

# The Missing Monument



ICRC

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The Missing Monument is a digital artwork dedicated to the families of persons who went missing during the conflicts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the 1990s and 2008. According to the ICRC's official data, there are 2'352 persons whose fate and whereabouts are still unknown. The Missing Monument aims at commemorating them but instead of directly recalling the names of the missing ones, this project focuses on the intimate experience of those who stayed behind and are in a permanent state of waiting and missing those who are gone. Beyond this context, the exhibition intends to pay tribute to families from all over the world, whose loved ones have gone missing in other situations, times, and places.

COVID-19 has changed not only our everyday lives, but also the way we make exhibitions. A 'real-space' exhibition was to take place in June 2020, during an International Workshop with families of Missing persons from all over the world, in the framework of a 4-year project led by the ICRC, the *Missing Persons Project*. The exhibition had to be 'relocated' to the digital space, due to the pandemic. By shifting the working space from a physical location to the digital sphere, the approach was broadened. This is meant to allow all families of missing persons to access it, and to enable the general public to be sensitized about the issue of missing persons, through the experience their relatives have been through.

The web platform is at this stage available in English, Georgian, and Russian, to be extended to more languages in the future. The historical and political backgrounds of the conflicts are intentionally left out, as the purpose of the *monument* is to focus on the common nature of pain related to disappearance: this pain has no land, no nationality, and no one's pain is larger than someone else's. In the words of a mother of a missing son, "Grief has no nationality. We live under a common sky; our pain is the same."

## Counter-monument

Following the concept of a "counter-monument" as proposed by James E. Young (1992), the aim of this project is to question the power of completeness as represented by traditional monuments. Often in a sculptural form, the traditional monuments commemorate events and persons – something clearly defined in space and time. Instead, the concept of a counter-monument challenges the way the monuments memorize the past, proposing the lack of closure as its main trait. As a consequence, the missing parts are to be filled up by the audience prompted to take responsibility of the memory. This way, the counter-monuments are aimed to cause a process of permanent reflection on the past, on memory and remembrance, refusing any clear-cut interpretation.

Thus, *The Missing Monument* is neither a typical counter-monument nor a traditional commemorative practice centered on the victims or heroes. Instead, it is a space of reflection about the process the families of the missing ones go through, bringing together the missed and the missing ones. *The Missing Monument* does not provide an answer or a set of solutions to the issues related to the disappearance. Rather, it tries to convey how complex it is to be *missing someone*, perceiving this experience as a living, breathing, constantly shifting multiplicity of embodied acts of commemoration. Or, in other words, as permanent acts against forgetting. We all become the co-authors of the monument: as long as we listen to the voices of the family members, the missing persons are being remembered.

## Experiences

In her work about the families of the disappeared soldiers, Pauline Boss coined the term "ambiguous loss" to capture the particular nature of the experience of *missing* someone: the person experiencing the "ambiguous loss" is searching not only for the disappeared person, but also for the information that would give some meaning to this incomprehensible situation. This experience is characterized by the fact that the closure, the definite answer cannot be found and one has to cope with the absence, with the openness, with something unresolved. To live with this is difficult and requires a particular kind of strength.

The content of the *monument* focuses on the experiences of the family members, which were recorded through interviews, as well as through the poems and letters they wrote. The material used to elaborate the exhibition comes from Abkhaz, Georgian and South Ossetian families. It was subsequently analyzed and divided into thematic parts such as "hope", "missing", "silence", "memory", etc. Although constructed from different fragments, the narrative always expresses one of the themes defined by the analysis, simultaneously expressing the diversity of the "missing experiences" and their common human nature. The extracts are not attributed to any specific person or sources.

The family members interviewed all spoke about the feeling of emptiness and the duty to remember, about their endless hope and the fear that the next generation would forget both the disappeared ones, and themselves. They all share the experience of a never-ending pain that cannot be healed by time. Some long for some kind of closure: only when the remains of their missing ones are found, will they be able to grieve. Others still have hope and believe the disappeared ones will return one day. They are waiting. All spoke of the enormous efforts they have deployed to find their beloved ones, to gather information about them, and finally to commemorate them. One of the interviewed mothers said that "the parents of the missing ones should also be seen as heroes". And indeed, they are the main heroes of these stories. Hence, the intention here is to give a voice to those who were forced to live with this absence, and whose lives are filled with never-ending hope, searching for the loved ones, some for almost thirty years now.

## Tree

*“For me, trees have always been the most penetrating preachers. I revere them when they live in tribes and families, in forests and groves. And even more I revere them when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche. In their highest boughs the world rustles, their roots rest in infinity; but they do not lose themselves there, they struggle with all the force of their lives for one thing only: to fulfill themselves according to their own laws, to build up their own form, to represent themselves. Nothing is holier, nothing is more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree.”*

Herman Hesse, *Wandering: Notes and Sketches*, 1972

On a conceptual and visual level, the project was inspired by the form of a tree: as a symbol of life and a metaphor for continuity, stability, life and strength, often chosen and used by the families of missing persons to commemorate their loved ones. More particularly, the artistic idea was to create a wish tree to which everyone, independently of their nationality, age, ethnicity, or religion could attach their message or a wish. On the basis of real pictures of trees from the context, twelve different trees were designed that one could visit, with the “sound tree” acting as an opening of the exhibition. Like a chorus in Greek tragedy, the sound tree provides the atmosphere and brings together different voices, providing a shared space for missing persons. The other eleven trees can be visited one by one in a trajectory chosen by the visitor. Each tree brings a story representing one aspect of the disappearance, hence the stories are fragmented, like remembrance itself. The narrative was created from fragments of poems, interviews and families’ personal records. During the process, the artist searched for ways in which it would be possible to capture the mental presence together with the physical absence of the missing persons, as well as the manner of mapping individual memories preserved by their families as their acts of remembering. The aim was also to retrace memory imprints into material forms and preserve it as an archive of incomplete stories and endless loss.

