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Books
from
Slovenia

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LITERARY CRITICS' CHOICE

2021

ESAD BABAČIĆ

Machine, You Know Your Debt

Veš, mašina, svoj dolg, CZ, 2020



Photo by: Jože Suhadolc

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In the early 1990s, Esad Babačić (1965) enrolled at the Ljubljana Faculty of Arts to study Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian and Slovenian language. As the singer-songwriter of the punk band Via Ofenziva, he received the award for best punk song from the record label FV 126/5 at the age of 17 for his song about Josip Broz Tito. Via Ofenziva was the first band behind the Iron Curtain that dared perform a cover of a “Nazi” song by Lili Marlen, which was strictly forbidden at the time. As a result, they were often interrogated by the Communist authorities. After the final downfall of punk in former Yugoslavia, Babačić turned his attention to poetry. To date, he has published 13 poetry collections. In collaboration with the art collective NSK, he issued the art book *Biospektiva* (Biospective, 2010). His works have appeared in renowned European magazines, such as Die Batterie, the Edinburgh Review and Literaturundkritik, and the American magazine DG The Dirty Goat. In the United States, he also published his first independent poetry collection in translation, *The Lying Poet*.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Childhood memories of the yearly wait for snow intertwine with memories of father’s raincoat, a kind of symbol of all the pains suffered by the proletariat that, despite a different dynamic of work today, the precarious worker can certainly find relatable. The young Esad therefore had no choice but to seek refuge in punk, which, unlike in other European capitals, was welcomed with open arms in Ljubljana, and basketball courts – the last bulwarks of community that he wants to rebuild in his mature years but encounters nothing but excuses and fake sympathy, products of growing individualism. In his essay *Uporniki tišine* (The Rebels of Silence), Esad Babačić comes to the conclusion that he has made a lot of noise for nothing and lacks an appreciation of silence. His writings are a mix of humorous philosophical insights, supported by an analysis of specific sports strategies for the games of Luka Dončić, Goran Ivanišević, Dražen Petrović and Rok Petrovič, cathartic Ljubljana graffiti, bizarre Bosnian jokes, excerpts from resigned punk lyrics and poetic reflections bursting from his poetic core.

The collection of essays entitled *Veš, mašina, svoj dolg* (Machine, You Know Your Debt) by Esad Babačić is not only an interesting read for the generation of Ljubljana residents who grew up in socialism and can relate to the author, but also for anyone who, despite their fast-paced life and buried dreams, did not suppress the curious child within them and the rebellious passion of a budding teenager. A must-read for anyone who refuses to come to terms with various forms of political dictatorship and totalitarianism. For anyone in constant search of an escape strategy or loopholes in ideology. Even if they, like the author, sooner or later hit the wall of disapproval, the abyss of personal trauma, the noise of ungroundable rhetorical syllogisms and metaphorical silences.

/ EXCERPT /

About Waiting, Perhaps

You never waited too long – always on the first of the month, the bill, still wet from the sweat you had worked up for those who will never wait for you at the pedestrian crossing, must be paid. Are you a man or what? I’ll show them ... When you returned home, the radiators were warm from the free Saturday, and the wait for Sunday, holy Sunday could begin. You’re not going to hit anyone, you’re not going to yell at anyone, you’re going to stay silent, as if it’s enough, as if it will make anyone happier than they were yesterday. You didn’t drink, you didn’t cross the

street, to the new shopping centre, you didn’t go see the new waitress like the other workers in your shift, you just went home, and you still weren’t happy, not by a long shot. You’re going to wait for it to pass. If you can hold out. If not ... You’re still going to wait. The houses are grey, where is everyone ... The houses are grey, where is everyone, so that they can kill you and paint the streets red, someone is screaming from the speakers in your son’s room. Then it’s quiet for a while, until you hear it again: I’m waiting for winter, I’m waiting for winter. It calms you. This voice. You don’t know why. As if this winter will never come. And, in a way, it won’t. That is the thing, the fetish that hides from the guilt and runs like the heroes in Velvet Underground songs. Saturdays are long because you still have enough time, or at least it feels like you do. How does one measure time? By the wait that never ends. Dew falls from the clouds, falling on the red tulips on the windowsill; you’re no longer afraid that it will all be for nothing and that the wait has only just begun. Outside a courtyard full of basketball players waiting for someone to bring the ball. Yes, who is going to bring the ball? We always have to wait for them. Why don’t I bring my own? Because I don’t have one. I’ll just wait. And then the warmup starts, the shooting of hoops, as if it there won’t be a proper game, as if no one feels like doing anything, as if the sky is too low and it’s not the day to play basketball. You shoot, you score, the first shot, the second ... it’s happening, slowly, it’s going in, like always, alright, it’ll be fine, even though the restlessness is always there and the fear that hounds you like a brother you will never meet ... is everyone as scared as you? Probably, they must be a little afraid. They never say anything, they seem the same, never-changing, pale, somewhat stiff but still not bitter, like you are sometimes. And you can’t hide it like they can, so they find you suspicious, from the very beginning. What could you be up to. That is the thing, that is the problem – you’re not up to anything. Too much waiting for the end – and that is it. That is the sadness picked up on by the Bosnian poet you met one night at a bar by the River Miljacka. Sarajevo was a city that knew how to wait. Everything came; the winter, the Olympics and the snow on which we all skied together for a few years. Until the snow turned bloody and the wait turned into a nightmare. Now you don’t know which wait is the worst – waiting in war or waiting in line at the shopping centre, the same old products every time. You hear: a Croatian general was sentenced to forty years in prison, we were sentenced to a thousand-year wait in a line at the shopping centre. You don’t know why you remembered that joke about waiting, the one about the end of Earth and the migration of people to new planets that were previously discovered and colonised. It takes place on the eve of the apocalypse and, of course, stars Bosnians who, like always, have the most original idea and solution to the problem. Their eternal optimism doesn’t leave them even when it becomes clear that this planet is no longer survivable. The space police are sweeping the Earth, looking for nations that are yet to leave their homes. Of course the Bosnians turn out to be the only ones left. The police warn them that it is high time they leave. They smile and snicker in reply, as if nothing had happened. A policeman tells the chief: can’t you see that it’s all over? Save yourselves while you still can!” The Bosnian smiles enigmatically, as if everything is under control, which is even more alarming to the guardian of humanity who tries a more reconcilable, yet decisive approach: “Look around you, everyone is gone, you’re the only ones left on this wretched Earth.” The Bosnian replies mysteriously: “We’re waiting!” “What the hell you are waiting for? Everyone has moved to their new planets and tomorrow is to be the end of this world for good,” screams the policeman in desperation. “We are waiting,” repeats the Bosnian. “What are you waiting for? What the hell are you waiting for?” The Bosnian has had enough, so he tells him his brilliant plan: “Just so you know: we are going to the sun!” And he snickers happily again, as if he has just pulled out an ace that no one in this world knew about, no one but him and a few millions of his fellow sufferers. The man in uniform cannot believe his ears: “What? Are you crazy? The sun is hot and uninhabitable. You will burn to death, if not here, then up there.” The Bosnian waits a moment for the man to calm down, then replies coolly: “Yes, that may be so, but you don’t know – “ “What don’t I know? What don’t I know?”, says the policeman, enraged. “We are going there at night!” exclaims the Bosnian cheerfully.

