

Bee Curious

SLOVENIA'S BEST FOR YOUNG READERS



The Bee

A new day awakens as dawn is breaking,
the twitter of birds, a song in the making,
glistening dew drops on grass and each flower,
oh, where flies the bee at this early hour?

Collecting and sipping the blossom of spring,
sweet nectar to the whole hive busy bees bring,
from sunrise to sunset, all day without rest,
the bee's work is its freedom, its noble quest.

Anja Štefan
(translated from the Slovene by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Illustrations included on front cover poster by:

Jelka Reichman, from the book *Golden Bee* (*Zlata Čebelica*), an anthology, MKZ, 2008
Lila Prap, from the book *Why?* (*Zakaj?*), Lila Prap, MKZ, 2022
Tanja Komadina, from the *Notebooks and Gibberish Pads* (*Zvezek in brezvezek*), Nataša Konc Lorenzutti, Miš založba, 2018 Filipić,
Založba Pivec, 2022
Nataša Vertelj, from the book *Potato Ice Cream (Krompirjev sladoled)*, Vesna Radovanovič, Založba Pivec, 2022
Andreja Peklar, from the book *The Boy with the Red Cap* (*Fant z rdečo kapico*), Andreja Peklar, Inštitut za likovno umetnost, 2005
Andreja Peklar, from the book Bina Štampe Žmavc: *Čarimatka*, Založba Pivec, 2016
Peter Škerl, from the book *The Cow That Barked at the Moon* (*O kravi, ki je lajala v Luno*), Ida Mlakar Črnič, Miš založba, 2015
Igor Šinkovec, from the book *Have You Ever Tried the Moon?* (*Si že kdaj pokusil Luno?*), Boštjan Gorenc – Pižama, MKZ, 2019
Ana Zavadlav, from the book *Night Visitor* (*Nočni obisk*), Gaja Kos, MKZ, 2022
Huiqin Wang, from the book *Giuseppe Castiglione: A Painter in the Forbidden City* (*Giuseppe Castiglione: slikar v Prepovedanem mestu*), Huiqin Wang,
Morfemplus, 2015
Maša Kozjek, from the book *Mousey the Mouse and Whitemouse* (*Mišek Miško in Belamiška*), Feri Lainšček, MKZ, 2010
Peter Škerl, from the book *How to Hug a Hedgehog* (*Kako objeti ježa*), Jana Bauer, KUD Sodobnost International, 2021
Alenka Sottler, from the book *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes* (*Drobtine iz Mišje doline*), Anja Štefan, MKZ, 2017
Damijan Stepančič, from the book *The Ripening of Porcupins* (*Kako zorijo ježevci*), Miš založba, 2017
Matjaž Schmidt, *Childhood Is Poetry of Life, Poety Is Childhood of the World* (*Otroštvo je poezija življenja, poezija je otroštvo sveta*), Boris A. Novak,
The 1997 International Children's Book Day Message
Marjan Manček, from the book *Tinyspan* (*Pedenjped*), Niko Grafenauer, MKZ, 2013
Tanja Komadina, from the book *Snuffy and Hopsy* (*Gobčko in Hopko*), Žiga X Gombač, Miš založba, 2018
Zvonko Čoh, from the book *Merry Ella's Cake Shop* (*Slaščičarna pri veseli Eli*), Slavko Pregl, Miš založba, 2014
Ana Košir, from the book *Annie and the Rabbit* (*Anica in zajček*), Desa Muck, MKZ, 2016
Gorazd Vahen, from the book *Mishmash Bakery* (*Pekarna Mišmaš*), Svetlana Makarovič, MKZ, 2023

Bee Curious

SLOVENIA'S BEST FOR YOUNG READERS

JAK SLOVENIAN BOOK AGENCY

Društvo slovenskih pisateljev
Slovene Writers' Association

The main awards in the field of literature for young readers in Slovenia











The Večernica Award

The Večernica Award is presented for the best new literary work for children or young adults published by a Slovene publishing house or author in the past year. The award has been presented annually since 1997 by the Maribor newspaper and publishing house *Večer*, the journal *Otrok in knjiga* (Children and the Book) and the society for humanist issues Argo. The ceremony takes place in September at the traditional meeting of Slovene authors of children's and young adult literature Eye of the Word (Oko besede) in Murska Sobota.

The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award

The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award was founded by the Association for Press and Media at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. Its purpose is to promote creative Slovene picture books and at the same time contribute to an increased public interest in them. The award is aimed at Slovene picture book authors, illustrators and publishers. Since 2014, an accolade for innovation in the field of picture book production called New Paths (*Nove poti*) is also presented within the framework of the Kristina Brenkova Award.

The Desetnica Award

The Desetnica Award is presented by the Children's and Youth Literature Section at the Slovene Writers' Association in Ljubljana for best children's or young adult literary work. Only members of the Slovene Writers' Association are eligible for this award, which is bestowed annually for an author's work published over the last three years.

The Levstik Award

Mladinska knjiga Publishing House (MKZ) has presented the Levstik Award for best works of children's and young adult literature since 1949. Only books published by Mladinska Knjiga are eligible for the award. From 1949 to 1990, the awards were given every year, since 1990 it has been bestowed biannually. The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award was introduced in 1999.

The Golden Pear Quality Badge and Golden Pear Award

The Golden Pear Award is an accolade presented since 2010 by Pionirska - Centre for Children's Literature and Librarianship (Ljubljana City Library), since 2021 in partnership with the Slovenian Library Association. Excellent books for children and young adults are given awards in four categories: original fiction, translated fiction, original nonfiction, and translated nonfiction. All nominated books (reprints are also considered) receive a Golden Pear Quality Badge, the best one in each category is chosen for the Golden Pear Award.

Žiga X Gombač



Žiga X Gombač won recognition as a writer of historical and fantasy literature for young adults but has in recent years also added some interesting picture books to his portfolio. [...] the book *Snuffy and Hopsy* in an unobtrusive and gentle way addresses children's fears and other emotions. [...] The story is written with a deep understanding of the youngest readers and passes on a positive message – with a little effort you can find a solution for many a situation that puts you into a bad mood and despair. In a similarly tasteful way the author stresses the role of parents, in this case the father, in thoughtful and creative guidance for their children.

(Miš založba)

prose

Selected piece

***Snuffy and Hopsy* (*Gobčko in Hopko*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2018, illustrated by Tanja Komadina
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Snuffy and Hopsy



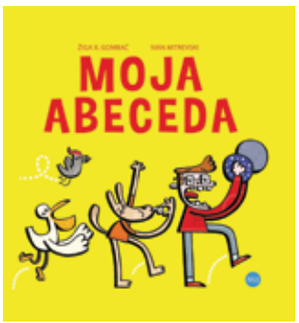
That spring day all was quiet on the way back from kindergarten.
Derek was quiet and Dad was quiet.
But it was not always like that.
Derek and Dad usually had fun on their way home from kindergarten.
Sometimes they would make up rhymes and look for dinosaur footsteps.
Sometimes they would count clouds and whistle with the birds.
But this particular afternoon Derek just stared straight ahead with a dour frown.
"Do you have a headache?" asked Dad.
Derek shook his head.
"Did I come too early and you didn't manage to finish your drawing?" Dad was concerned.
Derek shook his head.
"You didn't happen to fight with your friends, did you?" Dad persisted as they turned into the driveway in front of their house.
Derek shrugged his shoulders.
As they entered the flat, Dad slapped his hand on his head, "Oh, how forgetful of me! We were in such a hurry to get to kindergarten this morning that I forgot to tell you about something very important. I'm expecting a visit from a couple of good friends today."
Derek shrugged his shoulders once again.
"Actually, they're already here, in your room," Dad smiled. "You must come and meet them."
Derek wondered what Dad's friends were doing in his room. He was even more surprised when Dad suddenly, in mid-afternoon, lowered the blinds and switched on the table lamp, pointing it to the wall behind his bed.
"They're a little shy," Dad whispered.
Dad stood next to the lamp and stuck the palms of his hands in front of the light it emitted. He wiggled his fingers, then bent them, and two shadows appeared on the wall above Derek's bed. One of them looked very much like the neighbour's dog, the other like the rabbit Derek liked to cuddle whenever he visited Grandma's farm.
"Well, here they are," Dad said quietly. "Derek, say hello to Snuffy and Hopsy."
Derek smiled.
"You can confide in Snuffy and Hopsy," said Dad. "They're very good at keeping a secret. Isn't that so, friends?"
The shadows on the wall nodded.
"Do *you* sometimes talk to them as well?" asked Derek.
"Sure," Dad said sincerely.
"Do they ever fight?" Derek wanted to know.
"They can hear you," Dad smiled. "Only yesterday they argued about what kind of weather is better. Snuffy prefers rain but Hopsy prefers sunshine."

0–6

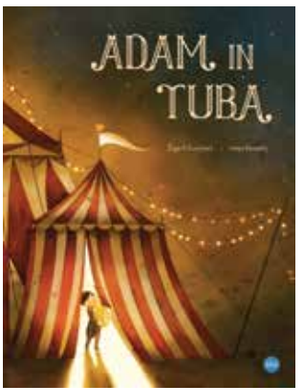


Snuffy and Hopsy

"Really?" Derek was amazed.
The two friends on the wall nodded again.
"Even though Snuffy and Hopsy are best friends, they do fight sometimes," said Dad.
"I had a fight with Andrew in kindergarten today," said Derek quietly. "He didn't believe that I'd built castle in the sandpit all by myself! I was really angry."
"Hmm," Dad grunted. "You don't say."
"Well, Snuffy and Hopsy then realised that rain and sunshine together create a rainbow. And they both like rainbows." said Dad. "They were instantly friends again."
"Snuffy and Hopsy, will Andrew and I soon be friends again?" Derek asked.
The two shadows nodded.
"What can I do so we're no longer angry at each other?"
"I know", Derek exclaimed a moment later. "Tomorrow, I can ask Andrew if he wants to build a castle in the sandpit with me. It'll be fun."
Dad smiled and nodded, and Derek said, "Snuffy and Hopsy, bye-bye and have fun! Dad, you can switch on the light now, I must get ready for tomorrow. I'll draw a plan of the sandcastle my friend and I will build at kindergarten. Can you help me?"
"I'd love to," said Dad.