Storytelling might take many forms and there are as many forms as there are ways of waiting. For each visit, the reading of the story will therefore be different, comparable to each individual experience of missing. The aim of this project is not to provide an answer or a set of solutions, but to invite us to think about these experiences in terms of a living, shifting, diverse and embodied acts of commemoration – in other words, as acts against forgetting.

We would like to take the opportunity to express words of gratitude to all families of missing for their participation and commitment which made this project possible, as well as words of empathy and admiration for the enormous, perpetual strength to live their daily life and support each other.

The project was initiated, conceived, and supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in collaboration with the artist Tamuna Chabashvili.

### Credits:

Project oversight: Jérôme Thuet

Artistic concept and realization: Tamuna Chabashvili

Concept and research Assistant: Agnieszka Dudrak

Materials collection, interviews & transcripts: Jovana Kuzmanovic, Kristina Papazyan, Sophio Elizbarashvili, Nana Tedeeva, Marina Tedeti

Translation and editing: Data Chigholashvili, Lali Petrenava, Marina Tedeti, Natalia Svintsova

Programming and additional design: Lado Oniani

Sound editing and design: Levan Javakhishvili, Lika Machkhidze

Project & administration assistants: Nini Palavandishvili, Tamta Kupatadze

About Text written by Tamuna Chabashvili, Agnieszka Dudrak, edited by Jérôme Thuet

ICRC editorial coordination: Sophio Elizbarashvili

Special thanks to: Claire Jean, Vesna Madzoski

# Clarifying the fate of the Missing Persons and addressing the needs of their families

As a result of the armed conflicts that took place in the 1990's and August 2008 over 2,300 people are still unaccounted for. The families have lived long years of anguish and uncertainty about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. This uncertainty leads to emotional exhaustion and leaves lasting wounds. Not knowing what happened to their loved ones and not being able to give them a dignified burial, or a place to mourn, generates an intolerable burden.

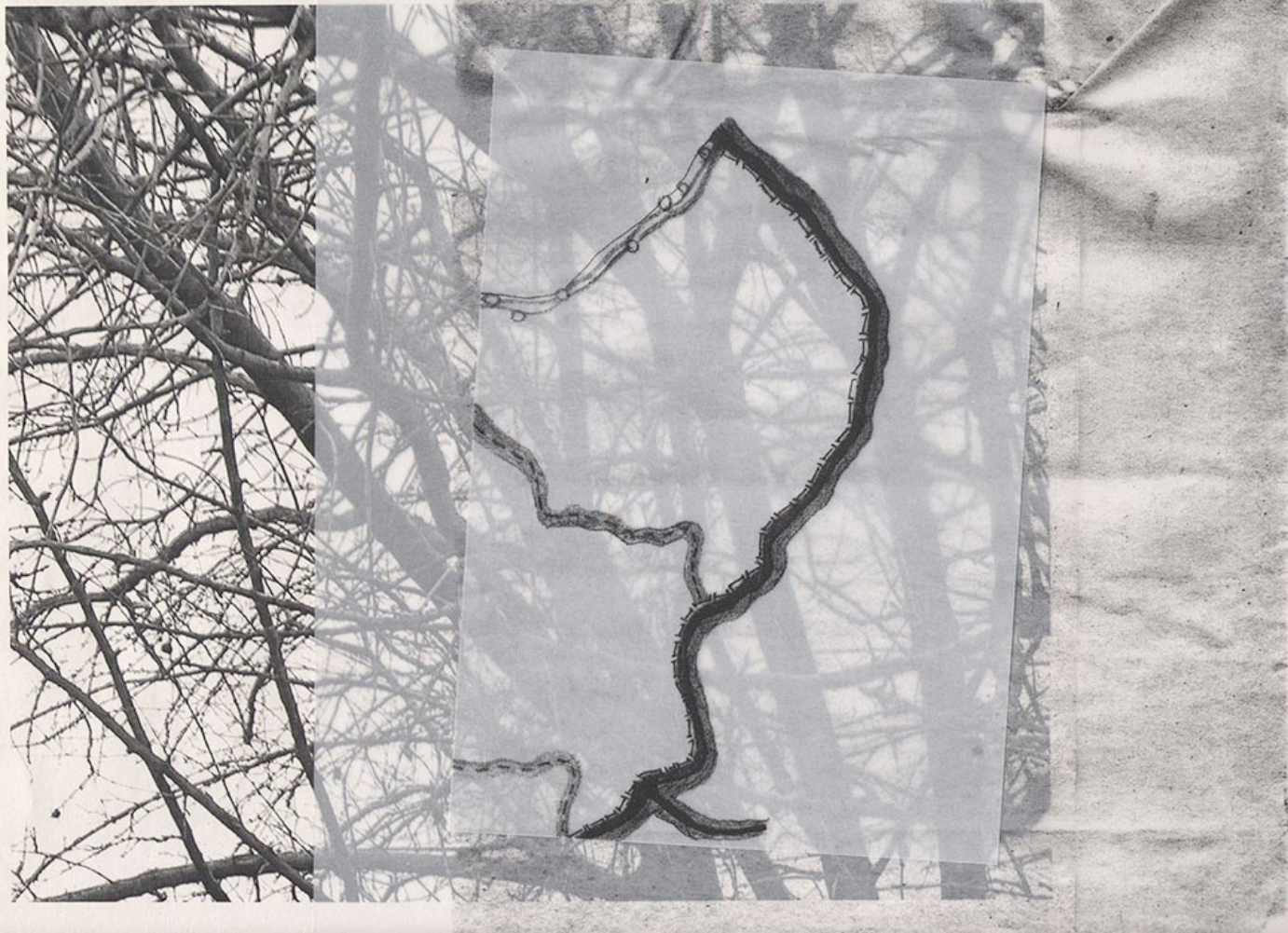
As such, disappearance continues to represent a significant humanitarian concern. In 2010, two humanitarian platforms (so-called "coordination mechanisms") were set up under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with the sole purpose of clarifying the fate and whereabouts of persons missing in relation to the armed conflicts of the 1990's and August 2008 and providing answers to the families. The ICRC has been facilitating the dialogue between the Abkhaz, Georgian, South Ossetian and Russian participants to those platforms, leading the process to clarify the fate of missing persons, and accompanying families through their ordeal.

