could not wait until the morning. I could not imagine greater torture and at last the light was on.

The jail howled. Another day of hope broken.

After breakfast I was again taken under escort in the direction of the reception block. When passing the yard I felt hostile glances and some prisoners shouted something, but it was slang and I did not understand it.

In the room I saw an officer. He was a middle- aged, handsome man. He mixed some papers around on the table, and to use their expression, got down to business.

- You were recognized by a witness yesterday.

- What do you mean "recognized"?

-Two days ago you had dinner in the "Victoria" restaurant.

- I did.

--Your friends had Makarov gun.

- How could a Makarov appear in America?

- And as a result of an argument two citizens from the neighboring table were wounded by this weapon.

- I left before.

- That's right, and the witness confirms it.

- But how could they wound anybody if they did not have a gun?

- We have found the gun.

- How could a Makarov get to America?

- That's what we also would like to know.

- What charges do you have against me?

- Connections with the Russian Mafia.

- What connections would I have with Russian Mafia I wonder? We are not Russians, they are our enemies...

- Crime does not recognize national niceties.

- What crime? Your witness confirms that I left earlier.

- But you were there together and you know them.

- Yes, I know them.

. - If you know them you must also know something about their activities. Help us and there will be no charges against you.

- Fuck you...I said I loudly in Georgian and began to get to my feet. Immediately two guards were at me. Something in my face told the officer that there was no sense in continuing our conversation (or interrogation) and he motioned to the guards to take me out.

We crossed the yard and I was put back in my cell. My nerves were at breaking point, my only consolation being that at last I knew the reason for my arrest. I told Rino everything. He listened to me very attentively but could not understand why we had been drinking during daytime.

I gave up and asked the policeman to let me go downstairs to the yard. He told me to wait for 15 minutes. These 15 minutes seemed to me like 15 days. I was at my wits' end *What shall I do if they do not let me out?*

I went down to the yard. I stood there smoking and spitting. The basketball players are mostly Negroes and they had quite an audience. I looked over the place - there was no way to run away. Somebody black, but not a Negro, came up to me. He looked more like a mixture. He tells me he wants to talk business. "What business?"- I am surprised. "We want your jeans"-he points to my jeans. I did not like the "we" and looked around--several prisoners were watching the scene. Even in Tbilisi, robbers do not ask their victims to take off their jeans, and here in America (particularly in a jail) how the hell can they take my trousers... I am surprised and smile. "Not now, come back in winter" - say I and pat his shoulder with my right hand: Then I turn round towards the basketball courts.

The first blow from a heavy fist caught me in my neck, then they hit me with something hard and when I came to my senses I found myself on the floor of the dressing room as several prisoners unmercifully and brutally beat me. There was no point in fighting back and it was physically impossible in any case. I felt a knife blade on my skin but for some reason they did not cut me...

I could not sleep at night. Apart from the pain, I was suffering mentally: "Where am I, where am I from?" The whole night long I was thinking, thinking about my fate, or to be more accurate, my misfortune and these thoughts made me smile. I even laughed loudly and Rino raised his head saying "Don't get insane". "I will try not to" - I promised.

I was dreaming; of a feast in the Alazani Valley (with Kakhetian jokes) - and of hot steaming boiled meat with salt sprayed on it by a helicopter... ,

It was very late when at last I slept soundly. In the morning I could hardly make myself stand up.

I could not eat, even drinking coffee turned out to be an effort. After breakfast Rino told us the news - Pablo Escobar, the boss of the Colombian Drug Mafia had escaped from his personal prison...

A brilliant idea came to my head, and I loudly declared that I knew Escobar and his Ochoia brothers very well. It seems that the most outrageous lie is the most easily believed, and that this is especially true in America.

The result became evident at noon. I was escorted to a meeting with the representatives of the security services. Georgians have an artistic nature, and I can hardly describe or repeat what I did at that meeting. The rank of my interrogator obliged him to be very formal. Had it not been for his position he would have torn his hair out on hearing my story.

After dinner I had a shower. When I came out to dress my trousers were gone. I began to shout that my trousers were stolen and demanded from the guard to do something about it, get something which I could wear. I understood that nobody would return my trousers, and I knew I would not survive another beating. In this country, whether in jail or not, one must rely only on oneself, and I was drained of all energy...

The whole night long I stood with my head protruding between the bars of my cell, loudly condemning the Bush administration and some clauses of the American Constitution because of

their inhumanity and disrespect for human rights in English as well as in Georgian. In the same loud voice I blessed the whole staff of my native Arakishvili Police Station for their friendly attitude and human warmth.

Several times my appeals provoked amused appreciation by the prisoners who encouraged me to further threaten the prison administration with the Helsinki Committee and the International Court. My every word was met with sympathizing roars and shouts from the prisoners. The faces of guards became concerned. I was not afraid of anything because I had nothing to lose and, what is most important, I was innocent. I stood and shouted and cried. I was shouting because of all those things which connected me with the little country known as Georgia and because Maka, my Maka, had not the slightest idea that somewhere very, very far away, in Jamaica jail, with my head between the bars and my heart full of hope for tomorrow and freedom, I was crying until I lost my voice and nobody in Jamaica or in the world knew how I was missing her, how I needed her support and her calmness. So I stood and shouted until the morning broke and I hoped in a miracle that would have to be even greater than the miracle of Nodar Dumbadze's hero Moshiashvili. The miracle did happen in the morning - although even now I do not know how or why - they gave me a pair of trousers and opened the doors of the jail. At the gate of the Jamaica prison I saw aunt Tina who was crying. She was standing there, crying and kissing me. "What are you crying about now?"- laughed I and we got in the car. "I have made khinkali for you"- she said and wiped her tears.

I looked back. At the entrance of the Jamaica prison I saw a police car. They were clutching a handcuffed man and were pushing him towards the door.

I did not think anything about it: The heat and fatigue were my only feelings. It is unbearably hot in New York in summer...