My Alphabet



Adam and His Tuba

Awards in the field of children's literature

- Zlatirepec Award for Best Original Children's Comic Book: 2021 *Great'n'Famous: Great stories of celebrities*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2022 for *Adam and His Tuba*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2019 for *Snuffy and Hopsy* and *My Alphabet,* 2018 for *A History of Slovenia in Comics* (with Ivan Mitrevski), 2014 for *The Secrets of Young Lions*, *Živa and the Mystery of the Mummy*, *Živa and the Ancient Birthday*

Select Bibliography

- *Adam and His Tuba (Adam in tuba*), Miš založba, 2022, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Scampsters* (*Lumpsterji*), Miš založba, 2020, 9+, realistic fiction
- *The Treasure of the Pokljuka Dwarves* (*Zaklad pokljuških škratov*), Škrateljc, do 6 let, pripovedka, slikanica
- *Great 'n' Famous: Great stories of celebrities* (*Znamenitni: imenitne zgodbe znamenitih osebnosti v stripu*), Rokus Klett, 2020, 13+, comic book
- *Snuffy and Hopsy* (*Gobčko in Hopko*), Miš založba, 2018, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Black and White* (*Črno belo*), Miš založba, 2017, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *A History of Slovenia in Comics* (*Zgodovina Slovenije v stripu*), with Ivan Mitrevski, Miš založba, 2017, 9+, comic book
- *FC Freedom* (*NK Svoboda*), Miš založba, 2017, 13+, realistic novel
- *The Secrets of Young Lions* (*Skrivnosti mladih levov*), Miš založba, 2014, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Živa and the Ancient Birthday (Živa in antični rojstni dan),* Vilinia, 2014, 6+, strip

Published in foreign language:

- English: *Adam and His Tuba,* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2022, United States; *The Treasure of the Pokljuka Dwarves,* Bevke: Škrateljc, 2021, Slovenia.

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Boštjan Gorenc – Pižama



The moon, full or new, attracts many authors and we have piles of (children's) books in which the protagonists are concerned with it. /…/ It is always connected to children's curiosity and imagination, and the picture book *Have You Ever Tried the Moon?* is no exception. Spot on in terms of children's play and way of thinking, it is also highly entertaining.

(Gaja Kos, review in the journal *Sodobnost*, 2021)

prose

Selected piece

***Have You Ever Tried the Moon?* (*Si že kdaj pokusil Luno?*)** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2019,
illustrated by Igor Šinkovec
excerpt (translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



Have You Ever Tried the Moon?

In the yard, Svit had his hands full with a huge cardboard box and coloured pencils. Completely engrossed, he was drawing buttons and dials when he heard his name.
"Erik!" he was glad to see his cousin who was jumping through the puddles towards him.
"Hello, Svit!" Eric smiled in response. "There is this massive puddle on the other side of the house. Let's go to jump around in it!"
"I don't have time right now," Svit responded. "I am making a rocket." He pointed in front of him at the cardboard box with drawings all over it.
"A rocket?" Erik was interested.
"Yes, I am going to go to the Moon," Svit explained. "I want to find out whether it really is made of cheese."
"Cheese? Isn't it made of white chocolate?" Eric was surprised.
"Maybe," Svit said. "Have you ever tried the moon?"
"Not yet. But I would like to. Can I come along too?" Erik forgot all about the puddles.
"Of course," Svit agreed and passed him the coloured pencils. "Help me finish the rocket."
Together they drew the propulsion engines and in the end Svit wrote the name of their brand new spaceship on its side.
"FLYIN'FARTER?" Eric slowly read.
"Yes," Svit laughed. "It will fly through space and its engines will fart along, FPRRRRR!"
[…]
Svit sat in his seat. "Strap in, the rocket goes very fast."
"Should we countdown?" Erik suggested.
"Of course. Let's do it together. Ten… nine… five... six... three... eight... one... four… zero! Takeooooooof!"
The rocket shook, made a loud farting noise, and in a cloud of smoke flew off onto the sky.
Their house was vanishing in the distance and soon the landscape was just a patchwork of colours. Like a collage made by a giant. Then they could suddenly see the entire globe, slowly reduced to the size of a marble.
"How far till we reach the moon?" Erik asked. "I am getting bored."
"How am I supposed to know? I am only six!" Svit replied. "Want a sandwich?"
And they both started munching on their bread roll, gazing upon the starry sky, trying to spot a comet. They saw none. Clearly all the comments were pinching the stars in the cheek and ruffling their hair in some other part of the Milky Way.
"Do you think that a comet's tail is actually a turbo engine so it can move across the sky at such speed?" asked Svit.
"Yes, and race round Saturn's rings," Eric laughed.
"But our flyin'farter engine outdoes it any day!" Svit cried out proudly.
"FRRRRRR!" they vroomed in unison and burst into laughter. The added acceleration belted them ahead so fast that they almost crashed into the Moon.
"That was close!" said Eric pulling on the hand break. "Here we are then!"
Unfolding below them was the milky-white lunar landscape. The boys cheered and pressed the landing button.
The colourful rocket shakily descended to the surface of the celestial body. As soon as it touched ground, both boys impatiently jumped out. They were surprised to find how high they could jump.
"Wooooow!" Svit was impressed and did a summersault in the air.
"This is better than a trampoline!" Erik shrieked.
"And way better than jumping in puddles!" Svit added.
"Shall we now try the Moon to see whether it is cheese or white chocolate?" Erik asked.

0–6



"Oh, I'm so full after that sandwich, I really can't eat anything else right now," said Svit. "Why don't we jump around a little more."
"Right, Captain!' Erik playfully agreed. He leapfrogged over Svit's back and called out, 'You're *It*!"
They chased each other across the lunar surface, cartwheeling and rolling around in craters, singing:

"We look at the moon every night,
so can you tell me please,
is it made of chocolate?
or is it made of cheese?
We made ourselves a rocket
out of a cardboard box
and flew here to figure out
the secret of these rocks.

The song perhaps needed a little more work, but they didn't mind, they had made it up themselves. They sang, they jumped, and they laughed and laughed, until they were both too tired to continue.



Have You Ever Ridden a Seahorse?

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award: 2020 for *Have You Ever Tried the Moon?*
- The Kristina Brenkova Award: 2022 for *Have You Ever Ridden a Seahorse?*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge: 2020 for *Have You Ever Tried the Moon?*, 2017 for *What Is Hiding in Daddy's Beard?*

Select Bibliography

- *Have You Ever Ridden a Seahorse?* (*Si že kdaj jezdil morskega konjička?*), MKZ, 2022, under 6, short realistic prose, picture book
- *Godfather's Present* (*Botrovo darilo*), MKZ, 2021, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Reformationists in Comics* (*Reformatorji v stripu*), with Jak Vukotič, Šrateljc, 2020, 13+, comic strip
- *Have You Ever Tried the Moon?* (*Si že kdaj pokusil Luno?*), MKZ, 2019, under 6, short realistic prose, picture book
- *SLOLvene Classics: Stories from the NetFlorian Valley*, (*Slolvenski klasiki 1: zgodbe iz doline Netflorjanske*), Cankarjeva založba, 2019 (first edition 2016 + further editions), short prose, parody, 16+
- *My Life* (*Moj lajf*), with Tanja Komadina, Škrateljc, 2018, 16+, comic strip
- *What Is Hiding in Daddy's Beard?* (*Kaj se skriva v očkovi bradi?*), MKZ, 2017 (first edition 2016), under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Šnofi's Gang* (*Šnofijeva druščina*), with Matej De Cecco, MKZ, four parts, comic strips, 9+

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Niko Grafenauer



Grafenauer has expressed most of his sparkling and enchanting playfulness in his poetry and stories for children. His Tinyspan has joined the pantheon of Slovene children's book characters and his collection of poems for children of all ages *Secrets* (1983 and numerous consequent editions) is a true play of mysterious bright gems and one of the most beautiful Slovene books for children in the last half century.
In 2003 the Assembly of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts elected Niko Grafenauer as its associate member and in 2009 as a regular member of the Academy.

(from the membership information at SAZU, the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

poetry

Selected poems

***Tinyspan*, Ljubljana, MKZ, 2013, illustrated by Marjan Manček**
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Tinyspan

Tinyshirt, tinytrousers,
tinyshoes on tinyfeet.
Tinyhands forever holding
some kind of cake or treat.

Dishevelled hair,
where a comb never goes,
and a finger that unknowingly
picks away at his nose.

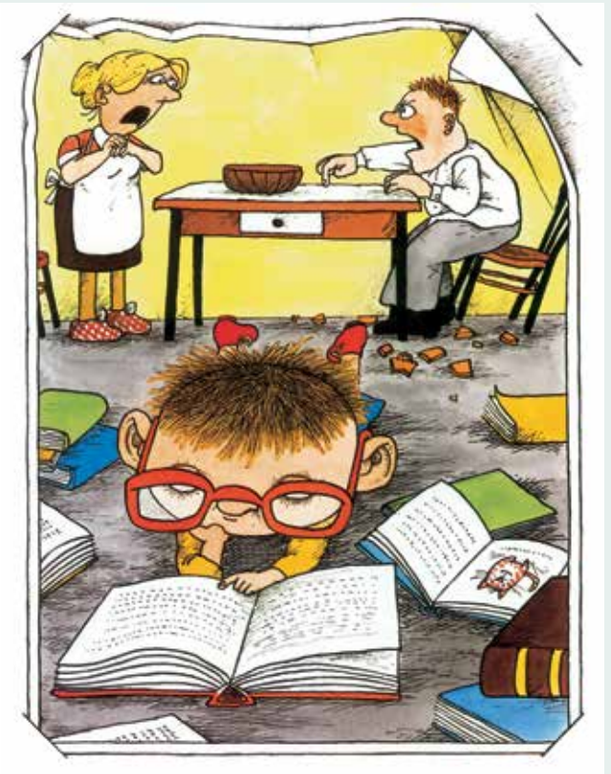
Ears as wide as those of a bat,
stick out as far as they can,
a tiny dimple in his cheek,
that's our man, Tinyspan.

Scholar

Tinyspan loves to browse and read
through piles of books, all types and kinds.
He reads out loud and nods, indeed,
at viewpoints from all sorts of minds.

Poring over them for days and days,
every page he has carefully read.
Knowledge heavy upon him weighs,
his hand props up his clever head.

Noise does not distract him at all,
singing along, time soon passes,
and if he can't make out a scrawl
he quickly sticks on his glasses.



Tinyspan (The Scholar)

0–6

Selected poem

Skyscrapers, Sit Down!, Ljubljana, MKZ, 2015
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

9+

Mummy

Of all the people in the world,
Mummy is the best out there,
because she likes to smile at me,
because with Daddy they're a pair.

Daddy likes to give Mummy a kiss,
together they sleep, together they wake
and promises of all sorts and kinds
to each other they always make.

Daddy smiles with Mum in photos
with his arm across her shoulder,
but when he stands up for me
they argue and grow colder.

Mummy can read Daddy's mind
and guesses all his wishes,
she helps him when his days go bad,
reminds him if something he misses.