Translated by
Špela Bibič



BORIS KOLAR

Thirteen

Trinajst. Goga, 2020



Photo by: Matjaž Wenzel

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Boris Kolar is an ecologist and ecotoxicologist working at the National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food in Maribor and an external expert on environmental risks of the European Medicines Agency in Amsterdam. He has written columns for the *Večer* daily and published the occasional text in Slovenian literary magazines, but he is most well-known for his humorous novel *Iqball hotel* set in Africa, which tells the story of a tourist who slowly turns into the proprietor of a hotel in the middle of nowhere. The novel was shortlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year in 2009. More than a decade later, in 2020, Goga published his book of short stories *Trinajst (Thirteen)*. His writings are in touch with nature, bright and, above all, extremely humorous.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The King of Spain is tracking two worn-out bears that have been brought from the circus for his pleasure, but both manage to escape and start new, unusual lives in freedom. A master with an incredible sense of smell sets out to trace the scent of Adolf Hitler in the clock tower from when the latter visited the city decades ago ... Not only are there clocks that speak through smell and an old house that talks to a young protagonist who lives in the attic, we learn of the fate of a tree and the hive of animal activity beneath it. The animals in these thirteen stories are often more human than people, and people are what they always were – animals. Both animals and people pay more attention to their instincts rather than reason and find the most incredible solutions to their problems. The bear escapes danger by a skilful ride on a bicycle, and the problem of pharaoh ants in the apartment is resolved through a complex regime aiming to achieve natural balance that includes birds of prey.

At first glance, the humorous stories seem fantastic, but above all, they bring to mind the incredible variety and heterogeneity of the world that is right before us, but that we manage to overlook every single day. And it is this variety that whispers in our ear: I am here, too, the world is bigger than you. If earthworms under the earth can feel, even the sky can come alive for a moment: "Perhaps the sun rose an inch too high that day and an error occurred in the sky. Why else would there be numerous white lines left behind by airplanes cutting across the sky?"

/ EXCERPT /

Pharaoh Ants

Ants are small, six-legged animals with big eyes: their only purpose is to see where to bite you. If, one morning, you happen to find armies of ants taking over your kitchen, aquarium, toilet, refrigerator and everything else, whatever you do, do not jump through the window. When an apartment is infested with pharaoh ants, the only thing that can save you is the proper ecological management of their population. So let us ask ourselves: who is the greatest enemy of ants?

We know from experience that ants are the favourite snack of toads. So run out and bring some toads back to the apartment; the ratio should be 9,000 toads per 1,000,000 ants. In developed countries, the Crimean toad is the most popular choice. The locals also call them the Simferopol poops, after Simferopol city, which is home to the largest purchase centre for these animals on the Old Continent. Don't worry, the prices are not too steep. In Moscow, for instance, seven roubles will get you a nice Plump male. The advantage of the Simferopol poops over our homely-grown toads is their small built – they are no bigger than a matchbox.

Now comes phase two of our ecological management. Toads can overpopulate in damp apartments, bathrooms or under kitchen sinks. Let us follow nature's example and find the toad's

mortal enemy. An apartment with central heating will do well with the Aesculapian snake in a ratio of 30 to 38 snakes per 900 toads. This particular snake is recommended due to its human-loving nature and calm, quiet character. But one has to be careful not to spoil them too much. They grow particularly attached to children. There was a case where the ecological management of pharaoh ants failed just because the children had overfed the snakes at lunch. Naturally, these spoiled reptiles then refused to eat the toads.

In phase three of ecological management, the snake population will be managed with the help of their natural enemies. Once again, be careful not to grow too fond of these good-natured reptiles. The housewife will be heartbroken over the death of a pet who has kept her company every day. Mexican and Bavarian experts recommend the Pallid harrier as the predator of Aesculapian snakes, namely 4 birds per 32 snakes, the booted eagle with 3 birds per 35 snakes or the secretary bird with 2 birds per 35 snakes. The latter is especially popular because of its colourful plumage. These birds are slightly taller and rather loud in early morning hours. If you go with the booted eagle, paint the aquariums in the apartment black or dark brown to hide the fish from the bird; this species apparently has a particular taste for angelfish.

Now your apartment has all the elements of a food chain. Naturally, the pharaoh ants won't disappear but their numbers will be carefully managed and the population won't stand a chance of growing any bigger. The atmosphere in your apartment will also be much more pleasant with a little piece of nature with all its laws.

And, last but not least: is there anything more beautiful than the sight of a magnificent, spread-winged bird soaring below the ceiling of your living room on a Sunday morning?

Translated by
Špela Bibič



ALJAŽ KOPRIVNIKAR

Anatomy

Anatomija. Center za slovensko književnost, 2019



Photo by: MATEJ PUSNIK

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aljaž Koprivnikar, poet, literary critic, editor and festival producer. He regularly collaborates with various Slovene and international literary organizations, is the Vice-President of the Association of Slovene Literary Critics and a jury member of the Vilenica Festival. His poetic debut *Ανατομία* was published in 2019 by the Greek publishing house Vaxkikon, the same year *Anatomija* was published by the Centre for Slovenian Literature. A Czech translation is currently being prepared by the publishing house Viriditas. His poems have been published in various literary magazines and anthologies, and translated into English, Czech, Greek, Croatian, German, Macedonian, Portuguese, Serbian and Spanish. He lives in several cities: Ljubljana, Berlin, Prague and Lisbon – in the first he organizes the International Critics' Symposium *The Art of Criticism*, the *World Literatures – Fabula Festival* and the *Slovenian Book Days*; in the second he is preparing the *Anthology of Young Slovene Literature in German translation*; in the third he is one of the program directors of the international literary festival *Prague Microfestival*; in the latter he often teaches at the Faculdade de Letras. He is currently preparing a new collection of poems for the Greek literary market and its Slovenian adaptation.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The author's physical fragmentation across different European countries is the starting point for the poetry book *Anatomy*. The places, cities and landscapes outlined in the collection are not merely geographical concepts, but intertwined points of identification for the poetic subject. Inventories of the author's intimate experience and personal search for his own identity through poetry becomes a universal human experience, in which the poet proves to be a skilful weaver of complex life stories and intimate encounters, all through the prism of modern historical reality, the uncertain and turbulent times of neoliberal Europe at the end of the second decade of the 21st century. – *Domen Slovinič (from the book's flap copy)*