Over the past 10 years, teams of local and international forensic experts excavated tens of gravesites throughout the region. As a result, hundreds of remains were recovered and nearly two hundred families of missing persons received answers. In parallel, civil society organizations and the ICRC have been supporting the families in their daily struggle to cope with the absence of their loved ones.

Hundreds of remains are yet unidentified, thousands of families need answers and support. Their suffering must end, the process goes on.



# Meaning



Looking for something  
That you don't know  
you become awake.  
Drunk from the scent of verse  
you become insane.  
A piece of paper runs out  
Your pencil wears down.  
What can I do when  
My sweet-bitter life  
Without verse fades out.  
Night is melting with vigilance  
Just a glance and daylight is visible.  
Through drops of tears  
Like a morning rose the poem appears.  
How many times you burst in tears  
And provoke empathy among your peers.

...  
Thank you Lord, by this grace  
Hardships of life I can sway.

...  
Only verse my solace  
Takes sorrow far away.

...  
I am leaving  
But will stay  
In your minds or maybe fade  
A cheerful girl  
With joys and pains.



Child, I'd better show you things  
so that you don't think these are  
just sayings.

We did not know... I thought only  
my child was missing; others thought  
it was only theirs. I started searching  
for him... It turned out there were  
many more missing.

We, the parents, took up the respon-  
sibility; asked the villagers if there was  
anyone missing

We used to collect money amongst us,  
although this was the time when people  
dreamt of having enough money to buy  
bread.

We used to take notes on pieces of paper  
about who we met and where.

I took notes of things I was  
told, even if the stories told  
were not about my child

We put down the date of birth,  
place, and who was searching for  
him/ her; the type of person he/she  
was, what he/she was wearing, and  
who he/she was accompanied by

All that was valuable I kept separately  
so that it wouldn't be lost.

You should gather all the information  
and crosscheck it ten times, hundreds  
of times. Out of ten instances, one  
might be true and the rest would be  
false... Evidences varied, people recalled  
different things

I have it all written on torn pieces of paper. I keep them because it is my personal archive - my soul. I am unable to throw them away, as there are their names.

I talk to them as if I am talking to my children. And then, it feels like I start breathing differently.

It doesn't make any difference they are all my children.

All mothers feel the same pain

We live under the same sky, on the same land, on the same grounds, and no one understands our common pain the way we, the mothers, do.

The war might have turned us into opposing sides but, according to our Caucasus tradition, we share the same pain and we, the mothers, should support each other.

Grieving people have no nationality

# Memory



Years have passed  
And we are alive in  
waiting without confines.

Boundless waiting...we have been slashed  
On the last step to death with bitter bite marks

...

"Maybe we are fortunate and they'll return"  
- hope flames in the heart.

...

For Twenty years  
Dawns we have fed  
Offering only our false dreams

...

I wait and think,  
the expectation is in vain,  
in sleepless nights my temples break

...

Each of them had a face,  
A first and last name...  
Each of them had a shorter life frame.

...

Oh, hark, hark, you all

...

A sparkle of sunlight,  
Could we have just a bit?  
Please, put us back on our feet!

...

We are old enough, who will give us mercy?  
Who will heal our scars?

...

Do children die in their mothers' hearts?!  
Help!

The graves cry out for us.



My uncle planted that tree.

I didn't know him, but he is an idol for us.

His friends left. He went with them.  
I was several months old.

They used to come back and tell her the stories about his/her child.

Had he left with them, he would have been alive now.