Mummy cannot be alone,
or find some uncle for a laugh,
for we all know that she
is father's better half.

Without all her kindness and love,
what would Daddy be?
If there's only half to go round,
what would there be left for me?

Selected poems

Secrets, Ljubljana, Grafenauer založba, 2012, illustrated by Matjaž Vipotnik
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

13+

Love

Love is born in secret,
of itself quite unaware,
it lives off sacred glances
and grows without fanfare.

Blossoming in Love's eyes
a dreamy flower of finesse,
gentleness in its palms
with a velvety caress.

Trembling on its lips
are contemplative sighs,
a golden ray of the sun
with its smile it amplifies.

Love floats in the clouds,
does not walk on the ground.
Written in secret code
on school desks it is found.

Love stutters and stammers,
does things a little amiss,
until it grows to be ready
for its very first kiss.

Life

Life is most beautiful when it casts
its glow in all directions,
burning with a fierce flame that lasts
until its final reflections.

Life sometimes keeps on guard
with a cheerful, smiley face
and sometimes finds it hard
the tears away to chase.

Life cannot stand still for viewing,
if so it does, you're dead.
The least it must be doing
is hanging from a thread.

Life is lived, it never lingers,
there's less left over, it burns away,
like sand it slips through our fingers
each and every single day.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Prešeren Lifetime Achievement Award, 1997
- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2007
- The Levstik Award, 1987 for *Littlish*, 1980 for *Skyscrapers, Sit Down!*
- IBBY Honour List, 2002 for *When the Head Swims Above the Clouds*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

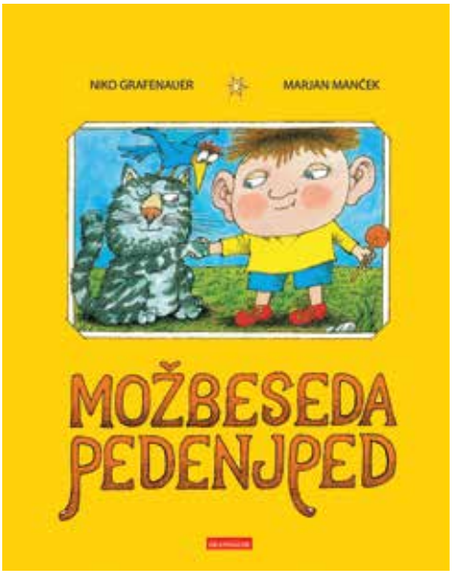
- The Desetnica Award, 2017 for *Queen Cats*, 2012 for *Frog Radio Station*, 2010 for *Pointygnome and the Hellofly*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2004 for *Free Entry Into Tinyspantale*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2013 for *Secrets*

Select Bibliography

- *Animals, animals everywhere* (*Živali, živali vsenaokrog*), *Grafenauer*, 2020, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *What the Sun Likes Best* (*Kaj ima sonce najraje*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 1979), 6+, poetry, picture book
- *Tinyspan Manoftrust* (*Možbeseda Pedenjped*), Grafenauer, 2017, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Skyscrapers, Sit Down!* (*Nebotičniki, sedite!*), MKZ, 2015 (first edition 1980), 6+, poetry
- *Queen Cats* (*Kraljice mačke*), Modrijan, 2014, 13+, poetry
- *Tinyspan* (*Pedenjped*), MKZ, 2013 (first edition 1966 and reprints), under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Secrets* (*Skrivnosti*), Grafenauer, 2012 (first edition 1983 and reprints), 13+, poetry
- *Frog Radio Station* (*Žabja radijska postaja*), Grafenauer, 2011, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Three Geese and a Gander* (*Troje gosk in en gosak*), Grafenauer, 2011, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *When the Head Swims Above the Clouds* (*Kadar glava nad oblaki plava*), MKZ, 2000, 9+, poetry

Published in foreign languages:

- Macedonian: *Pedaped*, Teplun, 2016, Macedonia
- German:
  - *Geheimnisse: Gedichte und Sprühte*, Hermagoras Verlag, 2010, Austria
  - *Spannenlang,* Edition Atalier, 2003, Austria
  - *Spannenlang,* Der Kinderbuchverlag, 1989, Germany
- English: *Silences*, Poetry Miscellany Chapbooks, 2000, United States
- Bosnian: *Tajne*, Zveza kulturnih društev, 1999, Slovenia



Tinyspan Manoftrust



Frog Radio Station

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Aksinja Kermauner



Spaghetti Joe sets off into the wide world and, after coming across some dancing girl-worms, meets Stacy the Shoelace. He falls in love with her but she is already taken; she's part of a pair. That is when Bigtoe the Crow flies in and wants to eat her, but brave Joe saves her. Though he is now her hero, they say goodbye and Joe is on his way towards new adventures. A masterfully devised character for a tactile picture book in the form of a wavy line that fuels the imagination of blind and visually impaired children, Joe's adventures are fun and educational, conveyed in beautiful literary language, filled with plays on words. Rich and polished writing where less means more! This is the first such picture book in Slovenia, intended for all who have some connection with deafness, Slovene sign language, the hard of hearing and deaf. It also helps non-disabled children discover difference.

(from the award justification for the 2018 Desetnica Award)

prose

Selected piece

***Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow* (Žiga špaget je za punce magnet),** Ljubljana, Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Slovenia and Miš založba, 2017, illustrated by Zvonko Čoh



background

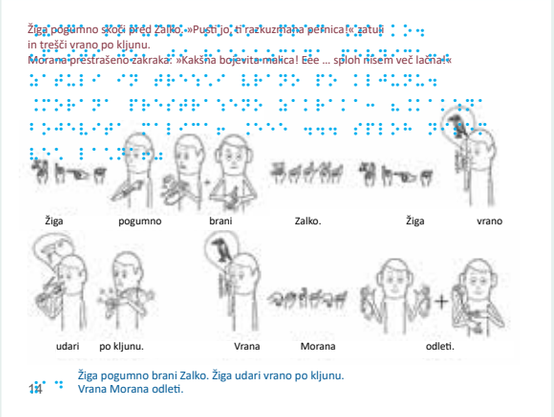
The *Spaghetti Joe* series is a range of special picture books. They are adapted to children who are visually impaired, blind, hard of hearing, deaf, children with disturbances in mental development and those with dyslexia: large print, Braille, Slovene sign language, easy reading and dyslexia-friendly fonts. The books are with tactile illustrations, scent, Slovene Braille, one-handed finger spelling and a CD or a QR code with a recording of an interpreter. The books are also interesting to young readers without special needs as a way of introducing them to their peers who have different ways of communicating, thus encouraging the understanding of those who are different. They are also multi-sensory, showing young readers how information can be received through a variety of senses.

Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow

Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

"Yippee, hurrah, I'm a brave Spaghetti, off into the wide world," Joe happily sings to himself as he spaghetties through the meadow on his way into town.
Suddenly something creeps through the grass towards him.



Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow

"What a long and slender worm," a whole bunch of girl worms start crawling around him. "Come and be wormy with us!"
"Girls, girls, pretty girls, I have no time for a dance, I am on a mission and need to go on!"
"Oh, what a show-off!" the girl worms were angry.
Joe barely manages to escape. Out if breath he heads straight for the centre of town.
"Aaaah! Look out! You almost ran me over! Goodness, how many shoes!"
He has to be very quick to make sure the wheels and feet don't trample over him. He finally reaches the park where he can breathe a sigh of relief. But there he meets… booom!
All shaken, he stutters, "Wh-who are y-you?"
"St-Stacy the Sh-shoelace, and you?"
"Joe Spaghetti, and for you I'd forget all about the wider world," says Joe as if in a spell. "Be mine, pretty Stacy, you charming lace!"
"I'd like to, you seem so sweet… but I unfortunately have my pair, I've always been a pair, you see…"

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All of a sudden a dark shadow appears in the sky.
"Oh, no, it's Bigtoe the Crow! He keeps coming after me! Help!" shrieks Stacy the Shoelace.
Her cowardly pair hides in a nearby shoe.
Joe bravely jumps out in front of her. "Leave her alone, you messed-up bunch of feathers!" he howls and strikes the crow on its beak.

"What a hot-tempered meal!" Bigtoe cows in surprise. "Eee… I'm not even hungry any more!"
"You're my hero…" says Stacy the Shoelace. "But sorry…" she sobs. And a heavy-hearted Joe says goodbye, "I'm off into the wide world, pretty shoelacey Stacey, perhaps you will one day change your mind! Us pasta guys are no mean feat! See you round, gal!"

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2018 for *Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2016 for *White as a Seagull: The Story of a Girl With Albinism*, 2013 for *And the Dragon Ate the Sun*, 2011 for *Spaghetti Joe Goes Out Into the Wide World*, 2009 for *Orion's Sword*, 2008 for *Berenice's Hair*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2016 for *Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow*, 2011 for *Spaghetti Joe Goes into the Wide World*

Select Bibliography

- *In the Vortex of Letters* (*V vrtincu črk: o deklici s skotopičnim sindromom ali sindromom Helen Irlen*), Morfem, 2022, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *About a Mousy, Who Slapped a Bear Silly* (*O miški, ki je oklofutala medveda*), Miš založba, 2022, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Car Brats* (*Avtomobilska mularija*), MKL, 2020, 6+, fantastična pripoved
- *Flowers and Fire – an easy read novel* (*Cvetje in ogenj – roman v lahkem branju*), RISA and CUDV Črna, 2016, 16+, realistic fiction
- *Spaghetti Joe and the Girls in Tow* (*Žiga špaget je za punce magnet*), a story adapted to Slovene sign language and Braille, Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Slovenia, Miš založba, 2015, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *White as a Seagull: The Story of a Girl With Albinism* (*Bela kot galeb: zgodba o deklici z albinizmom*), Morfem, 2014, 9+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Spaghetti Joe Goes into the Wide World* (*Žiga špaget gre v širni svet*), a story adapted to Slovene sign language and Braille, Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Slovenia, Miš založba, 2010, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Orion's Sword* (*Orionov meč*), Miš založba, 2008, 13+, realistic novel
- *Berenice's Hair* (*Berenikini kodri*), Miš založba, 2006, 13+, realistic novel
- *Snow Flower, a tactile picture book* (*Snežna roža, tipna slikanica*), Miš založba, 2004, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- Turkish: *White as a Seagull*, Tübitak, 2019, Turkey
- Chinese:
  - *White as a Seagull*, Ruji, 2019, China
  - *Spaghetti Joe Goes Out Into the Wide World*, GaoGao International Culture & Media Group, 2017, China
- Malay*: White as a Seagull*, Kualiti Books, 2017, Putih Seperti Burung Camar, Malaysia
- English: *Mouse Mici Falls Into the Pantry*, Burgdorf, Institute for Print Technology, 2014, Switzerland
- German: *Maus Mici fällt in die Speisekammer*, Burgdorf, Institute of Print Technology, 2014, Switzerland



Spaghetti Joe Goes into the Wide World



White As a Seagull

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Gaja Kos



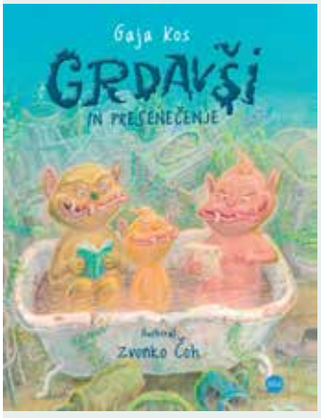
After an attractive board book for the youngest readers and short illustrated stories for slightly older children, Gaja Kos's heroes, Mr Yuck, Mrs Yuck and Little Yucksie now appear in a large format picture book with Zvonko Čoh's brilliant illustrations.

