

# THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ALEXANDER FAINBERG: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE POET'S LIFE VIA HIS CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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## Abstract

This article gives information about the life, character, and literary achievements of Alexander Feinberg, a prominent poet and translator, who became deeply connected to Uzbekistan. Feinberg's poetry is characterized by its philosophical depth, emotional resonance, and reflections on love, politics, and the human condition. The article also emphasizes Feinberg's impact on Uzbek and Russian literature, including his translation work and contributions to film. His approachable personality and lasting legacy as a poet are also discussed through personal anecdotes, providing a multifaceted view of his life and work.

**Keywords:** Alexander Feinberg, Uzbek literature, Russian literature, Poetry, Translation, Tashkent, Literary achievements, Pushkin Medal, People's Poet of Uzbekistan, Literary legacy, Personal anecdotes.

## Introduction

The writer and poet, who had warm thoughts about Uzbeks, strong love for Uzbekistan and loyalty to their homeland, emphasized that he saved his life here during the difficult moments of his life. "My hometown is Tashkent," he declares. "I'm in the capital of Russia. Here it is. I feel Moscow in the palm of my hand. I look at the history of this city from the window of the eighteenth floor. I looked at the horizon and I was disappointed. Disappointment! During the revolution, this city left my mother alone at the threshold of Magadan. After many years, only Tashkent embraced her and warmed her body in the cold." His childhood, the most important part of his life, coincided with the terrible and dangerous years of World War II." The houses of Yelena Sergeevna Bulgakova, Anna Akhmatova, Faina Ranevskaya, and Vladimir Lugovsky; Alexei Tolstoy's yard; Tatyana Sergeevna, Yesenina's shelter... How many more lives were saved due to the conflict in Tashkent, my hometown at the time, during those years? ... Not to mention my parents, who came in 1937 and gave birth to me in 1939... These expressed thoughts are a clear example of the difficult life experienced and the processes in it. Alexander Feinberg is a national poet of Uzbekistan. In the poetic firmament of Uzbekistan, he is one of the brightest luminaries without any exaggeration. His work is unusually



multifaceted. He is the author of thirteen poetry collections published in Tashkent, Moscow and St. Petersburg. For his contribution to the development of literature in 2004, Alexander Feinberg was awarded the honorary title “People’s Poet of Uzbekistan”, and 4 years later, he received the State Award of the Russian Federation - the Pushkin Medal. He is the author of fifteen poem collections (including a two-volume posthumous book compiled by the author), and also four feature films and more than twenty animated films based on his scripts. He translated into Russian the poems of Alisher Navoi and many other modern Uzbek poets.

Alexander Feinberg is one of the most famous poet in Uzbekistan. In this article I don’t give any information about the life of Feinberg. I looked for an interview about him. As a result, I wrote and add several facts.

Telling about Alexander Fainberg is an extraordinarily difficult task. After all, what could be simpler than writing about a poet? A poet is by nature a person always open – read by anyone, listen, think, admire, make sarcastic remarks, fill in the gaps... All will be revealed to the one who knocks! After rereading several of Alexander's latest poems, I sit and think about him. And thinking about him is, I must say, a magnificent thing. Join me...

What, you ask, should we think about him? Everything is already clear, with maximum frankness, his complicated path as a poet is laid out – honest texts, like a transparent fishing line, thread through all his days, like beads, from childhood to maturity, and between the lines (here it is, grab it, don’t miss it!) – a vivid and ever-changing philosophy of love, half-turns of passion, and an endlessly fascinating vibration of the inner poetic world. His Life and even his Death – all of it is here, in this book... What more do we need?

But no... you return to his books, and here it is again, the realization that you know absolutely nothing about this person...

Sometimes I think that Alexander Fainberg is so simple, like a textbook, like the alphabet, like a fundamental truth, but when I turn the page – once again, an abyss opens before me, unbounded spaces of poetry...

