

## ON DEKLEVA'S WORK

"Dekleva's body of poetry (and essays) is undisputedly one of the most philosophically grounded oeuvres in contemporary Slovenian poetry. Dekleva is the Slovenian champion of paradox, be it in prose poetry, free verse, stanzaic forms or traditional rhyme schemes."

*Dr. Vanesa Matajc, University of Ljubljana*

"All along, Dekleva's synthesis of grave fatality, fine irony, emotive suggestion, 'loquacious ambiguity' and jazz sequences tells the story of 'how man is adapting to the wondrous!'. "

*Matevž Kos on Jezikava rapsodija / Improvizacije na neznano temo (Loquacious rhapsody / Improvisation on an unknown subject)*

"Dekleva's poetry does not want – nor can it – offer any salvation 'models' or 'answers'. It hinders things from coming full circle. It cracks open the world, and with it a poetic language as possibility."

*Matevž Kos on Šepavi soneti (Limping Sonnets)*

"Dekleva's literary work achieves outstanding quality, yet due to its openness, paradoxicality and playfulness, it is difficult to capture it in a finite system. Neither the sum of features such as irony, humour, wit, contemplation, reflexivity, nor the combination of poetic and scientific character, concrete, passionate physicality and abstract metaphysics fully characterizes it."

*Dr. Irena Novak Popov, University of Ljubljana*

"The narrator and characters share an interest for those who have radically altered human self-comprehension and physical substance and instigated the dominion of internal division, (self)alienation, escapism, sensation, superficial pleasure, transgression, inescapability, crises or the 'schizophrenia of civilization'."

*Dr. Irena Novak Popov on Zmagoslavje podgan (The Triumph of Rats)*

"*Reševalec ptic* (Bird Saviour) is one of those works which are so, I cannot put it differently, noble, that they are heart-rending. This child, the bird saviour, is the embodiment of every man's destiny, condition humaine, mine, yours ..."

*Branko Gradišnik on Reševalec ptic (Bird Saviour)*

"*Izkušnje z daljavo* (Experience of Distance) tells of protagonists susceptible to a secret that surpasses them. At the same time, they are prisoners of tumultuous dynamics and superficiality of the contemporary world. The experience of distance is the experience of closeness, of delusive visions which the protagonist fall for ..."

*Nela Malečkar Izkušnje z daljavo (Experience of Distance)*

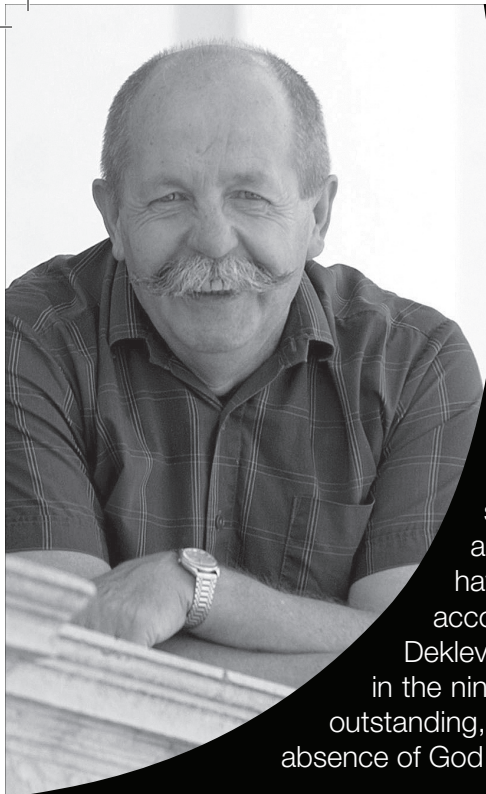
photo by Jože Suhračnik



MILAN DEKLEVA

"It seems to me that people are sensitive antennas, nets which capture waves of language and vibrations of the universe."

design | Studio U3nek d.o.o.