I am tormented with the only thought: what was he thinking about before he died?

My grandmother was the only person who told me stories about him. We don't speak about him since my granny died.

She was waiting for her child to return until her last day. She used to say that he was somewhere else and couldn't come back to the family.

If she were still alive, I would have asked her what had happened in more detail.

I don't have any bad memories, there are only good things to remember.

We have no detailed information up to date as we lost our contact with the people we knew there.

The difference is that those people experienced everything themselves, we have witnessed nothing of the kind.

What does it mean to have a missing beloved one?

# Story



I don't know you  
Neither do I know your age  
Nor have I seen you before.  
Does it somehow matter?  
It is March outside,  
More March will rebound.

...

Wild plums blossom in white,  
It turns out your grandchild died.  
You write poems and cry, now  
Please listen to this story of mine:

...

I had two children,  
And now I have none.  
They were young and charming,  
My nights like yours  
Vanish in silent crying.

...

I listen and look.  
Here are their photos  
You'll tell stories of your fawn  
I'll answer of my foals  
And thus our nights will go.

...

You are granny, a sweet granny  
I am a mother. I gave birth...  
Both of our hearts are empty  
We want to talk about that.  
Please forgive and don't blame us,

Take care of your sprout  
The world is severe without.

We did not talk to each other about it. Each of us cried separately. We tried not to show tears to each other.

I don't remember my father dying, because I was little.

I was 4 years old then, I vaguely remember. He had arrived twice. When he was leaving he had fever. We haven't seen him ever since.

He had secretly left his military service several days before going missing. Mother begged him not to go. He still went away.

When he arrived, he visited me at school and asked the teacher to let me go. He hugged and kissed me a lot and we had a tour around my classroom. I was so proud. Then he left. He promised to return in 10 days and never came back.

Everybody thought that this war was temporary, and everything would calm down.

Mother was 27 years old and was left alone with 2 children.

My mother used to cry often. We suffered from that.

My mother was searching for him all the time; she used to carry his photos searching for him everywhere, all in vain.

We learned that he had been wounded in his leg and found refuge with a family, which took care of him

We used to meet the trains arriving at the station. We used to receive calls informing that the wounded were expected to arrive and we'd rush to check, but that was all in vain and we had to return

My mother used to feel bad and run outside... we would go out to bring her back every time.

We haven't seen him ever since and could find out nothing to clarify his fate.

These were dark times. We have heard nothing about him ever since

It is impossible that a person disappears without a trace. I would rather believe, that he went on a trip somewhere. It is vitally important that I hear about him.

# Child



Ladybug, ladybug, what are you looking for?  
Are you looking for your mom?  
I am looking for my child.  
Beg you, help me to descry.

...  
Dead or alive, my child  
Who I could not find.  
My life now  
Has no price.

I am stranded in the same age.  
Everything stayed there.

I remember my grandmother's eyes.

I still experience the emotions of that  
day. I realized I'd never return there.

I remember my mother packing.  
I remember her embracing photos and  
documents.

It is very difficult to overcome all these, espe-  
cially for a child. You leave your home. Your  
mother tells you that you will not be able to  
return. And you don't understand why you  
can't take your beloved dog with you.

Grandma said she was aged and would not  
go anywhere. She stayed home.

The family was unable to take any  
valuables when leaving the place.

We left early in the morning by ship.

Kids brought their schoolbags, books  
and other school stuff.

After that, happiness is nothing I can feel. As if  
there were two places. One is full-coloured, and  
you cannot find colours to add to the other one,  
no matter how hard you try.

I am chased by that same fear.

We used to receive information about grandma for  
a while, but the contact ceased soon.

Our searches among our acquaintances  
were all in vain.

I remember my father entering the room and  
telling my mother that the contact with our  
granny was lost.

Why did I let her stay there? Why didn't  
I force her to go with me?

I wake up again and again in fear as if I still  
hear the sound of shelling.

Everyone felt guilty

# Sadness



Sorrow, sorrow  
Old sorrow  
Bitter sorrow  
Sweeter sorrow  
A better past life is lost  
to follow.  
Apple of my eye is  
In a hollow.  
The whole of me is fractured.  
My wheel of fortune  
works like the harrow.  
Bitter-sweet memories in  
Old photos captured.  
Mother's heart in woes,  
My love...  
Wherever I go  
Sorrow follows.  
In a dream or any realm  
Forgive me, could not leave  
The wretched sea of my grief.

We do not talk about this at home.

My brother disappeared together with other residents of the village.

He was on his way when he went missing.

It is extremely hard to lose ones only brother

It is very difficult for us to talk about it. It was a very bad period. I lost my brother and my father had followed him.

My mother still cries and continues searching for him. With or without me. I witnessed very bad situations - my mother crying and hitting her head against the wall.

Sometimes she used to get up at night and go searching.

She has not lost hope up to now.

She is still waiting for him to be alive.

She sits with his pictures

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I have never told this to anyone.

A miracle may happen ... I wish a miracle happened and she's found.

Time is ruthless. I start to forget my brother's face over time. However, it does not help the pain caused by this loss.

What shall I tell a person who says:  
"I'm choking with my tears"

Mom never smiles since then...