In the last decade, I have already seen the odd proclamation of a poetry collection of the generation, supposedly the ultimate reference point of poetry of the poetry of its millennials. But none of the above, regardless of its relevance, managed to address me as SUCH. When reading *Anatomy*, I finally have the feeling that I have in my hands a collection that actually touches that part of the generation with which I myself had the most social ties. Therefore, whenever I try to better understand this part of my youth, which was once considered the most vital part of life, I will probably reach for this book or offer it to anyone who is interested in how the world was being experienced by our social group, without having to resort to the pompous phrase “voice of the generation”, even though I have it at the tip of my tongue. – *Muanis Sinanović (Vrabec Anarhist)*

/ EXCERPT /

...

To Rosa Luxemburg

To plant acacias in the desert
To arrive and to depart
Not to say anything
To grow up
Without a fear of the dark
To put on clothes

To use the mouth to speak
To lower the white curtains of tenderness
Not to say anything
To face the clouds
And to press the lips
On the Brussels sky
On the Ljubljana sky *On the Grožnjan sky*
On the Prague sky *On the Lisbon sky*
On the Berlin sky *On the Uppsala sky*
On the sky
To glide before the reality
With the lips
To tremble treble
in the ear before sleep

Each word has its own landscape
the air is filled with syllables
you connect the dots on the map
one hand from the future
the other one from homesickness

the sea brings fish full of plastic
the waves lick one another
each belongs to a different story
the windows bang in the wind
the coast is full of swinging lights

you approach the destination
without a name without a given time
and hour you assume the world
has gone nowhere our latitude
grows above a landfill of
grassland wetlands and a coastline
here the shadows are filled with
intact sentences

each vowel as a murmur
how many questions does water ask
formed from droplets of saliva
each consonant as blinking
how many answers does offer
a land on the other side of the world
made of shadows of white air

the waving of beautiful words
growing into depths
this psalm verse says
your shadow is
as deep as
a door open into water
which takes your breath away

Translated by
Aljaž Koprivnikar



TINA KOZIN

The Sky Underwater

Nebo pod vodo. Litera, 2020



Photo by: Nada Žgank

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tina Kozin, editor, poet, radio journalist, literary critic, recipient of the Stritar Award and the Student Prešeren Award. Up to date she has published three books of poetry – *Mož s petimi podplati* (The Man with Five Feet; Litera, 2010); *Šumenja* (Murmurs; LUD Literatura, 2014) and *Nebo pod vodo* (The Sky Underwater; Litera, 2020) – and a work of literary criticism on contemporary Slovenian prose, *Zgodbe o(b) zgodbah* (Stories (up)on Stories; LUD Literatura, 2016). Recently she has turned her attention to writing scripts and librettos – she co-authored the libretto for the electro-acoustic opera IDEN (which won a nomination at the 2020 Prix Italia Festival) and wrote the script for the sound poetry event Daljave (Distances) presented at the 2019 Prague Quadrennial.

ABOUT THE BOOK

A selection of poems about passing, (even) dying or (perhaps most accurately) a slow goodbye from the material, a journey through a kind of interspace between *the here and there*. The image of *there* is fading, the *there* is anti-incarnated and the poetry collection does the opposite: it incarnates (itself), the less of *there* there is, the more poetry we have in our hands, the more *there* we have in our hands. That is the law of memory: the less *there* is present, the more it must be present in our memory.

So much more happens in the field of something that can be read as a story about passing, saying goodbye even. In her new book, the poet explores or establishes a new position of speaking. She blurs the lines between people and the environment (the work features a few excellent examples of this *ecological* stance) and, at the same time, occasionally subjectivises or at least sublimises the non-human. She also blurs the lines between the intimate and the public, as every time we try to interpret this collection through one or the other, we find ourselves in a predicament, realising the insufficiency of our interpretation, we can find a hint of a comment, perhaps meant for the whole world, but in those same words we can recognise a diary of a wholly intimate story. Perhaps the most intriguing, however, is the undulation and slipping of meaning. The author achieves this, on the one hand, by frequently breaking up the verses (creating, each time, a kind of tension in meaning and a vagueness) and, on the one hand, by carefully, slowly measuring out the flow of words, establishing a wide field of open spaces, wide enough for the collection to be read unproductively through clear and unambiguous interpretations. The book of poetry resists the urge to say something more with each new word, each new verse. On the contrary, the opposite is true sometimes. – *From the foreword by Aljaž Krivec – To Overpower Air*



/ EXCERPT /

the river:

it has dammed me completely

your old body

is

too fragile for me to wrap my tongue around it

your hands too
shaky too

reach out into words and
stay there otherwise

than in the photos: the blurred
stains incapable of clutching at

the other hands

just softening
the sharp edges of the light on the creases of
the blanket

the lake, it has spilt
her yet again : no-one

to walk around her, let
alone sink into her, as durable
as plastic, to turn
the stones on the bottom

the lake
she will not dry up again : all

thick, motionless, the light

is reflecting from her—the gray
heron waiting for the prey

on the shore, unable to tell itself from its
reflection

wrapped into the elusive and fleeting foam

: the brute force

shifting borders
all the time

shores

Translated by
Andrej Pleterski

BORUT KRAŠEVEC

Agni



Photo by: Martie Stajs

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Borut Kraševc was born in 1973 in Ljubljana. He studied comparative literature and Russian language and literature but did not complete his studies. A professional translator from Russian since 1999, he has translated nearly 50 books. He translates the classics, contemporary prose, drama, philosophy, literary theory and poetry. He received the 2004 award for best young translator for his translation of the novel *Chapayev and Void* by Victor Pelevin and the 2014 Sovre Award for his translation of the novel *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf* by the same author. He began writing fiction in 2017 – starting with prose miniatures and short stories, which were first published in the *Literatura* magazine in 2018 and later included in the author's 2020 debut novel *Agni* that won the award of the Slovenian Book Fair for best first book that same year.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The novel *Agni* is a love drama, interweaving three narratives: that of an animal (a female rabbit), a (pubescent) girl and three adults (three adult characters entangled in a love triangle – the girl's father, mother and aunt). The external framework of the novel is the life of the doe from the day of its birth to the day of its death. Not counting the main topic of "Eros and Thanatos", which is omnitemporal, the novel is most current in the here and now because of the animal topic that is not considered in a trendy manner but instead juxtaposes the traditional perceptions of a modern urban man about animals (animal = house pet) with the world of livestock and wild animals that are not sterilised and eliminated from the fight for survival. However, the novel's main quality is not its description of the animal world as such, but the intertwinement of all three narratives that are reflected in one another, give meaning to one another and expose, from their unexpected points of view, taboo topics such as incest, cannibalism and polygamy. The author uses animal scenes to describe the processes that take place deep inside a person's head, which could not be accessed through ordinary psychologization. On the compositional level, shifts in narration toy with the reader's expectations, producing a strong effect. Another important quality of the novel is its innovative language (in terms of its lexis and syntax) and narrative and technical procedures (in terms of perspectives), the prevalent mechanism being a variety of defamiliarizations.

