

ON KRAMBERGER'S WORK

"Nataša Kramberger is undoubtedly an independent, powerful and above all free and unique voice that, while well-informed and adhering both to contemporary writing and literary tradition, has no qualms about forsaking these entirely if necessary."

Literatura magazine, Slovenia

"The novel [*Nebesa v robidah/Heaven in a Blackberry Bush*] convinces us that reading can be a pleasing experience on several levels, from the story to the language and symbolism of the narrative. Readers giggle at situations or get pulled into deep, mysterious contemplations on the living forces of nature, its natural course and the traps awaiting people who struggle with the banality of life."

Mentor magazine, Slovenia

"*Nebesa v robidah/Heaven in a Blackberry Bush* must be read. More than once. The novel is extensive and expertly written. It features much of what the so-called 'elite' literature, resting on its laurels, lacks: readability, humour, well-structured dialogues and the joy of life and literature."

Mentor magazine, Slovenia

"Nataša Kramberger makes us feel that writing is pure joy, a grand adventure anyone should experience."

Primorski dnevnik, Italy

photo by Danielle Croci

"So much imagination comes rushing to the surface, so many of your own doubts, questions, wishes and ideas, which all of a sudden appear on the computer screen. You are there to solve, underline, repeat and turn them upside down ..."

design | Studio Usnek d.o.o.

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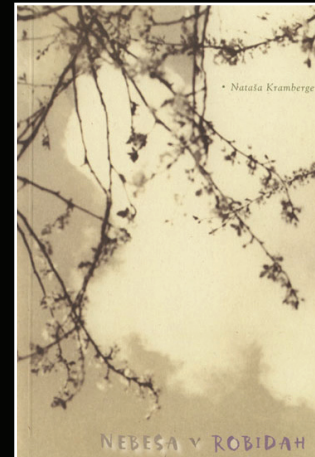
is one of the most promising authors in Slovenia.

Nataša was born in Maribor, the second largest city in Slovenia, in 1983. She spent her childhood in Jurovski Dol, a small village in the north-eastern part of the country, playing with pigs and cows on her grandmother's farm and enjoying the environment of the newly formed country – Slovenia. She later moved to the capital of Ljubljana, and continued her way to Utrecht, Milan and Berlin. She won the Slovenian young authors prize in 2006 and her book *Nebesa v robidah* (Heaven in a Blackberry Bush), a novel in stories, was nominated for the Kresnik Prize as Slovenia's best novel of 2008. In the same year Kramberger won the international short story competition A Sea of Words, which is sponsored by the Anna Lindh Foundation, and in 2009 she was awarded the Young Euro Connect prize for her essay *Dva tedna s smetarji* (Two Weeks' Tour of Waste).

Nataša Kramberger works as a freelance writer and journalist. She pens several articles, essays and columns for daily newspapers in Slovenia, Germany and Italy, writes literary texts for magazines and radios, and works on screenplays for documentary movies. In 2009 she founded the eco-art collective Green Central (www.greencentral.eu), where she tries to promote ecology and art. She lives in Berlin, but still fosters her love for Jurovski Dol and travels often.

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HEAVEN IN A BLACKBERRY BUSH



Nebesa v robidah (Heaven in a Blackberry Bush) is a novel in stories that come to life as raindrops, in medias res, passionately, wildly, sometimes peacefully, lazily, at other times euphorically. The novel surprises with a range of narrative styles and poetics, from situation comedy to countryside humour, from urban quarrels to post-war difficulties, along with wonderful love stories.

At 3 p.m. in Amsterdam, Jana, a young Slovene student, Bepi, an old Italian fisherman, and his sacred fish with a moustache and a white belly, meet at a flea market. Each of them carries a piece of the novel and these pieces intertwine wildly.

Jana, a girl from the Slovenian countryside and a student in Amsterdam, is forced to babysit a Chinese-Dutch child to make a living. Jana carries within her stories from the Slovenian countryside of the early 90s, from the period right after the declaration of independence and the middle of the harshest transitional rush. She was a member of the last generation to become Yugoslav Pioneers, at the same time bowing to the pressure of her schoolmates and signing up for religious education. The author plays humorously with the sacred/profane duality of the countryside, combining it with the reality of Amsterdam. We meet town clowns, the old grumpy post woman, the president of the local community, the troubadour Geordi, the Turkish neighbours, the Chinese grandmother of the child she is babysitting ... and Bepi. The old Italian fisherman, born sometime between the First and Second World War in Latisana, lost his parents under unclear circumstances and then went on to travel the world. Bepi's stories are tales of travels in South America, seeking gold, sacred fish and sacred rivers, Asia and the Mekong, Peruvian old ladies with long hair and a blonde he fell in love with in Amsterdam. Bepi is now in Amsterdam, taking care of his seven-year-old granddaughter, whom her mother simply shipped to him from India. And now?

When the young Slovene student Jana, the old Italian fisherman Bepi and his sacred fish with a moustache and a white belly, meet at a flea market in Amsterdam at 3 p.m., the consequences may be ENTIRELY UNFORSEEN.