

Peter Svetina (born 1970) is a writer, poet, translator, literary historian and theoretician. His work is aimed at adults, children and youth. His work has been translated into multiple languages, including English, German, Korean, Polish, Lithuanian and Spanish. His opus cannot be put into any mould, for among his works you can find various literary genres and types, so it is no wonder that he has received a range of awards, especially in the area of children's and youth literature. There is, however, one common factor – humour.

Peter is also an exceptionally prolific author, in the past 20 years having published more than 30 books – the great majority children's books. The books highlighted below are each in their own way inspiring for adults, too.

*What are you? Poet, writer, teacher, translator? What should we write? Alpinist. Write Alpinist.\**

\*from the poem "Alpinist," Peter Svetina: *A Slow Afternoon*. Cankarjeva založba 2011

PETER SVETINA

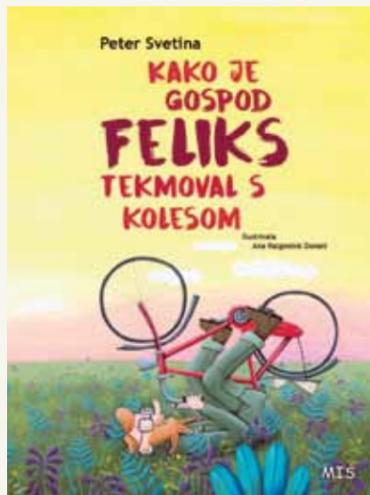
## Outside any mould

KATJA STERGAR



**Prayers from the Steps – Illustrated by Ana Zavadlav, Mladinska knjiga 2016**

This tiny collection of poetry is made up of little prayers by a child who is creating a dialogue with God, and asking about faith and trust. The prayers reveal who and what are important in the child's life, what worries or makes the child happy. The prayers are thus a chance to enter into the child's intimate world. Even though this collection contains a lot of humour and joy, the overriding sense in the book is one of warmth, which is also the guiding light for the outstanding illustrations.

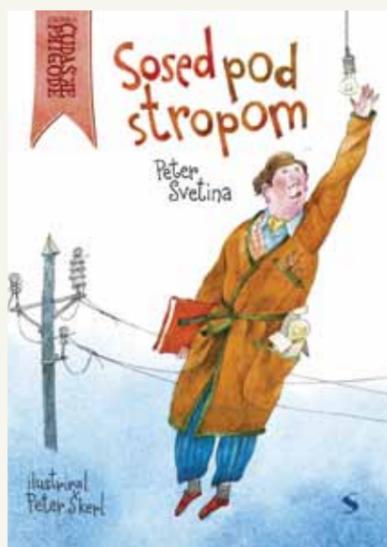
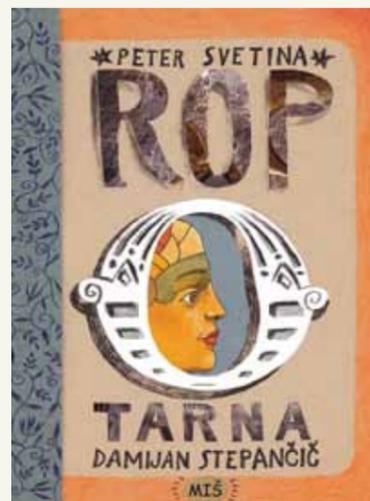


**How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race – Illustrated by Ana Razpotnik Donati, Založba Miš 2016**

Social expectations are high, you have to be the best, the fastest, you need to win. What else can a person do in a race?! We encourage even the youngest children to be competitive, but then wonder why people forget about compassion and become increasingly narcissistic and egoistic. Felix competes in a race and is winning, but at the same time he sees the world, drinks lemonade and soaks his bottom in a pond. He is winning in a way that we should all appreciate. Especially since the illustrator succeeded in finding the right idiom and appropriate tempo for this beautiful world of ours.

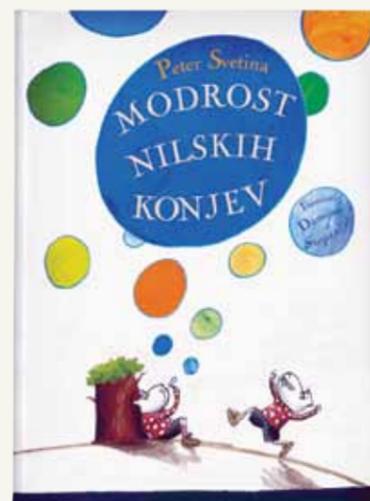
**The Lumber Room – Illustrated by Damijan Stepančič, Založba Miš 2012**

A collection of short and long tales, poems and miniature texts, this is a veritable lumber room. In all the texts the writer plays with language, rhythm and forms, he plays with the reader’s anticipation, tests the reader’s mind and stimulates curiosity. The illustrator does the same thing on the visual level, since each page is unique and full of surprises. Both writer and illustrator retain their characteristic wit and in so doing enrich each other.



**Neighbour under the Ceiling – Illustrated by Peter Škerl, Sodobnost Internacional 2016**

In this book all the craziest stories are even crazier, turned on their head, twisted, waggish and mischievous. When the neighbour dangles below the ceiling, only his neighbour can help him on the floor – or preferably she can fly up under the ceiling too. When there is no jam in the doughnut, it is clear that someone has eaten it, but it is not entirely clear that someone could move into the doughnut – just because of the jam. When Peter and Peter get together, the world is so colourful that sometimes the illustrations tell an entirely new story.



**The Wisdom of Hippos – Illustrated by Damijan Stepančič, DZS 2010**

Hubert and Marcel are hippopotami who do not take life as a bare fact, but come to know life, to taste it, reflect on it a bit, learn something about it – or perhaps not – and, especially, enjoy it with friends. The sentences, but also the stories as wholes, are clear and short, without any unnecessary baggage; they are full of dynamism, sometimes lyricism, while sometimes being concise, yet always full of humour and optimism. Occasionally the author deliberately foregoes adult auto-censoring and spices up the text here and there by depicting characters who are not always role models. This not only allows children to think independently, but encourages them by making them doubt, by giving them a chance to be wise.

A tale from the children’s book *The Wisdom of Hippos*.

**A Bundle of Rhymes** (translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Hippos Hubert and Marcel sat under the plane tree, throwing balls of mud into the water.

“I would really like to make a poem,” said Marcel.

“Can I help you?” asked Hubert.

“Do you even know what a poem is?” Marcel enquired.

“Hmm, I don’t think so,” Hubert replied.

Then they sat in silence and continued throwing balls of mud into the water.

“A poem is kind of – a bundle of rhymes,” Marcel suggested after a while.

“And what is a rhyme?” Hubert wondered.

“A rhyme is, for example, when you say, grass and hay – fresh veggies today,” Marcel explained.

“Which is the rhyme, the grass or the veggies?”

“Both are rhymes. Grass and hay rhymes with veggies today, get it?”

“Oh, now I see,” said Hubert.

At noon they stood up and said to the plane tree, “Well, goodbye and good luck.” And they left.

In the evening Hubert knocked at Marcel’s door.

“Look,” he said. “I don’t know whether you’ll like it, but I managed to make one of these poems.”

In his paws he held a bunch of grass and hay, a cabbage, two leeks, three carrots and some parsley. It was all tied into a neat bundle.

“You’re a real friend,” said Marcel and invited Hubert into the living room.

“I doubt anyone else could make such a good poem,” said Marcel when they had finished munching on the last sprig of parsley.

