

Mihai Grunfeld

Mihai Grünfeld was born in Cluj, Romania where he lived with his family until he was eighteen. In January 1969 he and his older brother traveled to Czechoslovakia and from there escaped to Austria. This was the beginning of a long journey, which took him to Israel, Italy, Sweden, and Canada in search of a home in the West. Eventually he settled in the United States.

He obtained his Ph.D. from University of California at Berkeley and is a professor of Spanish and Latin American Literature at Vassar College since 1987 where he teaches in the Hispanic Studies Department. At Vassar he has periodically served as chair, directed the Vassar-Wesleyan Program in Spain, Vassar's Summer Language Program in Oaxaca, Mexico, and was an assistant director of The Spanish School at Middlebury College.

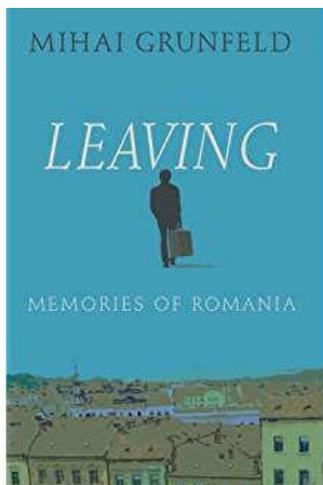


Mihai Grünfeld published [Antología de la poesía latinoamericana de vanguardia](#) (1995). His autobiography [Leaving – Memories of Romania](#) was published in 2008, and was translated and published in Spain as [Irse](#) (2011). He finished work on a novel entitled “The Dressmaker’s Son,” and together with Sarah Levine Simon adapted the novel to a play entitled “The Dressmaker’s Secret,” which enjoyed a successful one month run with sold out houses in February-March 2017 at 59E59 Theaters in New York. He also finished translating and editing a memoir entitled “Inherited Words” by Roth Zoltán, a Romanian Holocaust survivor.

REVIEWS

<https://www.amazon.com/Leaving-Memories-Romania-Mihai-Grunfeld/>

Leaving Memories of Romania recounts the author's childhood and adolescence as the son of impoverished Holocaust survivors. His parents are unable to talk about their past, but their lives and the lives of their two sons are utterly shaped by it. As he comes of age, Mihai Grunfeld is increasingly conscious of his parents profound loneliness, the glaring gaps in his family's history, and the questions that go unanswered. Gradually the story of an innocent child's tender, loving relationship with his parents evolves into a powerful tale of complex family dynamics shaped by adolescent experimentation, the daily grind of factory work, anti-Semitism, and big dreams of escaping the politically restrictive system in which he lives.



Katina Treese Blog

Complete review from the Writers' Tea page at www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

Grunfeld, Mihai. *Leaving*. 2008-12-05, 2008. Print.

Just finished reading this book and I thought that it was awesome. Thank you to my Aunt Lou (Annie Lou), who lent me the book... she heard him speak and he even signed the book for her. Here's are the reviews I found on the backcover of Mihai Grunfeld's "Leaving - Memories of Romania": "...The narrator's sensitive awareness of the palpable loneliness in this domestic unit, and the empty spaces in his parents' history, as well as his probing questions, many unanswered, makes this memoir comparable in richness to the writings of Eva Hoffman, Art Spiegelman, and Melvin Jules Bukiet." - Gerald Sorin, author of "Tradition Transformed: The Jewish Experience in America" and "A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880-1920" "In his touching memoir, Mihai Grunfeld takes us by the hand on a remarkable pilgrimage of survival, love, sadness, yearning, oppression and escape from post-war Romania. It is a powerful narrative in its own right, but it is the sweet, unadorned, authentic voice of the writer that makes this book utterly unforgettable." - Steven Lewis, author of "Zen and the Art of Fatherhood" and "Fear and Loathing of Boca Raton." "Mihai Grunfeld's compelling memoir offers a rich and evocative account of growing up in post-war Romania, haunted by the Holocaust, yet all the more delighted by the wonders of childhood, the intense yearning of adolescence, the immense challenge of escaping to the west. Grunfeld tells his story with the hard-earned wisdom of a man sensitive to the deeper mysteries. His book has all the charm and magic of a late-night conversation with a long-lost friend." - David Schweidel, author of "Confidence of the Heart" and "What Men Call Treasure"

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Leaving-Memories of Romania

by [Mihai Grunfeld](#)

https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/leaving-memories-of-romania_mihai-grunfeld/1333943/#isbn=0979229316

Book Overview

Leaving Memories of Romania recounts the author's childhood and adolescence as the son of impoverished Holocaust survivors. His parents are unable to talk about their past, but their lives and the lives of their two sons are utterly shaped by it. As he comes of age, Mihai Grunfeld is increasingly conscious of his parents profound loneliness, the glaring gaps in his family's history, and the questions that go unanswered. Gradually the story of an innocent child's tender, loving relationship with his parents evolves into a powerful tale of complex family dynamics shaped by adolescent experimentation, the daily grind of factory work, anti-Semitism, and big dreams of escaping the politically restrictive system in which he lives.



Off-Broadway Review: “The Dressmaker’s Secret” at 59E59 Theaters

By David Roberts

OnStage Chief New York Theatre Critic

“The Dressmaker’s Secret” by Sarah Levine Simon and Mihal Grunfeld is enjoying its world premiere at 59E59

Theaters. The new play is based on Mr. Grunfeld’s novel “The Dressmaker’s Son” and the change from ‘son’ to ‘secret’ is more significant than might be obvious at first glance. Why did the playwrights shift the focus from the son to the mother’s secret? After all, the core of the new play centers on Robi (played with a palpable adolescent melancholy by Bryan Burton) and his desire to know who his father is and his overwhelming need to escape his humdrum existence with his mother Maria (played with a deep-seated and enduring mourning by Tracy Sallows) in Kolozsvár a large city in Transylvania, Romania. The action of the play takes place in 1963, just after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in the United States during the communist oppression in Eastern Europe.

Maria is a dressmaker, barely making enough to support herself and Robi even with his meager wages as an electrician added to their joint income. Robi’s angst grows exponentially and his need to know who his father is and his desire to leave Communist Romania and “head west” frustrates Maria and results in frequent outbursts. Robi finds a photo of his mother with a soldier in uniform. Robi was told his father had died in the war but, after further conversations with Maria, he discovers that might not be true. In fact, his father could be Irma’s (Caralyn Kozlowski) brother Robert (the man in the photo) or it might be Zoltan (Zoli), the Jewish teacher friend Maria was seeing at the same time she was engaged to Robert (Robert S. Gregory). Apparently, this is dressmaker Maria’s secret – or perhaps there is yet another secret?...