

THE WHITE VILLA – A PLACE OF  
TRANQUILLITY AND STRENGTH  
OLEKSANDR IRVANETS

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I am a Ukrainian writer, 61 years old. The author of more than 30 books, I write poems, prose, and drama. The film *The Guide* (2014) was shot in Ukraine based on my script. In Germany and German-speaking countries, I had a little success with the productions of my plays *Lügner* [The Liar] and *Ein kleines Stück vom Verrat* [A little play about betrayal], but that was in the last century. Performances based on my plays were staged in theaters in Stuttgart (Theater im Depot), Leipzig (theater.FAKT), and Munich (Pasinger Fabrik) in 1995–1996 and 2001–2002. And in 2017, the Gaymon publishing house published my novel *Rivne/Rovno* (2001) as *Pralinen vom roten Stern* [Chocolates from the red star], translated by Alexander Kratochvil. The book had several favorable reviews in the German and Austrian press. – E-mail: alekirvan@hotmail.com.

On February 24, I found myself in Irpin. This city near Kyiv is now more than half destroyed. My wife and I evacuated to Kyiv within two weeks and in another month to Western Ukraine, to Rivne. During those difficult days, my wife's mother died. From the beginning of the war, I wrote poems and columns for Internet sites. Some of them have also been translated into German. I am deeply grateful to the Wissenschaftskolleg for the invitation and the opportunity to rest from the horrors of war. And also for the opportunity to understand the meaning of this war for Ukraine, Germany, and the whole world.

I called my project “The Unfinished Diary of an Unfinished War.”

I wrote my first essays on the subject of war in Irpin and Kyiv and continued my work in Berlin. I was interested in learning the position of German society, its attitude toward

Russia's war with Ukraine. I also had meetings with Ukrainian refugees who ended up in Berlin after these tragic events.

During those incomplete three months at the White Villa, I produced 12 essays, again on the subject of war. Comprehension of what is happening to my homeland is not very easy.

These essays, together with previously published ones, are gradually forming a collection of journalistic essays. Although the name "Unfinished War" was a bad joke here – many texts still need to be refined. And the war in Ukraine is not over. Several Ukrainian publishing houses have already expressed interest in this future collection. But the book has yet to take shape into a complete structure.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my deep gratitude to the entire team of Wiko for the excellent conditions created for the fellowship recipients.