



**Uncensored: Samizdat Novels and the Quest for  
Autonomy in Soviet Dissidence (Northwestern  
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*Ann Komaromi*

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# Uncensored: Samizdat Novels and the Quest for Autonomy in Soviet Dissidence (Northwestern University Press Studies in Russian Literature and Theory)

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Vasilii Aksenov, Andrei Bitov, and Venedikt Erofeev were among the most acclaimed authors of samizdat, the literature that was self-published in the former Soviet Union in order to evade censorship and prosecution. In *Uncensored*, Ann Komaromi uses their work to argue for a far more sophisticated understanding of the phenomenon of samizdat, showing how the material circumstances of its creation and dissemination exercised a profound influence on the very idea of dissidence, reconfiguring the relationship between author and reader. Using archival research to fully illustrate samizdat's social and historical context, Komaromi arrives at a more nuanced theoretical position that breaks down the opposition between the autonomous work of art and direct political engagement. The similarities between samizdat and digital culture have particular relevance for contemporary discourses of dissident subjectivity.

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