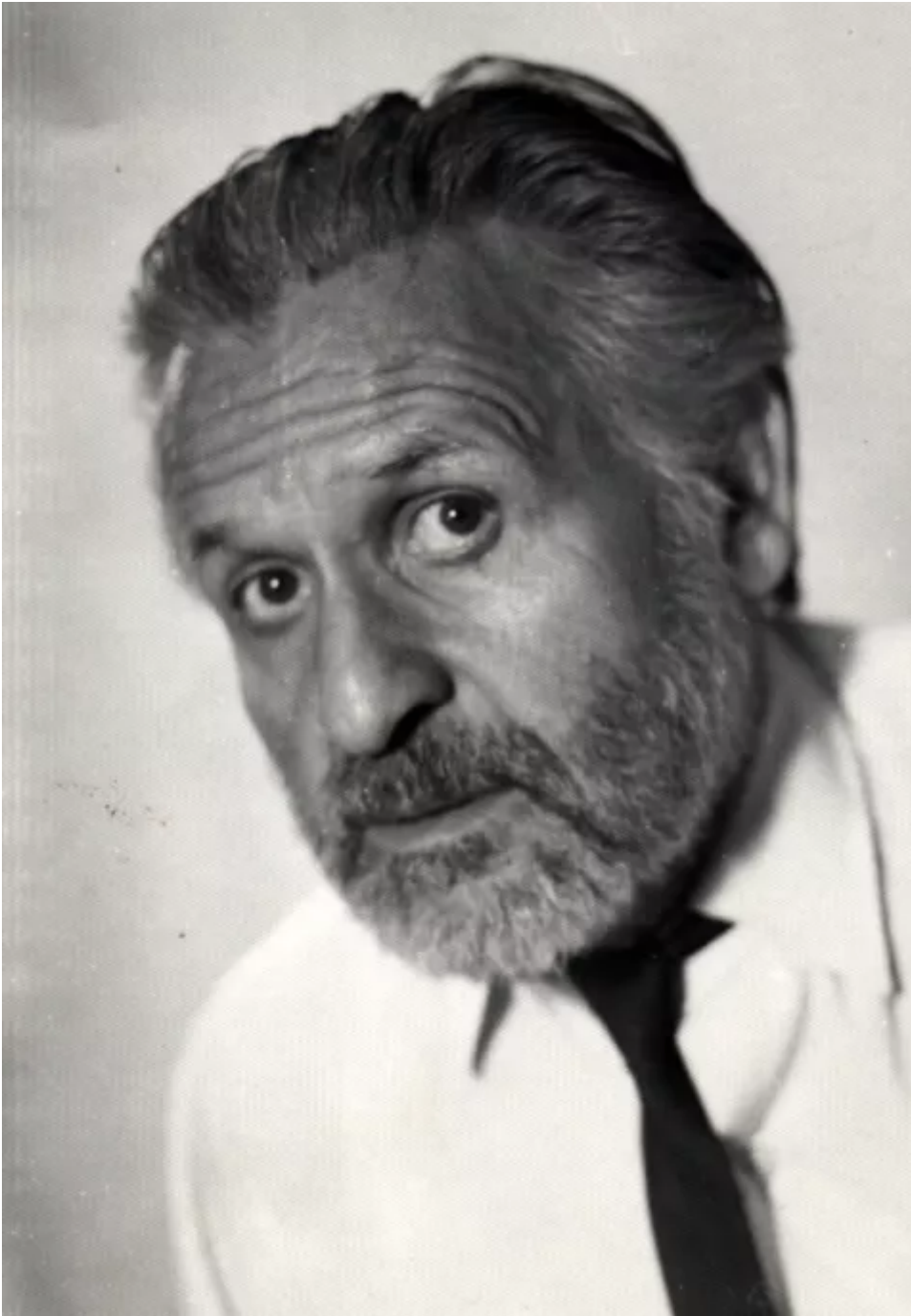


Vasile Gunea



This is me during my mourning for my wife, Erzsebet Grunea (nee Galfi). The photo was taken in the summer of 1987. I didn't shave for six weeks, that's why I have a beard, later I shaved it. She was buried in the municipal cemetery, according to her religion, but I recited the Kaddish in her memory. The Unitarian priest said the prayer and the sermon, and when he finished, I also recited what Jews recite over the dead. And there was a funeral feast in the Szamos restaurant; it's not forbidden for Jews to hold a funeral feast but it's not customary. I light a candle every year in her memory and publish a short ad in the Szabadsag daily in Hungarian and in the Adevarul de Cluj in Romanian, in which I state that so and so many years have passed since she died. My poor wife died quite young, at the age of 64. All I have left now is my son. I met my wife in 1949. There was a club called ARLUS at 1 Egyetem Street, where the editorial office of the newspapers Tribuna and

Steaua and the headquarters of the Writers' Association are located today. I used to go there, just like my future wife, and we met there. She was in the last year of the Unitarian Lyceum for Girls and she was a very pretty girl. I soon married her; we got married in August 1949. We went to the people's council with two witnesses - one was her classmate and the other her husband, a teacher - and after the wedding we invited them to have a beer and a Wiener Schnitzel in a restaurant, and that was it. My mother wasn't very pleased with my marrying a non-Jew. Although she had nothing against her as a person, only against the fact that she wasn't Jewish. My father kind of resigned to it, although he wasn't very happy either. But my mother said it openly, 'Don't do this, my son!' Just like young people in general, I didn't listen to mother and did what I thought was right. Erzsebet enrolled into Bolyai University majoring in Romanian literature and language. She was still a student, in the 2nd or 3rd year, when our son, Vasile Gheorghe Grunea, was born in 1951. My wife knew that I was a Jew, she was a Unitarian, but both of us kept our own religion. We never discussed it with my wife that I should maybe become a Unitarian or she should convert. Although I have a feeling that if I had wanted her to convert to Judaism, she would have done it for me. But we never discussed this. Of course, we have had many, many Jewish friends and they all know that she is Hungarian and their attitude to her has been very good and her attitude to them likewise. We talk both in Hungarian and in Romanian in the family. We talked in Romanian for quite a long time because my wife was a Romanian teacher, she taught Romanian in three secondary schools and a lyceum here in Kolozsvár. She wasn't religious either, so my son wasn't raised in any religious tradition. My son knew, even before 1989, that his father was Jewish and his grandmother and grandfather were Jewish, and he has visited them in Israel, too. He knows the broad outlines of the history of the Jewry, but he doesn't know Jewish religious traditions. He only knows cholent, for example, from the canteen of the Jewish community.