(Beti Hlebec, review in the book magazine *Bukla*)

prose

Selected piece

***The Yuckies and the Surprise*,** Dob, Miš založba, 2018, illustrated by Zvonko Čoh
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



The Yuckies and the Surprise

background

The hairy Yuckies with rotten teeth love bad weather and puddles, muddy picnics, cheating at team games, strange food, and are not particularly keen on cleanliness. In the book *The Yuckies and the Surprise* Little Yucksie, her father Mr Yuck and mother Mrs Yuck are scratching their heads, trying to think of a way to prepare a surprise. They cannot think of any recipe or even instructions about how to go about preparing one, even clever Little Yucksie is short of any good ideas. Until… quite unexpectedly they manage to come up with three surprises. The family of Yuckies jumps around puddles in three books that both in length and contents grow with the reader; they first idle away time in the board book *The Yuckies and the Rain*, then the picture book *The Yuckies and the Surprise* and finally in the illustrated book of stories about their amusing feats *The Yuckies.* They are accompanied throughout the series with wordplay exploiting metaphorical and literal meanings, and of course, all the aesthetics of yuck.

excerpt

The Yuckies are Father Mr Yuck, Mother Mrs Yuck, Little Yucksie and half-a-bus-full of yuckselatives. Mr Yuck spends a lot of his time deep-diving and fast-jumping into muddy puddles, Mrs Yuck making creepy-crawly spread and Little Yucksie conducting experiments. But over the past three days they have spent most of their time looking for an answer on how to prepare a surprise. Surprises, you see, can come on their own or they can be prepared. The latter is preferable of course, because simply waiting for the next surprise can sometimes be rather time-consuming.
Mrs Yuck knows exactly how to prepare toasted bread with fly spread but has not got a clue how to go about preparing a surprise.
"There must be a recipe for preparing surprises!" says Mrs Yuck who very much believes in recipes, especially those that have been handed down to her from Great-Grandma Yuckilda.
Mr Yuck knows how to make an excellent diving board for deep-jumping into puddles but has not got a clue how to prepare a surprise.
"We need some instructions! That's it!" he raises his right brow and looks through his notes at the letter S: silly fillings, slimy tires, sizzling hair … but nothing about surprises.
Even Little Yucksie, who is otherwise a rather practical girl, does not know how to prepare a surprise.
"I'm sure something will come up," Yucksie eventually decides, thinking it is probably enough that they know how to plan a jolly good birthday party.

Since the Yuckies have no recipe or instructions, nor do they have any good ideas on how to prepare a surprise, they cannot but wait for a surprise to come up on its own. Although that is not really the same thing.
On Thursday, after three days of constant rain, the sun comes out. One of the yuckselatives who is particularly fond of bad weather grunts in a bad temper, "What a horrible surprise." But for Mr Yuck, Mrs Yuck and Little Yucksie, this is not really a surprise at all. Their deaf great-aunt four times removed already had an aching knee on Wednesday, a sure sign that Thursday would be sunny. A surprise, however, is something special, not something you know will happen in advance. That much the Yuckies certainly know about surprises.
On Friday they get a visit from Mrs Yuck's cousin Yuckella. When one of the neighbours sees her he calls out, "Oh, what a pleasant surprise!" But for Mr Yuck,

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The Yuckies and the Surprise

Mrs Yuck and Little Yucksie, this is also not really a surprise because Yuckella had sent them a letter saying: *I arrive on Friday and leave on Saturday*. The Yuckies certainly know that one of the rules of surprises is that they do not announce their arrival.

On Saturday morning Mrs Yuck walks up the highest peak in the area for the first time, Mr Yuck wins a garden competition in mud jumping and it's Little Yucksie birthday. Basically the Yuckies are so busy they almost forgot about the surprise all together.

In the afternoon Mr Yuck looks through his notebook of instructions under the letter T: tantalising trophies. He wants to make a trophy for Mrs Yuck to mark her excellent climbing achievement.

Little Yucksie is preparing an experiment. She first jumps as quickly as she can into a deep puddle and measures exactly how far the mud splashes. Then she finds her flippers and sticks them onto her paws, and once again jumps into the same puddle. Once more she measures how far the droplets and lumps of mud splashed and the result is exciting – three claws further than before! Three claws further is surely enough for her to win the town competition!

Mrs Yuck in the meantime prepares a meal of fried cockroaches with mayonnaise, a special treat for Little Yucksie. Her favourite birthday dish are stir-fried dung beetles with mustard but Mrs Yuck could not find the mouldy ones, so she decided to try out a new recipe.

In the evening the Yuckies sit down to dinner as usual. But in fact there is nothing usual about this dinner, especially not the smell.

They don't just start eating, instead Mrs Yuck tells Yucksie "Here you are." And Mr Yuck says "Here you are" to Mrs Yuck and Little Yucksie says, "Here you are" to Mr Yuck. Then Mrs Yuck looks at her trophy and says, "Oh, how nice… what a nice surprise!"

Mr Yucks measures Yucksie's flippers and says, "Isn't our Yucksie full of … surprises? And hey, what a surprise this will be at the town competition!"

Little Yucksie dips a fried cockroach into the mayonnaise and munches away, saying, "Mmm, this is a yummy… surprise!"

"There, now we have it! Finally!" Mrs Yuck shrieks triumphantly.

"And not just one, three!" Mr Yuck is enthusiastic.

And that was how the Yuckies learnt how to prepare surprises – Mrs Yuck using a recipe, Mr Yuck using instructions and Little Yucksie with a great idea.

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2020 for *Visit,* 2019 for *The Yuckies and the Surprise*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2022 for *Night Visitor*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *Night Visitor*; 2020 for *Visit, The Migi Family On the Go,* 2019 for *The Yuckies and the Surprise,* 2017 for *The Yuckies and the Rain*, 2014 for *Heroes From the Argo*

Select Bibliography

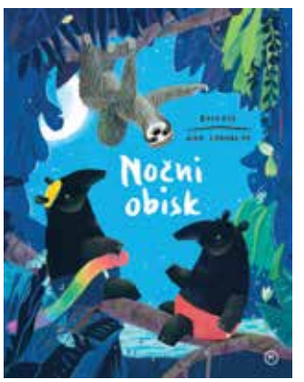
- *Night Visitor* (*Nočni obisk*), MKL, 2022, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Visit* (*Obisk*), MKL, 2022 (first edition 2019), under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Muffy, Luck and Wisdom (Mufek, sreča in pamet)*, Ajda, 2020, do 6 let, kratka fantastična zgodba, slikanica
- *The Migi Family On the Go* (*Migiji migajo*), Miš založba, 2019, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Heroes From the Argo* (*Junaki z ladje Argo*), Miš založba, 2019 (first edition 2013), 9+, fantasy fiction
- *The Yuckies and the Surprise* (*Grdavši in presenečenje*), Miš založba, 2018, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Yuckies and the Rain* (*Grdavši in dež*), Miš založba, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Jumpy and Laughter* (*Skokica in smeh*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Rizi-Bizi and the Lie* (*Rizibizi in laž*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2012, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Yuckies* (*Grdavši*), Miš založba, 2010, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- Italian: *I Bruttoni e la pioggia*, journal *Fili d'aquilone*, vol 51, March/April 2019
- Italian: *I Bruttoni e la sorpresa,* journal *Fili d'aquilone*, vol 51, March/April 2019



Heroes From the Argo



Night Visitor

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Helena Kraljič



Helena Kraljič's book is a realistic depiction of life in which word and image (Kraljič's text and illustrations by Tina Dobrajc), come together in a credible, realistic, manner – everything that the book speaks of could actually happen in a world where children and adults meet day after day, talking, reading, playing and quarrelling, heading off to school or to work.

(Igor Saksida, from the introduction to the picture book *Under a Lucky Star*)

prose

Selected piece

***Under a Lucky Star* (*Pod srečno zvezdo*),** Jezero, Morfemplus, 2019, illustrated by Tina Dobrajc
(translated by Jason Blake)



Under a Lucky Star

excerpt

Mommy Katya and Daddy Kevin were looking down at their new-born baby, "She's lovely! She's wonderful! She's gorgeous!"
Mommy Fiona and Daddy Philip were also gazing down at their new-born girl, "She's lovely! She's wonderful! She's gorgeous!"
Katya and Kevin named their baby Clara. Soon after she was born, she began to look out upon the world with curiosity. By the time she was three years old, she was already running across the meadow and asking, "Mommy, what's behind that mountain? Daddy, why is the sea salty? Mommy, where do Inuit live?"
Fiona and Philip called their baby Felicity. As time went by, they saw their daughter was in no hurry to walk. Mommy Fiona said to her, "Come on! Give me your hand. Let's go for a stroll."
"Eh," said Felicity, looking lazily up at her mommy. "I don't feel like it. I'll catch up. I was born under a lucky star. Grandma says Felicity means lucky one."
Sometime later, Katya and Kevin proudly watched their daughter as she counted blocks.
Fiona and Philip had a suggestion for Felicity, "Why don't you count the number of toys you have?"
"Eh," said Felicity, wrinkling her nose. "Not now! I'll catch up. You know, I was born under a lucky star."
Soon Clara and Felicity were old enough to go to school.
The very first class they had was gym. The teacher set out three logs to hop over.
Clara easily hopped over the obstacles. When Felicity tried to hop over the obstacles, she tumbled clumsily to the floor.
During math class the teacher asked the pupils, "How many dragons are there in the picture?"
Clara was the first to finish.
Felicity looked down glumly.
During English the teacher asked, "Who knows how to spell their name?"
Clara proudly raised her hand up high and went to write her name on the board. All the other pupils also knew how to write their names.
Felicity stared at the floor and started to think.
She wasn't able to hop over obstacles.
She wasn't able to count all the dragons.
And she had no idea how to write her name.
She went home with her head lowered.