## MILAN DEKLEVA

(born in 1946 in Ljubljana) is a poet, essayist and novelist, who graduated in comparative literature from the University of Ljubljana and works as a journalist for several papers and the television. He has published twenty books of poetry and several plays, two books of short stories, two books of essays and five novels as well as many children's books and musicals. His works have been translated into over 10 languages. An accomplished jazz pianist and a former rugby player, Dekleva, an award-winning author, rose in prominence in the nineties. His poems and essays, which are formally outstanding, deal with the modern human condition in the absence of God.

Milan Dekleva has received several awards for his works: in 1989 the Prešeren Fund Award, in 1990 the Jenko Award, in 1995 the Župančič Award, in 1999 the Rožanc Award, in 2003 and 2008 the Veronika Award and in 2006 the Prešeren Award and Kresnik Award.

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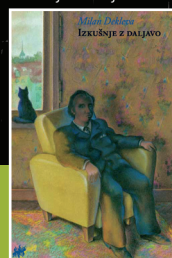
Milan Dekleva | Aljaževa 13 | 1000 Ljubljana | Slovenia

## SOME BOOKS BY MILAN DEKLEVA

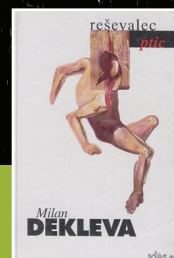
Audrey Hepburn, slišiš metlo budističnega učenca?



Izkušnje z daljavo



Reševalec ptic

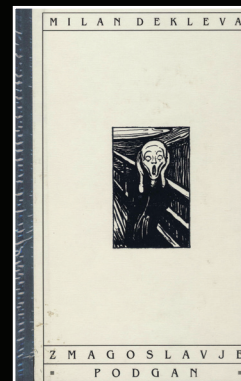


Sledi božjih šapic



## THE TRIUMPH OF THE RATS

Excerpts was translated by Michael Biggins



I'd left, but I hadn't arrived. I'd arrived no place, come to visit Josipina, my figmentary intended. I picked up my suitcase containing two folded suits, three shirts, underwear, the manuscripts of stories I'd started, your letters smelling of fresh bedsheets, the Sava, a sticky, gooey positive print of love, a stethoscope and a set of hypodermic needles. Seven years' worth of Vienna, a half-empty suitcase, an ailing stomach. I went toward the broad passageway, walked past the waiting rooms, headed toward the exit. Time was as thick as cheese. The funeral wouldn't be until Tuesday. Why go to Šmartna! A porter was leaning on his handcart, indifferently chewing on a toothpick with his yellowed teeth.

He lifted his cap, scratched at his scurfy mane and yawned. Seven years' worth of Vienna in too small a suitcase posed no interest to him. The suitcase twitters – did I mistakenly pack Selma's sparrow, Alois's hallucinations?

Tonight I'm not going anywhere, I decided. I'll visit Črt, I'll pay my dues at the Union Brewery cellar, support the Slovenian spirit industry. Stupid rabbit, what about Josipina and her parents? Aren't they waiting for you? I glanced over the signs on all the doors, found the right one and headed into the station master's office. A sniveling little drunk was staggering around at the door. The burst veins on his cheeks certified him as an old habitué of Ljubljana's taverns. He stopped me, grabbed me by the sleeve. The gentleman is a gentleman, he babbled, gentlemen help the unfortunate, gentlemen heed the call of Christian kindness. I would have given him something if he hadn't latched on and breathed his rancid breath all over me. As it was I shook him off and entered the office.

At a desk with a telephone and a chattering telegraph that was spewing a ribbon of punch-coded paper sat a tiny, clean shaven man in an immaculate uniform, his hair carefully combed over the crown of his head. Yes, he said politely. I hesitated, stopped halfway. I'm coming from Vienna, I explained – your little rabbit voice sounds false – could you help me? He stood up nervously. I need to get to Šmartna, I continued, my fiancée and her parents are waiting for me. I had finished. "And?" the station master's voice drew out. There's the train to Litija, which leaves in forty minutes. And another one late tonight, just a moment, let me check ... and he turned to face the train schedule hanging on the wall behind him.