We lived in the same city, the city of our childhood, walked the same streets, breathed the same air. Despite some age difference, I believe that Alexander and I were of the same generation, from the same field of berries. And this field of ours was always complex, contradictory, where it was plowed and replowed, and where it was impassable, like a jungle. I remember the Soviet years, when it was all the rage to be fascinated by the new poetry – back then, Fainberg seemed to be some unreachable bohemian symbol, his rare publications were read to tatters, and his performances on stage were fiery with free thought. Not many dared to approach and get acquainted with the handsome, intelligent, blue-eyed brunette. Today it seems strange to recall this, especially since the aura of the poetic elite was not created by Alexander Fainberg himself, but was based on our collective attitude toward poetry and those who produced this strange, intricate fabric.

Only many years later did our personal acquaintance happen – in the last year of Alexander Arkaevich’s life. I was amazed at the extraordinary ease with which he opened the doors to his life for me. Many of my compatriots say now – he was a simple person... Not at all. The ease with which it was so unusually interesting to communicate with him did not mean simplicity of nature. Fainberg allowed himself to be different and, while doing so, never wore masks. I



think Alexander could have been anyone: he moved from one layer of his personal expressions to another, simultaneously and spontaneously, as easily as a cat that roams by itself on a theoretically existing roof.

- **O'ldirilishim mumkin,**
- **Kimman axir men? Oddiy o'g'ri.**
- **O'ngda chegara,**
- **Chapda esa devor.**
- **Hech bir eshik menga**
- **Sharaf ko'rsatmas,**
- **Ammo men ham bosh egmasman,**
- **Hech kinga iltifot ko'rsatmasman.**
- **It can be strangled.**
- **Who am I here? A notorious thief?**
- **I look to the right – there is the border.**
- **I look to the left – there is the fence.**
- **No gate in the world is honored by me.**
- **I never bowed to any gate.**

Very few photos of Alexander Arkaevich are posted on the Internet, mostly public speaking photos. I cannot say that age did not leave its mark on his appearance – no, you can see the deep wrinkles on his face... but this is just a photo. I assure you, in real life, he didn't seem like an elderly man. He moved with the lightness of a teenager. His speech was alive and unique – when he told something, he would get into the role, and immediately, images and events grew before your eyes – like in the movies. It's no surprise that filmmakers gave Alexander even episodic, yet very bright and expressive roles. His voice. Oh... that's a separate topic for discussion... Deep and hoarse, his tone was so unique and special that you could recognize it on the phone from a single sound. It was on the phone that our first conversation took place. The famous poet introduced himself simply – Sasha Fainberg. And he was already nearly 70 at the time!

I will tell you how it happened. I work in a software company – a large team of about 70 developers. We were about to have one of our corporate parties, and I came up with the idea to give the employees an unusual gift. One day, I saw a fresh publication of poems in the local newspaper, and I was struck by the fact that Fainberg was still in Tashkent, that he hadn't gone to America, Israel, or Russia, that he was here! And suddenly, an image appeared before my eyes: the poet comes to our office and reads his poems for the team. Without much thought, and thinking it absurd, I wrote a brief, honest request – to come to our office and read poetry for our team. I didn't expect much – after all, in my subconscious, Fainberg still remained that inaccessible symbol of the bohemia. Well, I did it, and then sent the letter.

Some time passed, and I had almost forgotten about it, thinking it was a silly fantasy. But then, as it happens, one beautiful day, the phone rings, and a quiet, deep voice says: “Hello, this is Sasha Fainberg, I received your letter, and I liked it. I will definitely come if I recover. I promise to call and let you know soon whether I have recovered or not.” I could only thank him for calling.



A week later, Alexander called again and said, “I’m better,” and we easily agreed on the date and time of the meeting. I promised to send a car for him, but he replied, in a tone that left no room for disagreement, that he felt fine and would walk by himself, as he lived only 10 minutes away.

And so, our first personal meeting took place in our company’s conference room. Alexander had his coffee and presented poems. During the reading, some of us were already getting impatient, but suddenly everyone was drawn to him like a magnet. The office was full of executives, but it seemed that all were listening to him with a rare attentiveness. His poems about the eternal, about metaphysics, about the conflict between the political and the spiritual – all this was given with such sincerity that even those who came from different professional areas were captivated.

Елена Атланова *Ташкент, Январь–май 2010*

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