/ EXCERPT /

Night-time. A bench in an unlit area of the park. The entire scene is recorded by a thermographic camera that uses infrared radiation and shows what the eyes cannot see – warmer objects appear lighter on the screen. The sound is turned off.

First nothing. Then after a long time, a small red stain hops into view from the left, probably some rodent, and starts wandering about. It stands up for a moment and remains still, as if it saw or heard something. Something to the right seems to have caught its attention. It comes down to all fours, hops away behind a tree and disappears from view.

A few seconds later, two human figures appear, a man and a woman. All the exposed parts of their bodies are bright, especially their eyes, glowing as if they each had a sun glaring inside their heads. They sit on the bench, the man putting his left arm over the woman's shoulder. His mouth shines and sparkles – he must be talking. He pulls her closer and kisses her, but she does not respond, just sits there staring into space. She seems to be hesitating. Finally, her back moves away from the rest where his arm is and starts saying something. She talks for a long time, then

covers her face. Drops fall between her fingers, burning bright as if on fire. As they fall on the ground, you inadvertently remember the sizzling sound of the drops of burning plastic on a stick burned over the fire.

he man jumps up and walks nervously up and down a few times. His face is shining. He bends down to her and starts telling her something, gesticulating like a fakir with fires of hot, probably sweaty hands. She listens in silence, leaning back slightly, as if afraid to get burned by the fire blazing before her. She shakes her head every once in a while, then lifts her hands up to her face. His mouth turns bright red – he must have screamed, spitting out something hot. Saliva or something? Words are not so hot and flammable. Or are they?

The spectator behind the tree trunk becomes agitated, climbing the tree in a few hops and halts.

The man grabs the woman by the shoulder and turns her towards him: look at me! She shivers slightly. He grabs her other shoulder, as if trying to calm her, but he does not calm her; instead – trying to tell her something – he starts shaking her even more: he *shaaaaakes* her so much that the woman seems to be nodding, but when he stops it becomes clear that she is not.

She stands up and makes two quick steps to leave but he – where are you going?! – grabs her by the hand, pulls her back and sits her down on the bench. The woman takes a clumsy fall, trying to protect her face with her hands, but the man does not hit her, he sits down with her, clearly trying to calm her down and embrace her. She struggles and pushes him away. During the struggle, they fall on their backs, taking the bench down with them.

The spectator jumps from one branch to another, higher up.

After a short scuffle on the ground, the man is on top. He sits astride her, pressing down her wrists. He tries to kiss her, but she shakes her head and apparently starts screaming – some sort of sparks are flying from her mouth. He tells her something, looking back, as if he is afraid that people will hear her, but she keeps on screaming and screaming and does not stop. He tries to cover her mouth with the palm of his hand, but she wrenches herself free and goes on screaming. Then he slaps her, twice, three times, but when even that fails, he starts feeling around in a panic, picking something up from the grass. His hand draws a quick burning circle in the air, nearly touching her head, which finally makes the woman calm down. The man sits there panting – pink clouds coming from his mouth. Cooling as they escape his mouth, there seems to be one single, pulsating cloud. There is nothing coming from her mouth, but a red stain forms on the temple, oozing.

The woman lies still; she appears to be dead, but that is utterly impossible: the only dead thing is the dark grey bench, the dark grey ground, even the dark grey grass and trees, but a person burning so brightly in the night cannot be dead. Only a warm-blooded and fully alive being can glow so brightly. Nothing on the screen emits as much light as the motionless body – not counting the mysterious spectator and, of course, the man who is as bright as a volcano that is about to erupt. The man stands over the woman, looking at her. Suddenly a red spot appears in his crotch, spreading quickly through his groin. Jesus, what is that?! The man falls down on his knees, his hands pressing against the floor, and starts spitting fire. He spits and he spits, turning into a fakir again, only, unlike the fakir's, his fire does not go out immediately but spills over the floor like lava. Everything seems to have come out.