"Why so sad, Felicity?" Daddy asked her.
"I wasn't able to hop over the obstacles at school," she said.
"Come on," said Daddy. "I'll teach you to jump really high."
"At school I wasn't able to count all the dragons," Felicity admitted to her Mommy.
"Come on," Mommy waved. "I'll teach you to count."
After a while, Felicity looked at her Mommy and pleaded, "Will you teach me how to write my name?"
Fiona was proud of her daughter. Finally she wanted to learn something!

Felicity could hardly wait to go back to school.
Now she too knew how to spell her name.
And she could count all the dragons in the picture.
And she was able to hop over all the obstacles.
After school, Felicity raced home, happy as could be and gave her Mommy and Daddy a great big hug.
She felt PROUD. Proud of HERSELF. Proud of her MOMMY. Proud of her DADDY.
And even proud of the LUCKY STAR she'd been born under.

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Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2022 *Sophie and the Ballet Slippers* (special recognition for innovation), 2019 for *Under a Lucky Star*, 2017 for *Two Wishes*, 2016 for *White Cat and Black Cat*

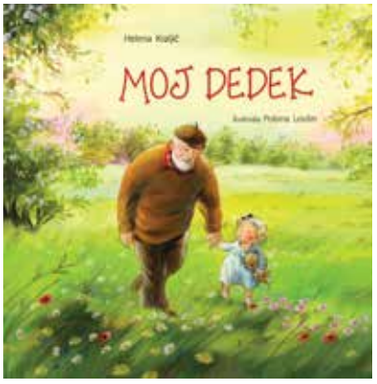
Select Bibliography

- *Sophie and the Ballet Slippers* (*Sofija in baletni copatki*), Morfemplus, 2022, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *My Daughter* (*Moja hči*), Morfemplus, 2022, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Under a Lucky Star* (*Pod srečno zvezdo*), Morfemplus, 2019, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Apples Taste Best When You Don't Have Any* (*Jabolka so najboljša, ko jih zmanjka*), Morfemplus, 2019, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *My Grandma* (*Moja babica*), Morfemplus, 2017, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Two Wishes* (*Dve želji*), Morfemplus, 2016, 6+, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Cleopatra* (*Kleopatra*), Morfemplus, 2015, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *White Cat and Black Cat* (*Beli muc in črni muc*), Morfemplus, 2015, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *John Is Different, a Story of a Boy with Autism* (*Žan je drugačen, zgodba o dečku z avtizmom*), Morfemplus, 2014, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *How the Lie Grew* (*Kako raste laž*), Morfem, 2013, 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book

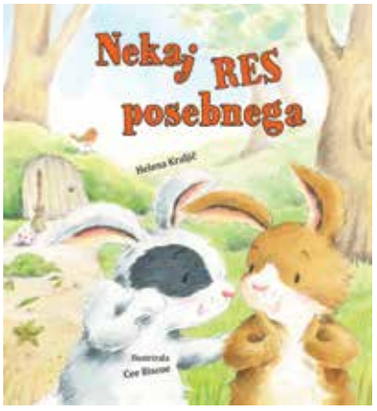
Published in foreign languages:

To date publishers from 17 different countries have bought the rights for Kraljič's books. A selection of the most translated titles:

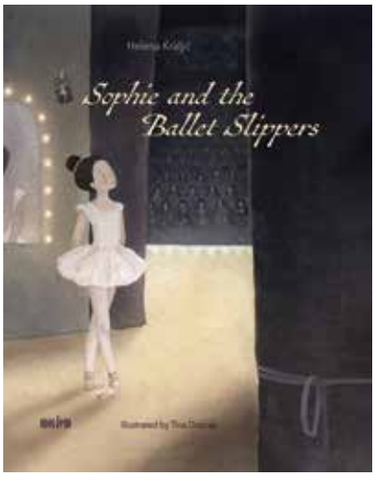
- *How the Lie Grew*: Turkish, Portuguese (Brazil), Mandarin (China), Cantonese (Hong Kong), Korean, Slovak
- *My Grandma:* Spanish, Turkish, Mandarin (China), Italian, Slovak, Bulgarian
- *My Grandpa:* Spanish, Turkish, Mandarin (China), Italian, Slovak, Bulgarian
- *I Have Dyslexia:* Spanish, Turkish, Mandarin (China), Cantonese (Hong Kong), Malay, Slovak, Polish
- *I Have Down Syndrome:* Spanish, Turkish, Portuguese (Brazil), Mandarin (China), Cantonese (Hong Kong), Malay, Polish
- *Elvis and Tara Have to Go:* Turkish, Mandarin (China), Cantonese (Hong Kong), Polish
- *John Is Different:* Spanish, Turkish, Mandarin (China), Cantonese (Hong Kong), Arabic, Malay, Thai, Polish
- *No Time:* Spanish, Turkish, Mandarin (China), Cantonese (Hong Kong), Italian, Romanian
- *Donkey Only Goes Onto the Ice Once:* Portuguese (Brazil), Italian, Portuguese (Portugal)



My Grandpa



Something Really Special



Sophie and the Ballet Slippers

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Nina Mav Hrovat



Nina Mav Hrovat and Kristina Krhin have created the pentalingual picture book *Posluh, jazbec gre = Dëgjo, vjedulla po vjen = Listen, Here Comes Badger = Slušaj, ide jazavac = Слыште, барсук идёт!* (2020), with Slovene, Albanian, English, Bosnian and Russian text. Badger is an enthusiastic singer but his singing gets on the nerves of everyone else in the forest. When the other animals plot to try and silence him but instead find themselves in trouble, it is Badger who comes to the rescue. Not only does he have an ear for music, he also has an ear for good relationships with those around him.

(Dragica Haramija, Bi- and Multilingual Picture Books for Preschool Children, 2022)

prose

Selected piece

***Listen, Here Comes Badger (Posluh, jazbec gre)*,** Dob: Miš založba, 2019, illustrated by Kristina Krhin
(translated by Tadeja Spruk)



Listen, Here Comes Badger

excerpt

Badger wanted to become a singer. He simply adored singing, so he practised hard every day. He would start his singing exercises first thing in the morning, training his voice, his vocal technique and the like.
"Eeoo-eeoo-eeoo-eeoo-eeoo-oooo… So-mi-so-mi, so-mi… Mi-hee-mi-hee-mi-hee-mi-hee-heee…"
The animals covered their ears, while Badger continued day in day out, "Mah-may-me-moh-moo … Ei-dle-dum, di-dle-dum, ei-dledum-dee…" and so on until the evening when he went to bed, exhausted.
One evening, the inhabitants of the forest gathered and complained to each other. Hedgehog groaned that all his spines stood on end, Hare's ears were pierced, Squirrel moaned that he had lost his appetite, Fox' s fur was bristled all over, Dormouse couldn't sleep, Mouse no longer took any pleasure in eating cheese, and Snail complained that he spent all his days locked in his shell, failing even there to find a moment of quiet.
In the morning, Badger started practicing again: "Twirlywirly-twirly … Nee-naw-nee-naw-neeeeee!"
And the following morning:"Blah-blah-blah-blah-blah … Mah-yah-mah-yah-mee-yoo-meeyoo-meh-yeh-meh-yeh-moh-yo-moh-yo-moo-yoo-moo-yoo …"

"I've had enough of this!" said Hedgehog and the other animals nodded in despair. Even Snail crawled out of his shell to listen.
"We should dig a deep hole, a trap for the Badger. Once he's caught, we'll roll a giant rock over it. Let him bawl all he likes in the pit!" said Hare.
"Good idea," agreed Squirrel. "But how are we going to lure him into the trap?"
"With a trick!" said Fox. "We'll invite him to an imaginary concert. Badger will be happy to come and the hole will be there ready for him."
"Good idea!" agreed Snail.

"Excellent! Let's get to work!" the animals resolved enthusiastically.
"Wait for me, I'm cooomiiiiiing!" Snail called after them, crawling as fast as he could.

The animals found a place suitably overgrown with thick fern, and began digging.
Snail was still racing along to catch up with them…
Hedgehog, Fox and Hare dug a deep hole in the ground, Squirrel, Mouse and Dormouse brought leaves and branches to cover the hole, and soon the trap was ready.
Snail was still racing along…
Fox went to fetch Badger, pretending that they were organising a concert and wanted him to perform as well.
The invitation delighted Badger. He was thrilled by the chance, "Sing at a concert? How nice! How wonderful!"
He put on his best suit and followed Fox.
Hedgehog, Hare, Squirrel, Dormouse and Mouse all waited for them, hidden in the ferns.
Snail, too, was nearly there.
"The stage is just behind the fern," said Fox to Badger.
"Follow me!" The animals were waiting in their hiding place. Right at that moment, Snail arrived, huffing and puffing. "Where is everyone?!" he yelled. Startled, the Fox tripped over Snail and fell clumsily, pushing Hedgehog, Hare, Squirrel, Dormouse and Mouse out of their hiding place in the fern and straight into the hole, and then himself also fell into the pit.
"Ouch! Eek! Ugh! Oh! Aah!" groaned the animals as they hit the bottom.
"Goodness me!" screeched the frightened Snail, shutting himself into his shell.
"Oh, dear me!" yelled Badger. "Let me help you!" he added and ran off in search of a way to help them.
He brought some thick branches and tied them together into a long ladder.
Snail stayed in his shell, trembling.

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Badger lowered the makeshift ladder into the hole and, one by one, the animals climbed out.
"Thank you, Badger!" they thanked him with relief, feeling ashamed that the hole had been intended for him.
"What kind of a concert would it be without an audience?" Badger exclaimed.
"Come, let's go somewhere nicer and safer. Come join us, Snail!" He knocked on Snail's shell.
"All right, I'm coming!" Snail answered.
Badger led the battered and humbled animals into a glade where the Cricket orchestra was just warming up.
"Play, Maestro, play!" said Badger. The orchestra played and Badger sang with a voice so beautiful that the animals all sat down on the ground in astonishment.
Snail heard the wonderful music from afar and raced faster than ever not to miss the concert.
Badger sang with an enthusiastic glow while the animals listened, jaws dropped and ears pricked. "Well, I never! It's wonderful!" they kept saying.
After the concert, the audience congratulated the singer and the members of the orchestra one by one. "The singing exercises have paid off!" said Hedgehog, and there was no doubt about it. Everyone agreed.
Well, nearly everyone! Snail arrived just as everyone had gone–to bed!