I realised there are no words to comfort

~~Even now, I don't want to think of my brother as dead. I don't want to pray for him as dead either.~~

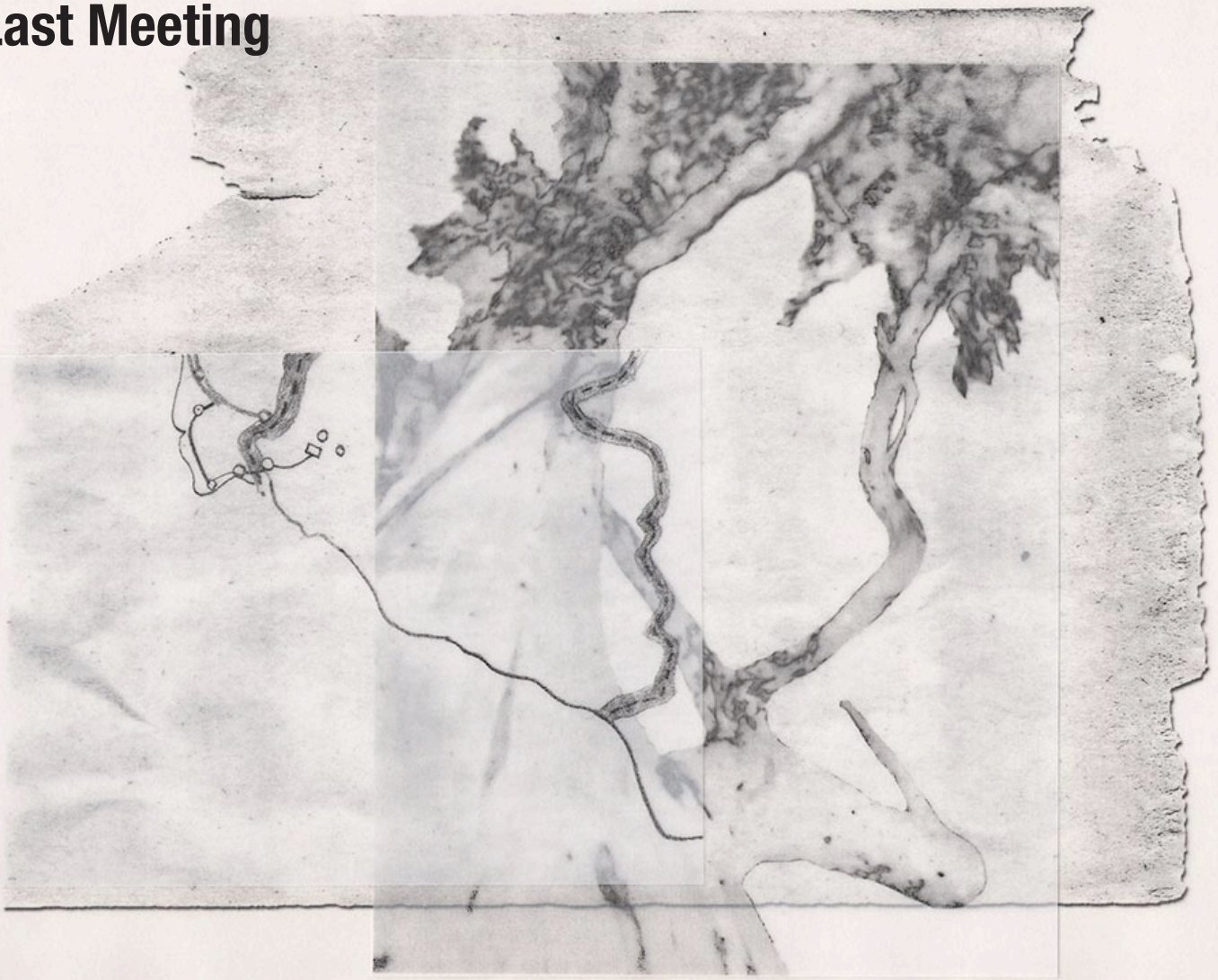
I want to scream out for someone who'd hear me, but I don't know who.

I am having a dialogue with myself.

May a miracle happen! I wish a miracle happened. I might have lost my memory. God, may every missing person return home...



# Last Meeting



In the dream...  
You ran away  
I chased you in vain.

...

It is not clear  
Whether you or me  
Write this verse.  
I print with needles  
Lines of ranks.  
You know,  
the poems  
are filling up the chest.

...

Are you able  
to be back?  
I will sing you the verse.  
You, the soul of my world.

He decided to show me the stars: "Look, look at them".

He phoned me: "What do you think, should I go?" I said: "You will go anyway, you won't listen". "Yes, I am leaving". "I won't come by then, as it will be too hard to leave you".

I should not have left that day. If I had stayed with the kids, he might not have returned from the mountain down here. Or he might have gone elsewhere. With the others. Things could have happened differently. If we had not left, he would have known that I'm home with the children. I don't know, this was my gut feeling. But we rarely listen to our gut feelings.

My youngest child was three back then. He came, yes, wearing the uniform, "we have to leave", he said. He couldn't look me in the eyes, as if he was out of this world. Our house was at the motorway a bit distanced. I knew that it was for the worse to look at somebody leaving, but I was still watching, don't know why, I wanted to remember; how he went out of the house, how he was walking, I knew it was a bad sign to watch someone going, but I was still standing and watching.