Translated by
Špela Bibič



JANA PUTRLE SRDIĆ

Eye for an Eye a Crow

Oko očesu vrana. Center za slovensko književnost, 2019



Photo by: Nada Žgank

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jana Putrle Srđić, poet and intermedia art producer, author of articles on emerging art and translator of poetry, lives and works in Ljubljana. She has published four poetry books: *Kutine* (Quincies, 2003), *Lahko se zgodi karkoli* (Anything Could Happen, 2007), *To noč bodo hrošči prilezli iz zemlje* (This Night the Beetles Will Come Out of the Ground, 2014) and *Oko očesu vrana* (Eye for an Eye a Crow, 2019). The last two books were nominated for the Jenko Award and the last one also for the Veronika Award. Her translated poetry works appear, among other, as: *Puede pasar cualquier cosa* (Buenos Aires, 2011), *Este poema lo paga el pez* (Madrid, 2015), *În noaptea asta gândacii vor ieși din pământ* (Bucharest, 2015), *Anything Could Happen* (New York, 2014), and *Diese Nacht kommen Käfer aus der Erde gekrochen* (Ljubljana, 2018). She has read her poetry in South America, Cuba, Canada, USA, Great Britain, Egypt, Russia and all across Europe.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The space of the fourth poetry collection by Jana Putrle Srđić, *Eye for an Eye a Crow*, is decentralised and dehumanised¹; instead of concentricity or categorisation (in the spirit of the Enlightenment), it represents a fusional, fluid reality in which no living entity is attributed anything – least of all centrality, anchorage or even superposition; it is in this sense that the dehumanisation of space established by *Eye for an Eye a Crow* becomes apparent; the collection moves along the lines of object-oriented ontology (technology and objects that appear in the collection are beyond the concept of separation between “nature” and “culture” or even “animate” and “inanimate”) and sensitively follows the logic of non-human; all entities in the collection live in transition, in relation to other; no entity exists in separation from everything else; the life experiences of a crow, a person, plants – merge through chemical reactions that “humanity” never stops in any way – at best, the concept of humanity, as seen through the traditions of the Enlightenment and Humanism, dissolves before the reader’s eyes. The processivity, communication (perhaps “only” on a biochemical or atomic level) and emergence of experiences take place within each entity and in their interactions with one another. Through this emergence and constant changing of participants inhabiting its space, the collection carries within itself the awareness of the simultaneousness, concurrence of these countless processes, experiences, aspects which, in co-existence (and co-disappearance) shape this multi-prismatic reality. But if the participants in a particular space keep changing, no experience can be expressed through a single prism – such an attempt would represent a rigorous hierarchisation and suppression of all other co-dependent processes and experiences; this brings us to the point of recognising the inability of total representation of such a reality as – if processivity and communication are constant – this reality keeps changing; instead, the collection depicts this very feature, this constant shaping of space of the collection and its participants. The tissue of the poetry collection is thus in the language that is full of shifts (from one experience to another, from one entity to another), fragmentary descriptions and silences (which do not suggest an end to experiences; rather their duration/incompleteness). In this constant co-dependence, *Eye for an Eye a Crow* is also a space of gentleness; the collection is free of hierarchies and its breathing, open structure, suggestive of this multi-prismatic existence opens up a space of free experiences in a constant and, in a way comforting, closeness. – *Anja Radaljic*



1 But this dehumanisation is free from judgement.

/ EXCERPT /

More Than a Pretty Girl

(To Ani D.)

for the woman who
clasped me to her
closeness i stick the needle
into a record
hoping
the circling
draws us into parallels

each one in its
own hub in two circles
in two solitary paths
around the chosen suns
we endure the rush of photons

to feel the transfer
of sound
between us
the pulsing
the kiss
the fist in the hair
the slap our trip

for the women who only
gave this
who did not
let us dance you
inside the leather
in the dark skin
to skin

we would always one
always the other leave
for another
to stand by them

we still resonate
in our trail running
in parallel each
on her track
each on her chosen hunt
we defend we pillage
a pair of she-wolves

and then at once
you stand by the door
telling me softly you will
travel me down
walk me on a chain
through ljubljana by night
in this wild
open air

Translated by
Andrej Pleterski
and the author

Into Webs

i calibrate the world against poetry
learning to say less

i try to descend the sentence
lead just like any fiction
through words into webs
through the levels of branches
among the leaves

trees feeling the beauty
arriving with explosive
force over septimus

the insane beauty and death
72 microseasons
and the seeming humlessness
of the universe expanding

toward these senses
every poetry stretches
every movie with its images
something spaceships
fly toward

PETER SEMOLIČ

Edges

Robovi. LUD Literatura, 2020



Photo by: Tihomir Pintar

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Semolič, born in Ljubljana in 1967, studied general linguistics and cultural studies at the University of Ljubljana. He is the author of fifteen independent books of poetry: *Tamarisk* (1991), *The Roses of Byzantium* (1994), *House Made of Words* (1996), *Circles Upon the Water* (2000), *Questions About the Path* (2001), *Border* (2002) *The Bog Fires* (2004), *A Space for You* (2006), *Ride Around the Sun* (2008), *Milky Way* (2009), *Poems and Letters* (2009), *Night in the Middle of the Day* (2012), *The Other Shore* (2015), *Visits* (a bilingual Slovenian-Italian collection), *Edges* (2020) and several collected works. He has received many prizes for his work, including the Jenko Award and the Prešeren Award. He also won the 1998 international Vilenica Crystal Award and the 2016 Velenjica Award – the Cup of Immortality for his extraordinary poetry oeuvre of the past decade. Peter Semolič also writes plays, children’s literature and essays and translates from English, French, Serbian and Croatian. He is the co-founder of the first online poetry magazine in Slovenia – Poiesis (<http://www.poiesis.si/>).

ABOUT THE BOOK

Edges is a mature poetry collection that is aware of the power of lyrical simplicity; the narrative poems often adopt a popular science discourse, an encyclopaedic narration, which imperceptibly metamorphose into an unexpected insight and offer a way into a person’s layered reality of the here and now. Similarly veiled is the topic behind the title of the collection, which explores *edges* in their cultural, social and historical heterogeneity; nevertheless, the book as a whole is driven by the awareness of the outer edge – where/when the question of life and death can no longer be avoided. This fundamental existential question often gains a socio-political edge in the poems or it can remain fully private or reach for the extreme or the metaphysical; at best, all three levels intertwine and merge. The poems, often set at well-known locations throughout Slovenia, can go quite far back in time, thousands, even millions of years. This temporal hole generally helps one to see the current, temporary reality in a new dimension that is no longer as fixed, unique and temporary but becomes rather dynamic and, above all, more general. As if a poem, in fact, was (as one of Semolič’s favourite poets, Bataille, would say) a shift from a profane to a sacred time and often a more bearable confrontation with transience, finality, an existential crisis, pain, injustice. Even though the collection could hardly be considered as having social criticism for its agenda, it is a clear reflection of the present and the troubles of our world, particularly when the poems come from the poet’s personal position. In the friction between the experiential, imaginative, symbolic and (meta)physical, the poems quietly and persistently seek the remains of humanity, solidarity, genuineness and, last but not least, harmony (between partners). – *Diana Pungersič*



/ EXCERPT /

The Dreamcatcher

No longer does he dream. These are not my words.
The remains of the day are too pale and the old
traumas have lost their impact. I say:
The solar system travels the universe in the shape

of a spiral. Who knows where this train will be
in a thousand years and more? Dreams are essential,
just as food and art. No-one should be
persuaded about this. He keeps quiet; as for the sky,

he is only interested in the black holes and when
he will be connected to the fiber-optic cable.
I do not want to say “myself” or “a comfort zone”,
not even “a border” or “a transfer”. On the wall,

there is a dreamcatcher, which he bought in a shop
with ethnic supplies. It’s broken, he says,
or spent. I think to myself and do not say it:
What if our dreams have only been staged too?