Award in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2009 for *The King Who Hated Tidying Up*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2021 for *The Winter Harvest,* 2013 for *The Mouse that Plucked up her Courage*
- The Desetnica Award, 2021 for *Listen Up, Here Comes Badger!,* 2019 for *About a Mouse That Makes New Friends*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *The King Who Didn't Like Reading*; 2021 for *Questions for Grandma*; 2020 for *Dont Think About the Elephant! and One, Two, Three - an Elephant!*

Select Bibliography

- *The King Who Didn't Like Reading* (*O kraljeviču, ki ni maral brati*), MKZ, 2021, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *The Winter Harvest* (*Ozimnica*), Hlebec, 2021 (first edition 2020), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Simon the Beetle Spreads Satisfaction* (*Hrošček Simon širi zadovoljstvo*), Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2017), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *About a Mouse That Makes New Friends* (*Miška želi prijatelja*), Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2016), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Don't Think About the Elephant!* (*Ne misli na slona!*), Miš založba, 2019, under 6, realistic fiction, picture book
- *Listen Up, Here Comes Badger!* (*Posluh, jazbec gre!*), Miš založba, 2019, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Beaver the Footballer* (*Bober nogometaš*), NK Domžale, 2016, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Mouse that Plucked up her Courage* (*O miški, ki je zbirala pogum*), MKZ, 2012, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Messy the Elf!* (*Neredko!*), MKZ, 2011, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The King Who Hated Tidying Up* (*O kralju, ki ni maral pospravljati*), MKZ, 2008, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- Spanish: *La Ratoncita que queria ser Valiente*, Unaluna, 2015, Spain
- Albanian-English-Bosnian-Macedonian edition: *Miška želi prijatelja / Minushja dëshiron miq / Mouse Finds New Friends / Mišić želi prijatelja / Gluvčeto bara drugar*, Miš založba, 2016, Slovenia
- bilingual Slovene-English edition: *Bober nogometaš / Beaver the Footballer*, NK Domžale, 2016, Slovenia
- Chinese/Mandarin: *The Mouse that Gathered Courage*, Paisha Agency, 2017, Taiwan / Gaogao Sky, 2016, China / Complex Chinese edition, world-wide (including Hong Kong, Macao), 2018
- Czech: *Jak myška hledala kamarády*, Albatros Media, 2021, Czech Republic.



About a Mouse That Makes New Friends

e-mail (author):
nina.mav.hrovat@gmail.com

Manica K. Musil



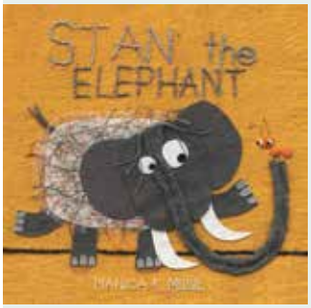
The fundamental novelties that the author introduced into the world of Slovene picture books include building the linguistic code of communication through the basic text as well as various kinds of intraiconic text, and her original use of materials and fabrics for her textile illustrations. Beside the intertextual and intermedia aspects of her work, it is also worth remembering its folkloric note; in the past, sewn and embroidered wall hangings were popular throughout Slovenia. Manica K. Musil has managed to successfully include a glimpse of our cultural heritage into a contemporary postmodern picture book with a rich multimodal story.

(Dragica Haramija in the journal *Otrok in knjiga* vol. 109, 2020)

prose

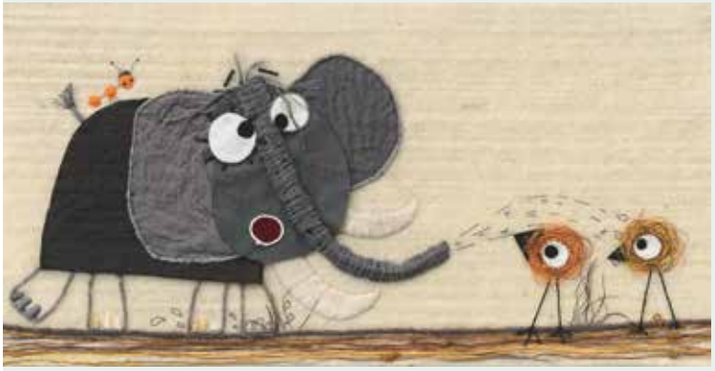
Selected piece

***Stan the Elephant (Slon Stane)*, Maribor, Založba Pivec, 2017**
(translated by Jason Blake)



Stan the Elephant

My name's Stan and I just love telling stories. But everyone says my stories are without rhyme or reason.
Today, as usual, Stan set out to find a listener for his stories.
He went up to the zebra, who was grazing nearby.
But before Stan could say hi, she was already fleeing.
He went up to the lion, who was stretching out in the sun.
But before he could say hi, he already had to flee.
Not even the other elephants in Stan's herd wanted to listen to him.



Stan the Elephant

The parrots had enough to talk about by themselves and had no time for Stan's tales.
But Stan was so caught up in his stories that he didn't realise someone had been listening in all day.

That afternoon, as Stan lay moping on a pile of leaves, the tiny little voice finally reached his ears.
"Who are you?" asked Stan.
"I'd love you to tell me a story," answered ant.
"Well, why didn't you say so?" asked Stan.
"I told you a thousand times, but you didn't hear even once!" moaned Ant.
"Can I tell you one now?" asked Stan, delighted.
And Stan started to tell tales to ant.
The two of them told each other stories all through the night and into the next day.
Even though the zebras, crocodiles, lions, other elephant, snakes, and the parrots still had no interest in Stan's stories, Stan was happy as could be. He had found someone to listen to him… and so what if it was just a little ant.

Awards in the field of children's literature

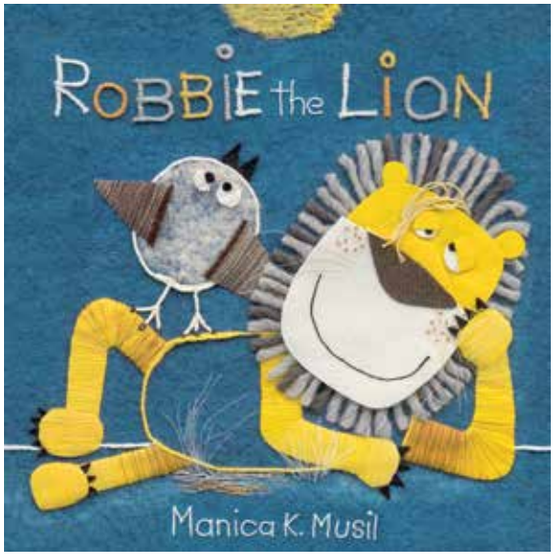
- The Glazer Diploma, 2019
- Laureate of the Russian Book Illustration Contest "Image of the Book", International Book Fair 2021 Moscow for *Two Little Architects*, 2019 Moscow International Book Fair for *Stan the Elephant*
- Merit at the 3x3 International Illustration Show No.16 in the category Books&Covers awarded by the 3x3 Magazine of Contemporary Illustration, New York, Unites States, 2019, for *No, I Won't*
- The Slovene Best Book Design Award in the category Books for Children and Young Adults, Slovenia, 2015, for *The Naughty Pigs*
- Best of the Best, Hiii Illustration, China, 2022 for *Two Little Architects*
- Special Prize at the 8th Biennial of Illustration, 2020, Zagreb, Croatia

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- Best Books in Jiangsu Province, China, 2017, for *The Naughty Pigs*

Select Bibliography

- *Friends* (*Prijateljici*), Založba Pivec, 2022, under 6, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Roba Tonka* (*Tonya the Fish*), Miš založba, 2022, under 6, under 6, short fantastic fiction, picture book
- *Robbie the Leon* (*Lev Izidor*), Založba Pivec, 2021, under 6, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Three Kittens and a Dragon* (*Tri muce in zmaj*), Založba Pivec, 2020, under 6, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Franky the Anteater* (*Mravljinčar Franc*), Založba Pivec, 2019, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Stan the Elephant* (*Slon Stane*), Založba Pivec, 2017, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Magic Shell* (Čarobna školjka), Založba Pivec, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Johnny Mosquito* (*Komar Janez*), Založba Pivec, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Naughty Pigs* (*Pobalinska pujsa*), Založba Pivec, 2015, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Cecilia the Goat and Who Drank All the Water* (*Koza Cilka in kdo je popil vso vodo*), Morfem, 2014, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book



Robbie the Lion

e-mail (author):
manica@manicamusil.com

Published in foreign languages:

- *Robbie the Lion*:
  - Arabic: *Kalimat*, 2021, United Arab Emirates
  - German: *Gregor der Löwe,* Baeschlin Verlag, 2020, Switzerland
  - Hindu: *Sher Ki Neend,* Ektara –Takshila's Centre for Children's Literature & Art, 2019, India
  - Russian: *Лев Робби,* A Walk Through History Publishing House, 2019, Russia
  - Czech*: Lvíček Bertík,* Albatros Media (Fragment), 2019, Czech Republic
  - Chinese*: Youth Press Limited, 2019,* China
  - Croatian: *Leon lav,* Kašmir promet, 2019, Croatia
- *Stan the Elephant*:
  - Arabic: *Kalimat*, 2021, United Arab Emirates
  - Korean: *ST Unitas (Kidsschole),* 2020, South Korea
  - English: Rosen Publishing, 2019, United States
  - Russian: *Слон Стэн,* A Walk Through History Publishing House, 2019, Russia
  - Croatian: *Slon Stanko*, Kašmir Promet, 2019, Croatia
  - Hindi: *Kissu Haanthi*, Ektara – Takshila's Centre for Children's Literature & Art, 2019, India
  - Turkish: *Hikayeci Fil*, Timaş Çocuk, 2019, Turkey
  - Chinese: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2018, China
  - German: *Theo der Elefant*, Baeschlin Verlag, 2018, Switzerland
  - English: *Stan the Elephant*, Oxford University Press, 2017, Pakistan
- *No, I Won't*:
  - Arabic, *Kalimat*, 2021, United Arab Emirates
  - English: *No, I won't!*, Rosen Publishing, 2020, United States
  - Croatian: *Neću*, Kašmir, 2022, Croatia
  - Chinese: Youth Press Limited, 2019, China
- *The Naughty Pigs*:
  - Spanish: *Los cochinos traviesos*, Thule Ediciones, 2018, Spain
  - Chinese: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2016, China
- *Franky the Anteater*:
  - Arabic, *Kalimat*, 2021, United Arab Emirates
  - Portuguese: *Fred, o Papa-Formiga,* 2021, Editora Charochinha, Brasil
  - Chinese: Modern Press Co., 2016, China
  - Turkish: *Küçük Dilli Karıncayiyen*, Timaş Çocuk, 2016, Turkey
- *Friends:*
  - Chinese: Youth Press Limited, 2019, China
  - Turkish: *İyi Arkadaşlar Ne Yapar*, Timaş Çocuk, 2019, Turkey
- *The Magic Shell.*
  - Chinese, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2016, China
  - Turkish, *Masalcı Kız,* Timaş Çocuk, 2016, Turkey
- *Johnny Mosquito*:
  - Chinese, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2016, China
- *Three Kittens and a Dragon*:
  - Chinese, Modern Press Co., 2016, China
  - Turkish, *Üç Kedicik ile Bir Ejderha*, Timaş Çocuk, 2016, Turkey
- *Cecilia the Goat and Who Drank All the Water*:
  - Chinese, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2016, China
- *Cecilia the Goat*:
  - Chinese, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2016, China
  - Portuguese, Bicho Esperto, 2014, Brazil