They had already left. I was watching from the terrace. He looked at me and it seemed he waved at me. I waved back. He left. This was our last meeting.

He was wearing jeans, sneakers and a blueish T-shirt. This is how I remember him.

I hoped that the children could have saved him

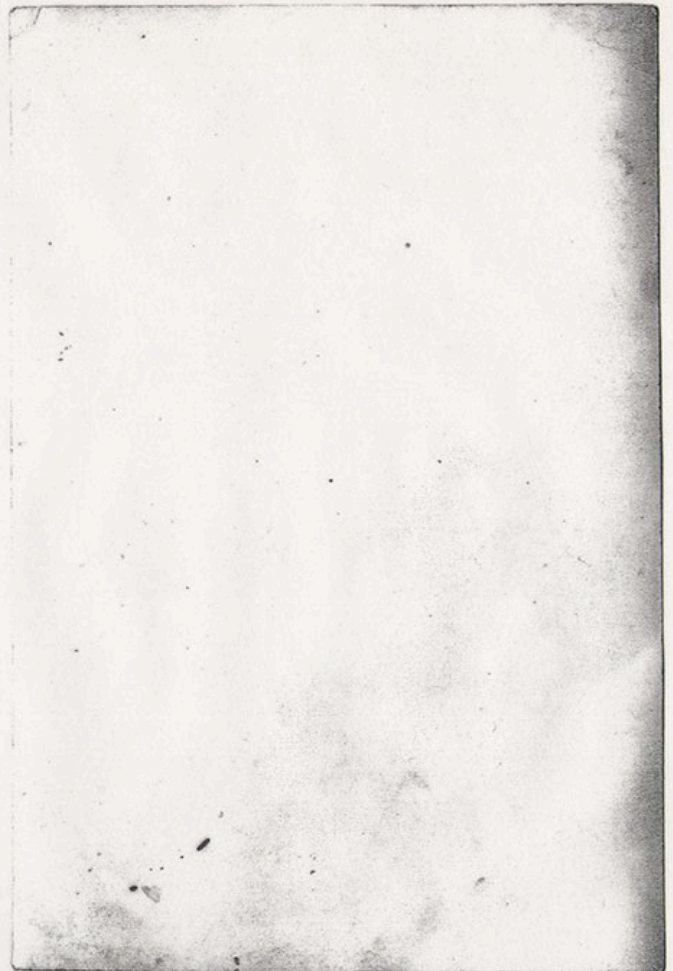
I remember the sound of him walking toward the gate...

I think we will meet. He might be waiting for me there. That is why I am not afraid of departing for the afterworld. It's not that I want to or plan for, but I make myself believe that we'll be there together and live together

# Dream



Suddenly,  
I fell in the well  
...  
Cannot  
Get out from the hell  
...  
I grapple  
God please help!  
There is nothing  
To attach  
...  
I start singing  
Does anybody hear?  
But, wait a minute  
I don't sing  
But roar



I had a flashback of the war

I managed to reach the gate, and then the stairs. There was a path leading to my house with flowers and tangerine trees on either side of the path. I managed to reach the ground floor and when I tried to open the door, it all started turning into light was turning into light, and I woke up.

I was very angry, because it was me who planned to return. I could have happened to be among them. I'd better have died than to live through this grief

Frankly speaking, we'd learnt it long after.

How could I stand the thought that my mother and the others were no longer alive? We thought they were routing down their way, or finding a safe and short refuge somewhere, that slowed down their way?

She was the core of the family and always thought first about the children. She used to take equal care of her husband, my father. Their love to each other was special.

My father used to take my mother by her hand and they would walk by the sea. That's what I remember from the times before the war

We were worried to tell all this to my mother and it turned out that she died after them. She passed away without knowing anything. And here is my dream - everything turns into light, everyone goes into the heavenly light.

# Wish



When you left  
Without seeing me  
I thought  
You would come back.  
I dreamed that I called.  
You were there to help.  
I believe you appeared  
So I rest at home.  
You died  
But I wait  
I so miss you, please, come back.

...  
I believe  
My sparrow  
Will find his nest.  
But I should be here for him  
I should not die as well.  
Hey, Lord,  
Please be graceful  
Do not kill hopes  
Till the end.  
Give me a chance  
Have mercy at least  
Let me see his bones

My only son, life has turned into a cold desert for me since you are no longer by my side.

In grief I follow the thorny road of life. A silent cry, like a shadow crawling on the ridges, brings a continuous stream of tears from my eyes

I did not know what I should have done. I didn't know what to do! I spent a whole year going here and there, where on earth I did not go, and I did so fearlessly! I met every kind of people, checked every rumor, sometimes they said such things- I am back home, kids are looking me in the eyes, what can I tell them?! I was told terrible stories...

I had to swim across the river at night. A contact was established on the other side of the river to agree on where we could wade across the river. My mother was following me. It was December. When we entered the river, the water was cold. My meeting did not happen.

I see a two-storyed house: the roof has fallen down; concrete slabs between the floors have fallen; the tree grows inside the house and the treetop covers it like a roof. If anyone could touch my hands thereafter, they were like stones. My whole body turned into stone. I was watching dead gum-trees and fir-trees as if they were crying over my loss.