The Hair

You let down your hair, and the history falls across
your shoulders, your back, your breast. Again, I am
a young lover having to persuade you that
his embraces are the sweetest, that his desire

is the strongest. You have not reached forty yet, but
you already consider cutting them off, to show
the world you are not available anymore. I sink
my face into them and breathe in the smell of the sea,

of the countries overseas. I do not want to own you,
yet I cannot but be jealous as you comb your hair
on the shore, of the men passing by
coming to a standstill. I know you are not your hair

and you can, in an instant, turn from a nymph
into a Medusa, before whom I petrify and seek
an apology for my behavior. But not now. I am
traveling across your hair as if across a carpet woven

from silk—I am old enough to know what awaits me
at the end of the journey, yet when I am finally there,
I will be there for the first time.

Translated by
Andrej Pleterski

MUANIS SINANOVIĆ

Fragile caravans

Krhke karavane. LUD Literatura 2020



Photo by: Simao Bessa

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Muanis Sinanović (1989), poet, writer and critic. He has published four poetry collections: *Štafeta okoli mestne smreke* (Relay Race around the City Spruce Tree, KUD FP, 2011, Best First Book Award), *Pesmi* (Poems, KUD FP, 2014), *Dvovid* (Double Vision, Litera, 2016) and *Krhke karavane* (Fragile Caravans, LUD Literatura, 2020). 2020 saw the publication of a selection of his poems in Serbian translation, entitled *Noćni nomadi* (Night Nomads, Dom kulture studentski grad, translated by Ivan Antić). Prior to that, Srbski kulturni center Danilo Kiš published a bilingual selection of his poems, *Izohipse* (Isohypsies, 2016, also translated by Ivan Antić). In 2017, Sinanović published the short novel *Anastrofa* (Anastrophe, Litera). He is currently working on a collection of essays entitled *Beat v svetu* (Beat around the World) to be released by LUD Šerpa. Sinanović writes critiques and essays on literature, film, music and theatre for LUD Literatura, portals Vrabec Anarhist and Odzven, Ekran and other publications. In 2019, his text on the poetics of Miklavž Komelj made the selection of the LUD Literatura competition in the category of essays on contemporary Slovenian literature. His poems have been translated into several languages and featured in international and Slovenian anthologies. He was a critic at the Pranger Festival, a journalist at Radio Študent and co-editor of the IDIOT magazine.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Muanis Sinanović is a poet and writer of the younger generation. He received an award for his debut poetry collection and has since become a prominent thinker. After somewhat formal experiments in his early works, Sinanović has found a mature voice in his new collection *Fragile Caravans*, whose refined and well-thought-out poetry explores the identity of an individual in a time of social change. His poetry is at once personal and socially critical, his voice is the voice of an individual as well as a member of a collective. This extremely powerful collection also discusses topics such as migration, religion and being different, which gives it an important social weight.

The poems contain various toponyms and paint the imagery of the Balkans and Central Europe and the relationship between them in a hyper-globalised 21st-century world. They study the dissolution of tradition in modernity and modernity in tradition from the perspective of a Millennial subject who moves in an atomised society between the current communities, transient ties and the legacies of past generations. Links are formed between glimpses into an urban technicised life and archetypal images. Rooted firmly in their own era are metaphysical features and quests in which poetry is considered a privileged medium. The collection therefore gives a full sense of the world from a particular perspective that can be read through various lines. The book won the Kriteško Sito Prize bestowed by the Slovene Literary Critics Association.

/ EXCERPT /

October

The winds caught in fervid, incomprehensible drama. Somewhere above the ground, just like us. Swept-up feathers. The birds have flown away. We've been quiet these evenings. The screen flickers with the secrets of distant, always queasy strangers. We sleep in other rooms, the TV sets are switched off. We imagine the people on our

screens have red faces. We eavesdrop on the swoosh of their blood. During the day we quietly sit by the windows and on balconies. Now and then a leaf lands in our space. Like a message in a bottle.

It's a small town, but even through the night rain we listen to the revving cars on their way to the cities. To the cold villages, or perhaps the coast. We have no land of our own, yet we persist here. Processing our solitude.

We remember the times we have and haven't lived through. Memories are delicate herbs. We reforest ourselves. Lush or withered, we shall hum in the wind. Weeds, too, will have their place in our midst. That's the way it is. The way it is.

Our thanks is bitter stuff. And there is no rapture in us. We leave it to the wind, the TV, the rain, the cars. We listen, amazed.

Solitude of Clouds

Be like a cloud in this town;
a cloud that darkens the streets.
Europe is over by the springs, lonely
trees and hands quick to reach for the knives.
You see, behind your eyelids, that sleepy morning
frowned at the clumsy probes of other creatures.
You see, real solitude is the solitude of clouds.
When Hassan in Berlin serves you
a falafel, the spirit pushes Hegel away.
You see, when a basketball swishes
past the block and through the net,
the American continent inches a bit
closer. You see, the poets you hated are
now keepers of the treasure chests. Why not clear
a small park in London for a carousel and bury
a few chests there?
Why not sit on the bench with Karmen
and talk till the end of the day?
She would evaporate and your old magazine
would lie open. Her outline would stay there
forever. And its inability to be removed
would feed Europe's tragedy.

Translated by
Mirza Purić

SUZANA TRATNIK

A Pontoon Bridge

Pontonski most, Beletrina, 2020



Photo by: Nina Ferkolj

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Suzana Tratnik (1963) has published seven collections of short stories: *Pod ničlo* (Below Zero, 1997), *Na svojem dvorišču* (In One's Own Backyard, 2003), *Vzporednice* (Parallels, 2005), *Česa nisem nikoli razumela na vlak* (Things I've Never Understood on the Train, 2008), *Dva svetova* (Two Worlds, 2010), *Rezervat* (Reservation, 2012), and *Noben glas* (No Voice, 2016), five novels: *Ime mi je Damjan* (My Name is Damian, 2001), *Tretji svet* (Third World, 2007), *Tombola ali življenje!* (Bingo or Life!, 2017), *Norhavs na vrhu hriba* (Madhouse on the Hilltop, 2019) and *Pontonski most* (A Pontoon Bridge, 2020), a children's picture book *Zafuškana Ganca* (The Hany Rattie, 2010) as well as a monodrama *Ime mi je Damjan* (My Name is Damian, 2002) and a radio play *Lep dan še naprej* (Have a Nice Day, 2012). She has also published four non-fiction books on the lesbian rights movement, literature and activism. In 2007 Tratnik received the national Prešeren Fund Award for Literature, in 2017 the Novo mesto Short Award for best short story collection, and in 2018 the Desetnica Award for best children's or YA work. Her books have been translated into more than twenty languages.

The two central themes of Tratnik's fiction are destinies of people living on the margin of today's urban world and growing up in the 1960s and 1970s Yugoslavia.

A selection of Tratnik's stories was published in the English translation in *Games with Gre-ta and Other Stories* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2016).