Lila Prap



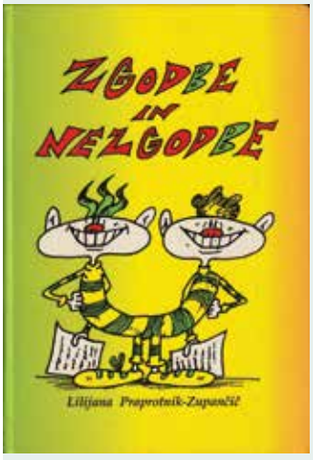
poetry and prose

Lila Prap is the winner of this year's award for lifetime achievement in the field of illustration. Lila is not, however, just an illustrator but an all-round artist and creator who plans her own work, writes the text, illustrates the images and combines all this into its final book form. Carefully and relentlessly. The seeming simplicity of form is in fact a process carefully thought out down to the last detail, from composition, drawing and application of coloured chalk. The colourful dust glows in full shine and vibrates to a tangible sense of matter. Strong images in books full of humour and mischief, the quality of which has been recognised and appreciated also beyond Slovenia. The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award for lifetime achievement is only one of many Lila Prap has received. The numerous translations of her books are also witness to the uniqueness of her work. Their numbers place her at the very peak of successful Slovene illustrations abroad and prove that Lila Prap is indeed a universal and world artist, understood and appreciated across the world in all cultures. In the Slovene artistic and designer landscape she has paved her own, entirely unique course, radically broadening and decisively enriching traditional aesthetic values.

(from the award justification for the 2017 Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award)

Selected piece

***Stories and Non-Stories* (*Zgodbe in nezgodbe*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2016, illustrated by Bori Zupančič
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



Stories and Not-Stories

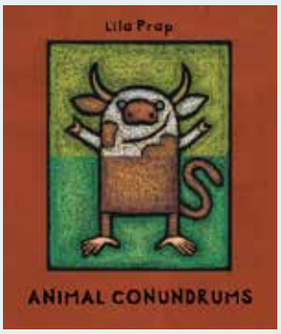
Grandma Tells a Story

Well, children, are you ready? I am certain you have not heard the goodnight story I will tell you tonight before. So, let's begin,
Once upon a time there was a little girl called Little Red Riding Hood…
You know this one off by heart? That's strange! I cannot recall…
Well, I suppose, if you insist that you have heard that one before, I will tell you a different story, an even nicer one. Here is how it goes,
There was once a terrible… Tilen, can you close the window please, there's a horrible draft in here!
So, where were we, then? Once upon a time there was a little girl… Not that one, you said? Yes, yes, alright,
There was once a terrible… Igor, would you be so kind as to bring my glasses from the kitchen, I can't see you at all in this light! If they're not in the kitchen, then they are on the night stand in my bedroom. Oh, no, I've remembered, I left them in the bathroom!
So let's go on,
Little Red Riding Hood… Sorry, terrible… Tony, can you switch off the radio. You know how this wild music distracts me when I'm telling you stories!
Now, here we go, for real,
There was once a terrible… Jure, stop jumping up and down in the chair! Such a wild boy! If you don't all calm down, you will go to bed without a story!
Let's see how it goes on,
There was once a terrible… Izidor, can you check the time! It's eight? Goodness me, you should all long have been in bed! But you want to hear the end of the story? Of course I will tell you the whole story, I promised to do so, didn't I?
Well, listen carefully,
There was once a terrible… a terrible… broken old pail and that's the end of our fairy tale!

0–6

Selected piece

Animals Conundrums, Ljubljana, MKZ, 2015



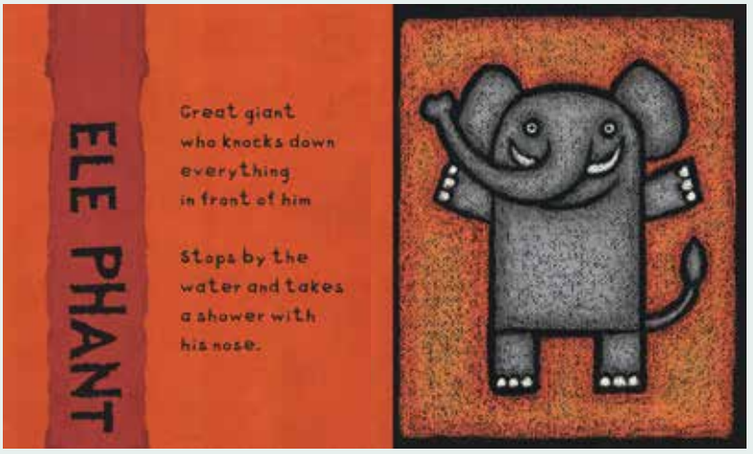
Animals Conundrums

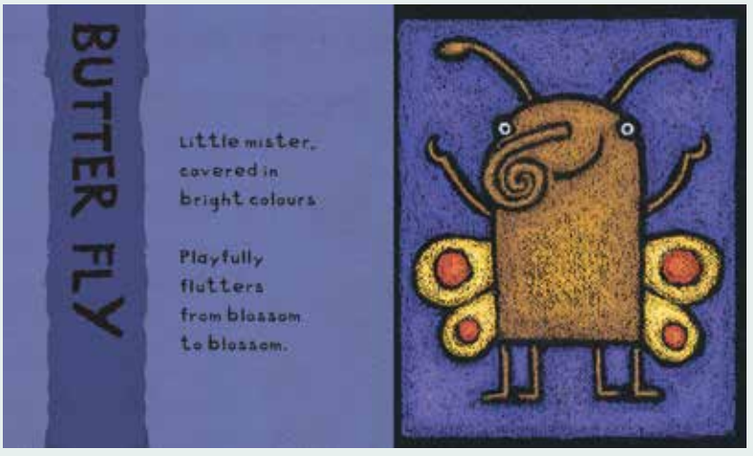
background

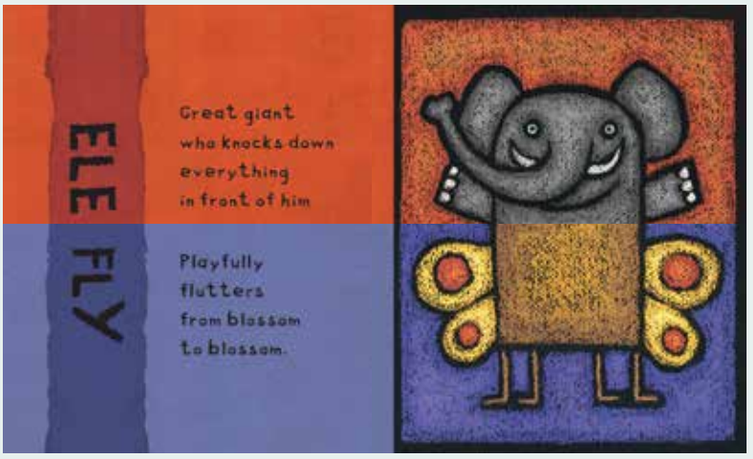
Instructions to young readers on the inside cover of this book say, "*In this book there are 18 hidden poems or riddles about animals, which all of you surely know. But you will find them only if you fold both halves of the cut pages at the same time. But if you fold the halves of the pages differently, you will find a whole bunch of completely unknown species with new names and extremely odd descriptions. You can just entertain yourself with these odd animals, or you can check your small and big friends from the poems and the names of unknown animals, and guess which animals a new crossbreed comes from.*

(language editing by Andreja Prašnikar)

What kind of an animal is the ELEFLY? Combine the pages to find out!

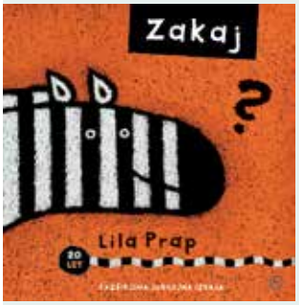






Selected piece

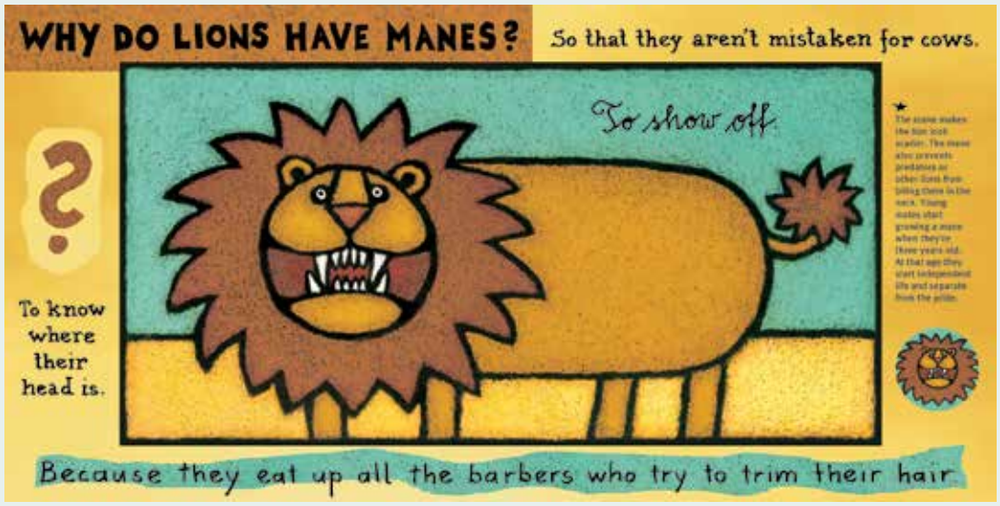
***Why?* (*Zakaj?*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2022
(translated by Lili Potpara)



Why?

background

Why? is a picture book that was first published in Slovene in 2002, and republished in 2010, 2011 and 2017. It is a picture book that allows the child to develop their own text, which is also the reason why the book has gained such popularity around the world. The book presents fourteen animals, each drawn across two pages. Each animal is also accompanied by a question concerning a specific characteristic true or typical of that particular animal and known to all children. Lila Prap then, in the fashion of nonsense, finds four funny, impossible or humorous answers that appear logical and convincing. In the corner of the page there is a simple scientific explanation for the feature asked in the question.