At that moment I felt nothing about it, but when you return, then you start to think... would I go there consciously? Would I do that? I have no answer, but at that time I was there, and I was proud to follow my son's path.

I wish I could find a mere bone fragment to have a grave to come to.

I wouldn't want to leave this world without seeing you once again.

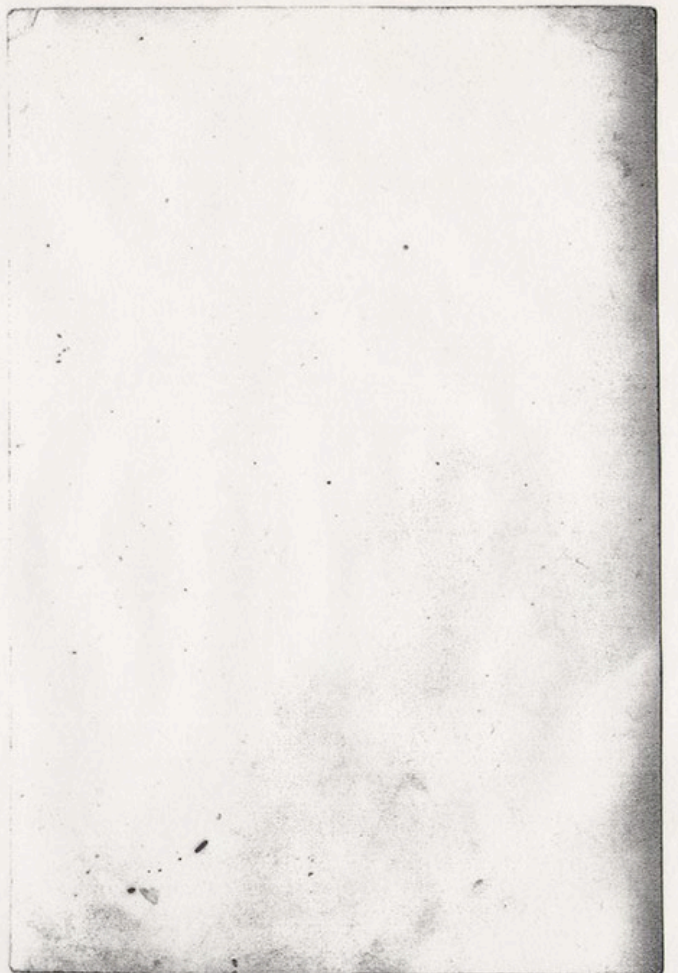
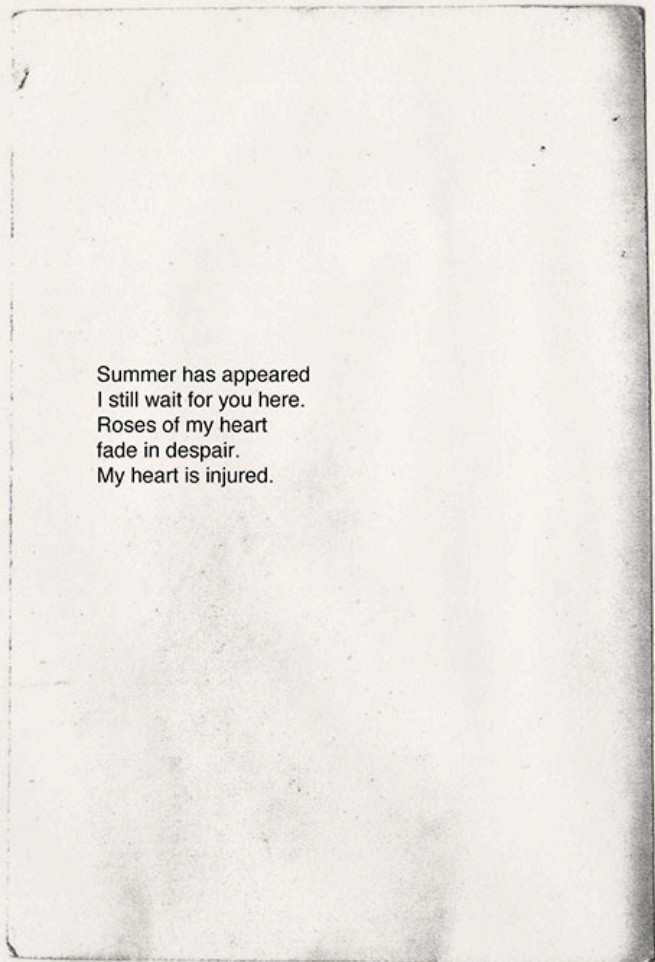
I wish I could mourn you, worthily honor you.

Come back to me, please,  
I want to embrace your grave.  
I miss you!

# Waiting



Summer has appeared  
I still wait for you here.  
Roses of my heart  
fade in despair.  
My heart is injured.



Nothing disappears without a trace

He went missing in summer.  
I remember, I was at work  
in a hospital, when my son  
came with the news of his  
disappearance.

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Many of his friends are no longer alive

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Минск

I am left with nothing for his remembrance,  
just couple of photos. I have nothing but a  
couple of photos to remember him

We have been searching for him. The whole  
family. Kids were too young then.