ABOUT THE BOOK

The central character in the novel *A Pontoon Bridge* is the eternal student Jana, who lives on the existential edge in the raving 1990s Slovenia, a time of political change in a newly independent country and a time of legitimation of hate speech against minorities. Though very well educated, Jana and her friends largely live on the margins – because of their sexual orientation, poverty or other prejudice – and some even fall over the edge. After a difficult breakup with drug addict Simi, Jana must face her demons and anxiety attacks all on her own. When she starts going to therapy, she begins to see her life as a pontoon bridge, provisional and temporary. Taking stock of her wild recent past, she tries to build and bring meaning to the present, although she keeps worrying how strong this bridge of hers really is. With fun times left in the past, Jana is acutely aware of her loneliness, both on a personal and on a social level. As she searches for her place in the world, she comes to realise that her circle of lesbian friends is the only community where she feels herself.

A Pontoon Bridge is a radical book that features vivid and candid descriptions along with slang typical of the era, recalling the 1990s Slovenia that gave birth to the LGBT community and the alternative squat of Metelkova. A time when rave parties abounded and club life was imbued with activism and rebellion.

/ EXCERPT /

1. You Need To Get Angry!

It began just as she reached the Karlovška Avenue Bridge. A very inconvenient place, if any place was convenient for a panic attack. The bridge was still some way from the Rudnik post office, where she was headed, and almost equally as far from the town centre, where she had walked from. It made no sense for her to go back to the centre, where there was nowhere she could take refuge and would still have a long trip back to her flat in the Šiška district.

So she just stood on the bridge. Panicking. Nervously, she rummaged for tissues in her backpack, which possessed not a single inner pocket – although tissues were entirely useless. She

didn't usually sweat enough for there to be anything to wipe, but at least they offered her a small chance of distraction.

A very small chance, but still.

Finding a tissue permeated with bits of tobacco and detritus, she scrubbed her nostrils, which were already dried out from her short, spasmodic breaths. She rubbed doggedly at her nose, forehead, neck and palms, although it was only her palms that were sweating. She tried to think about deep, regular breathing, the kind that calms you and supposedly can even change your outlook on life and the world – although she hadn't yet reached that point.

Inhale! First the abdomen, then the ribcage, and finally, ever so slightly, the collarbone too rises. Exhale! The collarbone lowers, the ribcage contracts and the abdominal muscles pull in. (Other sequences are also possible, depending on your school of breathing.) After two or three deep breaths she started feeling dizzy, which only aggravated her feeling of distress. Neither the tissues nor the deep breathing had been able to distract her. The pulsing thoughts of alarm were infinitely stronger than anything else. Even the most banal of them drowned out the noise of the cars in the road and latched itself on to her.

She knew very well how things would likely play out: she had to isolate the positive thoughts, prise them out somehow, sort them from the negative ones, and spur them on. But the moment she prised out some positive thought, it would prove to be nothing but the sorry mask of its negative twin. So she'd rather just leave her thoughts alone in the hope that they would leave her alone. But it's not easy bargaining with thoughts, especially when they're yours. As soon as they realized she was trying to pull a fast one on them – and they always realized this right away – some thought would present itself as life-saving and thus outsmart her in her trickery.

So it was that Wednesday afternoon, when she started panicking on the Karlovška Avenue Bridge, that she suddenly remembered that her old professor from the university lived nearby. This professor had invited her over for coffee some five or six years ago when she needed a recommendation for the international summer school. As they drank coffee, smoked and gossiped about the cut-throat students in her class, she was amazed to discover that she'd be getting a recommendation from a person who was actually on her side. The woman had gone out of her way for her because she genuinely wanted to support underprivileged students. That was also when she realized with perfect clarity that she possessed no privilege at all, not even a little bit. If lack of privilege in itself is what gives you the privilege of a favourable recommendation, then you really are beyond help.

Fucking affirmative action. And yet you need it.

After that, having coffee with Tamara at her home had become one of her few customary visits, although it happened no more than two or three times a year. So in fact she'd be able to ring the professor's doorbell even unannounced – certainly in an emergency, the life-saving thought cajoled her – and tell her she wasn't feeling well. Or she could make something up, say she just happened to be in the neighbourhood. They'd have coffee and split a bottle of beer, and maybe then she'd feel easier. Afterwards, Tamara would ring her from time to time to ask if she was feeling better, if she was getting enough rest, if she still had anxiety attacks, if she wanted to talk to anyone. And then she could never visit her again, not even in the most dire emergency – she'd feel too ashamed. Lack of privilege and psychological problems, we all know where they lead. (*The Road of No Return* – sounds like a movie title.) Better to keep quiet; after all, who in their right mind would still stick up for a university dropout who had clearly abandoned her degree ages ago, despite being so damn clever? What would be her chances of getting any future recommendations from that professor (not that she'd still need them)? And what would happen to her herself, if she so frivolously wasted a chance for help in a truly critical emergency? That life-saving thought could not have been more deceptive.

It was best to walk on. The Rudnik post office couldn't be more than fifteen minutes away. And who knows when she would next leave her flat, and then it would be even harder to get to the post office – it would be a far longer journey than now because she would first have to go from Šiška to the centre; she would basically have to start from scratch, knowing there was more than 100 per cent probability of the attack repeating itself at this very spot. And most importantly, her thoughts didn't give a damn whether she stood here on the bridge or kept walking; the only difference was that if she kept walking she'd get to the post office today. A fairly significant difference! She stuffed the tissue in the pocket of her jeans, slipped on her backpack, and marched on determinedly, almost furiously. Now she was angry. Yes, anger was a good thing; that's what everybody said. 'Jana, you need to get angry! You need to learn to express your anger!'

