

ON THE COLLECTION *POD NIČLO* (BELOW ZERO)

"Tratnik's stories reveal an impeccable feeling for invoking the emotions between those who love, those who fail to return love and those who have ceased to love. The stories display a great narrative force in all its nuances. The author's language gives rise to clear images, surprising associations and stylistic skill. Powerful metaphors, without the use of cheap tricks!"

Linda Stiff, Der Standard, 13 July 2002

ON THE NOVEL *IME MI JE DAMJAN*
(MY NAME IS DAMJAN)

"Damjan is independent enough to go off on his own with the symbolic act of renaming himself. Suzana Tratnik has written an exceptionally readable novel which, for a change, does not judge, but only documents. It is a fragment of time and space, written in a very witty and humorous style."

Varja Velikonja, Masinfo, nr. 20, 2001

"Much like the author's previous works, *Vzporednice* (Parallels) is a kind of a literary manifesto for an uncompromising stance and the necessity of parallel thinking that does not allow for moralising or pretending."

Alenka Vesenjāk, Delo – Polet, 29 December 2005

"Reading this fiction is like watching a B-side family album or misplaced photos from a private collection – images we have tried hard to erase, but which bear such an uncanny resemblance that we can no longer hide from them."

Urban Volk, Literatura, 2006

ON THE COLLECTION *ČESA NISEM
NIKOLI RAZUMELA NA VLAKU*
(THINGS I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD ON THE TRAIN)

"The stories are excellent and full of suspense: they depict both everyday and turning point events, or grotesque occurrences and incidents. The stories sometimes take the regular route, but every once in a while they take sudden, unexpected turns.

And yes – humour and irony. All aboard the Suzana Tratnik train!"

Zala Hriberšek, Narobe, March 2008

ON THE COLLECTION *DVA SVETOVA*
(TWO WORLDS)

"Psychological writing in the best sense of the word is indeed taking place. It subtly evolves throughout individual stories and surprises time and again with unexpected turns of events right to the very end."

Tina Kozin, Delo, 3 Februar 2010

photo by Jože Suhadolnik



SUZANA TRATNIK

design | Studio Učinek d.o.o.



SUZANA TRATNIK

Suzana Tratnik was born in 1963 in Murska Sobota, Slovenia. She obtained her BA in sociology from the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, and her MA in gender anthropology from the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis in Ljubljana. She lives in Ljubljana, working as a writer, translator and publicist. She published five 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 vlaku* (Things I've Never Understood on the Train, 2008), and *Dva svetova* (Two Worlds, 2010), two novels: *Ime mi je Damjan* (My Name is Damjan, 2001) and *Tretji svet* (Third World, 2007), the children's picture book *Zafuškana Ganca* (The Hany Rattie, 2010), as well as a monodrama and two treatises: one on the lesbian movement in Slovenia, and another on lesbian literature. She received the national Prešeren Foundation Award for Literature in 2007. Her books and short stories have been translated into over fifteen languages, while she has translated several books of British and American fiction, non-fiction and plays, including the works from authors such as Judith Butler, Adrienne Rich, Leslie Feinberg, Michael Cunningham, Jackie Kay, Mary Dorcey, Katy Watson, Mary Dorcey, Ian McEwan and Truman Capote.

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Česa nisem nikoli razumela na vlaku



ABOUT TRATNIK'S WORK

One could say that Suzana Tratnik's short stories fall into the category of "women's writing" or "lesbian writing", but this is not always explicitly so. She adheres to "universal writing", characterized by a broad and varied diapason of meanings. Tratnik reflects on reminiscences of her childhood and lesbian issues in order to outline the constant emotional, political, or social parallels and gaps between the worlds of children and adults, majorities and minorities, and those within the characters themselves. She also incorporates surrealist elements, making her prose diverse. In many of her stories depicting childhood, Tratnik uses morbid aesthetics to play with the concept of inherent evil. The pleasant surprise of this prose is that the author does not sentimentalize, because she knows what she wants and, in most cases, also gets it. The author claims that she is searching for the hidden or forgotten through the creative process, the stories we usually dismiss by saying: "Oh, but that's another story".

THIRD WORLD

Excerpt was translated by Michael Biggins



Utsa had just arrived in Geneva from New York on the first day of the conference. She had been studying in America for several years, and now she had a job, but her American coworkers seemed silly to her for constantly moaning and complaining about every little thing and saying, "I can't handle it." So, as a joke, Utsa would keep repeating, "I live in New York and I can't handle it." When she opened the door of the apartment of some schoolteacher from Geneva and (judging from the furnishings) Japan enthusiast who had invited her to stay there during the conference, I thought she was barely legal age. All of us were shocked when she told us she was twenty-eight. Then she gave a conspiratorial laugh and said that people from Asia aged differently than Caucasians.

Yuki immediately backed her up, avowing that they would never tell us Caucasians their secret, and then all the other Japanese women laughed. Even Meng from Bangkok must have been a member of this Asian camp, since she didn't look her twenty-five years, either, although, according to her, the source of her youthful appearance was sex. What followed this was a discussion and exchange of experiences lasting several hours, of the kind that was supposed to be so characteristic of quickly and newly assembled lesbian social circles. When was your first time, and with whom?