Мавгза

I believe nothing is secret that shall not be  
made manifest. We have been tirelessly  
searching back then, all of us, family and  
friends. This is the strangest disappearance  
in my opinion. For other cases, there is at  
least something to hook on, for us - nothing,  
everything was shattered and lost.

I kept going here and there, I was  
told he had been seen somewhere,  
we went there but could not find  
him.

Nobody could tell us anything precisely. Once we  
were told: "yes, we have seen him together with  
this and that person." Other source said, we  
saw him being put in a truck and taken some-  
where with others. But where... I had been  
searching for a very long time, but somehow it  
did not work out.

No one in the family had ever dared say  
a single word that he's no longer there  
(alive)

This is more than just burying a person when  
they know the person does not exist anymore.  
Of course, they existed, yes, existed, lived and  
were present. For us, they will always exist, no  
matter what happens. Deeper in our hearts,  
there is still a ray of hope that every disappeared  
person is somewhere, as long as he or she has  
not been buried. Wherever I might be, he is by  
my side. I feel it, he is with me, by my side,  
he keeps living with me. What if they cannot  
find peace, what if they are around.

I'd be happy, if I could hear anything  
about him. I would not even be afraid  
to die...



# Doubt



All nights and days  
Tired from waiting  
my life takes its way  
...  
I won't speak with you  
I am upset  
Waiting continues  
I am drained.



It would be a relief if we  
learned that he was dead.

We had to leave. My husband suggested that I  
stay and go together. The child would not stay  
without me, and so I didn't agree to stay. I  
told him he could join us on Friday after he'd  
finish his work. He seemed unwilling to let  
me go. I was thinking, if I'd stay or go. I  
was hesitating, and I could hardly catch the  
train. Public transport was unavailable, trains  
were the only working means. He saw us off.  
We lost any contact with him ever since.

You no longer think about  
yourself. At all.

First, you're reflecting and waiting far  
too long, still not knowing how it  
would all go. But you do hope to find  
him. Then, you start thinking if there's  
anything you could do while the person  
is missing for a long time. After all  
these years, you come to an under-  
standing that he might no longer be  
alive.

When at a church lightening up can-  
dles, I don't know whether I pray for  
his life or his soul. I find it very dif-  
ficult and so I decided that I pray for  
him no matter where and how he is.

I always thought he had so many acquaintances,  
and in fact, he was such a person that should  
he be anywhere, he'd use every chance to get in  
touch with me. Then I thought he might not  
know exactly where I was. I don't know.

He might still be there.

# Hope



Winter is leaving  
With cautious steps  
Spring is marching to the fore.

....

The sun changes  
Time and place.  
Light comes early, darkens late.  
The sun in heaven  
Makes its ways  
Gets up, arrives,  
without delays.

....

We greet charming spring,  
Twelve months cycling.  
I think and think,  
And, as a poet  
Start posing questions  
of our being.  
If the world has laws  
When to come and leave,  
After passing on  
Humans do not live.  
But, what if they  
Could come back?

....

Are there rules in fact  
That the world has set?  
Years fit to years

Sunny days are real  
But it can be fearsome  
Those humans reappear.

....

Being or being without -  
It is earth and heaven's affair.

Why did I let him stay? Why  
haven't I forced him to go with me?

He was 27 years old

He let us leave (his wife and his children),  
while he himself stayed together with the  
others.

I was 9 at that time. He stayed.  
He thought, we would return soon.

He was an agronomist and enjoyed looking  
after his large citrus plantations.

Father crossed the border and that's it.  
We know nothing ever since

My mother said "We should wait for him  
there, where he left us".

It was very difficult for my father  
to leave us.

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We thought he would return.

We have been sending enquiries everywhere,  
addressed every agency, simply everywhere,  
but nothing happened...He didn't return and  
we were explained that his group had been  
bombed. We searched, looked for someone  
who saw him last. Someone said he'd seen  
him, others said he became sick and had to  
go down the hill where the cars were  
parked, everyone said, he had to, he was left  
there after the war.

I remember how my mother and I used  
to meet the arriving trains.

She was looking for him everywhere, trying  
to reach out to him.

My mother was 25 years old. No  
home left, no place to live. It was  
difficult to survive without the  
husband.

My mom, my dear mommy still hopes that he is alive and that he will come back soon...

Till now, we do not know whether he is dead or alive. We have been searching for so long.

My mom, my dear mommy still hopes that he is alive and that he will come back soon...

Mother talks about it from time to time. She does not like sharing her bitter emotions.

She believes she will know the truth someday.

I want someone to tell me something that would convince me

I want to believe he is still somewhere out there.

I am grateful to my mother that despite all the psychological and physical hardships she endured and stood strong. She taught me to build good relations with people, to love people and to stand by their sides in all times.

This loss may have had a big impact on me, but it was not a reason for me to do something bad or wrong in life

My mom became both, the mother and the father for me.

This had made me stronger.

# Mission statement

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization, whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavors to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863 ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Address: 44/16, Ardzinba/Pushkina str., Sukhum/i  
Phone: +78402294497/+78402294491

Address: 24, Mosashvili str, Tbilisi  
Phone: +995 322 35 55 10

Address: 47, Luzhkov street, Tskhinval/i  
Phone: +7 929 807 93 26

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