Translated by
Rawley Grau

MAJA VIDMAR

Phenomena

Pojavi, LUD Literatura 2020



Photo by: Andraž Gombac

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maja Vidmar was born in 1961. She comes from Nova Gorica and lives in Ljubljana as a freelance writer. Up to date she has published nine collections of poetry (*Distances of the Body* 1984, *Ways of Binding* 1988, *Urge of Direction* 1989, *At the Base* 1998, *Presence* 2005, *Rooms* 2008, *How You Fall in Love* 2012, *A Minute Head Start* 2015 and *Phenomena* 2020). Her book *Presence* won the Jenko Award, the Prešeren Foundation Award and the Vienna scholarship as part of Grosser Preis für osteuropäische Literatur. She also won the award Premio Letterario Internazionale Trieste Scritura di Frontiera dedicato a Umberto Saba 2007 and her book *Rooms* received the award Nagrada mreže gradova književnosti 2009. Eight of her books of poetry have been published abroad: *Leibhaftige Gedichte* (Droschel, Graz, 1999, translated by Fabjan Hafner), which won the award Hubert-Burda-Stiftung für junge Lyrik, *Akt* (Meandar, Zagreb, 1999, translated by Radoslav Dabo and Branko Čegec), *Molitva tijela* (Tugra, Sarajevo, 2007, translated by Josip Osti), *Ge-genwart* (Edition Korrespondenzen, Vienna, 2007, translated by Fabjan Hafner), *Način vezivanja* (Udruženje Književnika Srpske, Banja Luka, 2009, translated by Zdravko Kecman), *E il mondo si scolora* (Ibiskos Editore, Empoli (Fi), 2010, translated by Jolka Milič), *Izby iné básne, Literarná nadácia Studňa* (JSKD, Bratislava – Ljubljana 2015, translated by Stanislava Chrobáková Repar) and *The Gift of Delay* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2018, translated by Andrej Pleterski). Her works have appeared in numerous foreign and Slovenian magazines and anthologies.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The poetry of Maja Vidmar is a poetry of questions, which the poet poses time and time again in extremely precise and convincing poetic terms. Such are the questions that appear in the last, separate part of the collection, entitled Child. Not some outsider but an inner child that does not offer only innocence and a sense of wonder at the world (as we have seen, this comes from our transformations as adults when we become aware of our internalised social inhibitions) but weights us with its actions, emotions, fears. The poems pose questions that make us uncomfortable, at the very least, as they address various topics that we have buried inside us. It therefore comes as no surprise that the collection ends with the poem Interview, which explores the topic of death, fear of death and one's helplessness to influence, in any significant way, the "countdown" that begins when we are born. The poems in the collection *Phenomena* are scary, creepy, filled with pain but never pathetic; they are also beautiful, not only in the rare, warm glimpses of memory, but also as a whole. However, they become beautiful only after they help us fully deal with the dark questions about our existence and actions in the world. That is when the phenomena – from the stick and the animals through empty squares and the frozen lake to the child within us – glow in their quiet, distant beauty that is inherent to them yet enlightening to us. – Peter Semolič



/ EXCERPT /

A Child I

She surely is a child.
At times, she's three
or even less, at times
six or even eight.

She has the power of a horse
pulling two wagons,
harboring no doubt
about needing to pull them.

She imagines herself
as a large dead
and decaying mass.
She has no other idea.

Yet she feels herself to be
something small,
naked and exposed.
So she prefers not to feel.

She runs her own
concentration camp
she's locked in.
She manages the world there.

She paints fences, picks up
candy wrappers, divides people,
in general terms,
into the good and the bad guys.

She disables the bad guys,
distributes goods
and cleans the oceans.
Then she's tired.

Translated by
Andrej Pleterski

A Child II

She hates God.
If God had a target in the middle
of his forehead, she'd strike him
one-handed and blow
the smoke from the barrel.

This shouldn't have happened to her,
every child knows it,
but it did, and it keeps happening
to others also, again and again.

So nobody should say to her
that anything is arranged,
that anything is in place
and meaningful because it's not,
any child can see this.

If only animals or trees
at least were exempt from this,
at least men or women,
or old people when the skin is thin.
Children, or toddlers at least.

It was her choice.
She could hate people
and stay alone in the world,
yet being like this, godless,
she still can't join them.

Slovenia – Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2023

The project will be carried out by the Slovenian Book Agency

Slovenia's appearance as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair (18-22 October 2023) was formally sealed in early 2018 when intensive preparations for this role began. The presentation of the Republic of Slovenia as guest of honour at the most important international book fair is significant both from the point of view of long-term visibility and positioning of Slovenian authors and Slovenian creativity in the field of books in German-speaking countries as well as from the point of view of a greater recognition of Slovenian creativity and cultural and economic potential.

A successful performance of countries as guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair substantially increases the number of publications of showcased authors in German-speaking countries and other book markets. At the same time, the performance enhances the cultural and tourist potential of the country and contributes to economic growth and the development of cultural and service activities and creates new employment opportunities.

In addition, Slovenia will be Guest of Honour at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2024 as well. The Bologna Children's Book Fair is, beside the book fair in Frankfurt, the international platform at which the greatest number of Slovene publishers from the field of children's and young adult literature are presented, either independently or as part of the Slovene national stand.

The aims of the Guest of Honour programme are to support the publishing industry and cultural institutions of the selected country in order to integrate them internationally and thus increase visibility of its literature and the number of translations from its language. From the point of view of the book industry the programme leads to an increased trading of copyright and helps publishers develop international contacts even after the end of the fair and the country's role as Guest of Honour. The entire book industry benefits from the additional attention the showcased authors receive due to the increased promotion and presence of publishers at the world's largest book fair.

Guest of Honour role brings many benefits for foreign publishers of Slovenian literature – from new financial mechanisms for support of translations to highly increased visibility of the authors and their translated works.

More: www.jakrs.si/en/

Co-financing Publications of Slovenian Authors in Foreign Languages

The Slovenian Book Agency (JAK)

Founded in 2009, the Slovenian Book Agency (JAK) is a government institution that deals with all actors in the book publishing chain, from authors to publishers and readers as well as promotes Slovenian literature abroad.

Subsidies for translation and publication costs of Slovenian authors

The main form of international promotion is the co-financing of translations from Slovenian into other languages, including adult fiction, children's and young adult fiction and essayistic and critical works on culture and the humanities, theatre plays and comics. Applicants can only be legal persons (publishing houses, theatres), registered abroad. The subsidy covers up to 100% of the translation costs and maximum of 10.000 €.

In light of Slovenia's role as a Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2023 a special call of first translations and reprints into German language has been introduced in 2017. This subsidy can cover up to 50% and up to 11.000 € of all types of costs connected to translation, publication and promotion costs.

Next deadlines:

Spring 2022 (publications in German language)

Spring 2022 (translations into all other languages)

Subsidy for printing costs

As of 2020 the Slovenian Book Agency also supports printing costs through a separate call for proposals and contributes up to 70% of printing costs for all the above mentioned works.

Applicants can only be publishing houses, theatres, registered abroad. Grants cannot be awarded retroactively.

Next deadline: Spring 2022

Mobility grants for Slovenian authors

Another form of international promotion is the public tender for mobility grants. The applicant can be a Slovene author (or translator, editor, rights agent) who has been invited to a literary or industry event abroad. The application must be enclosed with an invitation to and the program of the event. The subsidy covers up to 100% of eligible travel expenses and up to 1.200 €.

There are two calls per year covering trips throughout the year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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