Why?

Awards in the fields of children's literature or illustration

- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2017
- The Prešeren Foundation Award, 2011
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2005 for *Animals' International Dictionary*
- The Levstik Award, 2001 for *Animal Lullabies* and *Little Creatures*
- The IBBY Honour List, 2002 for *Little Creatures*
- The Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Award, United States, 2006
- The International Award Eule des Monats September Deutschen Akademie für Kinder und Jugendliteratur, Volkach, Germany, 2004
- The Bronze Coat of Arms of the Municipality of Celje for originality and internationally recognised work in children's literature and illustration, 2003

Nominations in the fields of children's literature or illustration

- The Večernica Award, 2000 for *True Fairy Tales and Stories*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2019 for *Birds?!,* 2018 for *Dragons?!,* 2017 for *We Like Counting*, 2015 for *Animals Conundrums*, 2010 for *Dinosaurs?!*, 2008 for *My Daddy*, 2006 for *1001 Fairy Tales*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2021 for *The Animal Zodiac*, 2020 for *Birds?!,* 2019 for *Dragons?!,* 2016 for *Animals Conundrums,* 2012 for *Creepy Crawly Questions,* 2011 for *Dog Questions* and *Why Do Zebras Have Stripes?*
- Deutsche Jugendliteraturpreis, 2005
- The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, 2011, 2010, 2008, 2007, 2006
- The Hans Christian Andersen Award, 2008, 2006

Select Bibliography

- *Why?* (*Zakaj?*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2002 and reprints), under 6 let, short fantasy fiction with factual explanations, picture book
- *The Animal Zodiac* (Živalski koledar), Miš založba, 2020, under 6 let, story, picture book
- *Birds?!* (*Ptiči?!*), MKZ, 2019, 6+, fantasy fiction with factual explanations, picture book
- *Dragons?!* (*Zmaji?!*), MKZ, 2018, 6+, fantasy fiction with factual explanations, picture book
- *Dinosaurs?!* (*Dinozavri?!*), MKZ, 2017, 6+, fantasy fiction with factual explanations, picture book
- *Animal Lullabies* (*Živalske uspavanke*), MKZ, 2017 (first edition 2000 and reprints), under 6, poetry, picture book
- *1001 Fairy Tales* (*1001 pravljica*), MKZ, 2017 (first edition 2005 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Stories and Not-Stories* (*Zgodbe in nezgodbe*), MKZ, 2016 (first edition 1993), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Animals Conundrums* (*Kraca*), MKZ, 2015, 6+, poetry, picture book
- *Cat Questions* (*Mačji zakaji*), MKZ, 2013, 6+, fantasy fiction with factual explanations, picture book

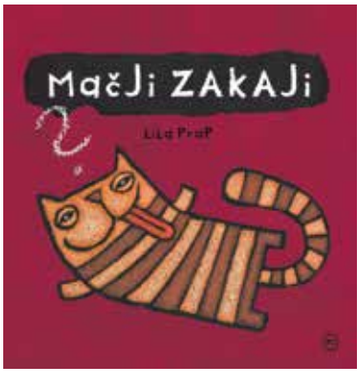
Published in foreign languages:

Lila Prap's picture books have been published in the following countries, in some cases by more than one publisher (more than 100 international editions in 38 countries): Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Israel, Japan, Korea, Macedonia, Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Taiwan, United States, Venezuela.

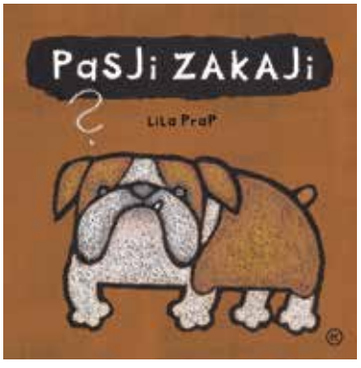
The most translated work is *Why?* (*Zakaj?*), first published in Slovene in 2002. In this picture book Lila Prap developed her now recognisable literary-artistic poetics that look very simple at first glance but are also universal. Other picture books, especially literary-informative books such as *Dinosaurs?!*, *Cat Whys*, *Creepy Crawly Whys, Doggy Whys* and others have also been published in other languages. Translated works also include *1001 Fairy Tales*, *My Daddy*, *Little Creatures*, *Animals' International Dictionary*, *We Like Counting*, *Cope*, *Animal Alphabet*, *Animal Lullabies*, *Where Do Dreams Go?*. In 2019 Lila Prap celebrated 20 years of creating picture books – in these twenty years since her first, *Little Creatures* in 1999, Lila Prap has created (written and illustrated) 18 picture books and numerous other works.



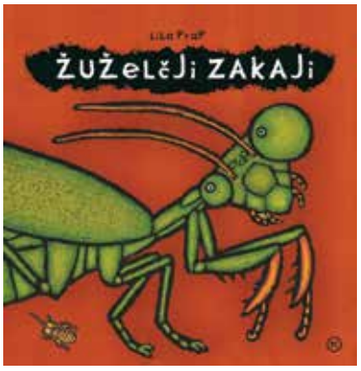
Birds?!



Cat Whys



Doggy Whys



Creepy Crawly Whys

e-mail (author):
lilaprap@gmail.com



Andrej Predin

What we have before us is a polished, intense story, full of imaginative characters and situations, with a wonderful sense of humour as well.

(Gaja Kos, review in the journal *Sodobnost*)

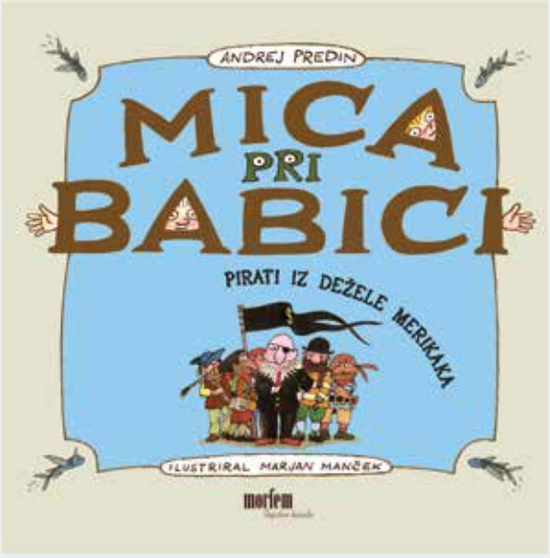
prose

Selected piece

***Mary at Grandma's: Pirates from Merikaka Land* (*Mici pri babici: Pirati iz dežele Merikaka*),**
Jezero, Morfem, 2014, illustrated by Marjan Manček

background

Mary is a tiny girl who lives in a block of flats at the centre of town during the week and spends her weekends at her grandmother's place. Although her grandmother does not have a TV or a computer, life at her house is far greater fun. There are a number of reasons this is so; firstly, as befitting all grandmothers, Mary's grandmother also allows her to do things her parents won't. She can thus jump up and down on the bed, eat sweets instead of lunch or put on makeup in front of the mirror. Best of all, her best friend Louis also lives there. In the four books they come across a magic hat that makes every wish come true, terrible pirates and crazy princesses, they even give Santa a helping hand. Stories that are funny, unpredictable, imaginary and at the same time worldly, but most of all entertaining.



Mary at Grandma's: Pirates from Merikaka Land

excerpt

(translated by Jason Blake)

Our adventurers deftly work their way through the forest. They find shelter behind some fallen trees at the top of a hill. Louis pulls out his binoculars and carefully surveys the island.

"I see it," he cries out happily and points in the direction of the house with the yellow roof. Like a small boat, it's tied to a pier of a tiny seaside village, where tall palm trees grow.

"Knock, knock, knock," Mary knocks, but no one answers.

"Anybody home?"

Suddenly, from all corners and nooks and crannies, as well as non-nooks and non-crannies, cheerful and chubby faces emerge, surrounding our heroes.

"Who are you guys?" asks Louis.

"We are the Patterlings, poof, poof," the strange little creatures cry all at once, giggling and grinning and tapping their chests.

"We're the masters of this island and we just love visitors. There hasn't been anyone for ages, and you two are now our special guests, poof, poof."

"Oh, how adorable they are," Mary titters, but Louis is not at all impressed. He doesn't trust these Patterlings, who seem a little too smarmy for his taste.

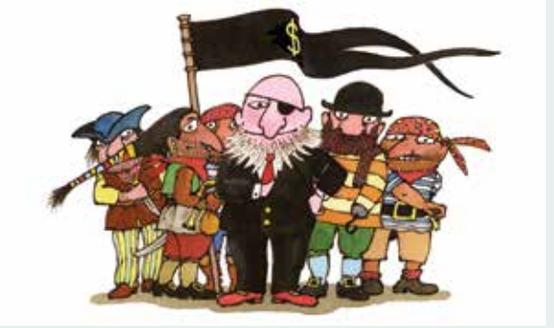
"Dear Patterlings," says Mary. "We're delighted that you have accepted us in your village. We need help: would you perhaps know how we can get back to Jolly Street, where my grandma lives?"

A fawning Patterling with a red cap on his head approaches her.

"To the left, to the left, stick to the left, poof, poof!" he confides in Mary, then stretches out his arms, wipes his brow and says, "A candy for my reward, where's my reward-candy?"

0–6

Even before Mary can respond, a couple of blue-capped Patterlings elbow themselves to the front of the pack and trumpet: "Not left! Right, right, go right!" They, too, stretch out their hands and demand candy for their assistance.
That's how it starts, and suddenly the Patterlings are clamouring all over each other, the ones with the red cap hollering "left, left," the ones with the blue cap screaming, "right, right," to and fro, each demanding candy for a reward.
The shouting soon turns into a contest and the jostling of elbows. A proper fight would certainly have broken out, had they not noticed the big, black ship sailing into the bay.
The Patterlings turn pale with fear and freeze on the spot. They put off their quarrel and say, all together, "straight, straight, go straight home!" And just like that, they disappear. "Poof, poof."



Mary at Grandma's: Pirates from Merikaka Land

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2008 for *Getting Ahead*
- The Desetnica Award, 2021 for *Aliens,* 2015 for *Mary at Grandma's: The Magic Hat,* 2014 for *Yucky Pits*

Select Bibliography

- *Arlan Under the Carpet* (*Arlan pod preprogo*), Morfem, 2022, 9+ fantastic fiction
- *Aliens* (*Vesoljčki*), MKZ, 2020, under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Mary at Grandma's: Kidnaped Santa* (*Mica pri babici: Ugrabljeni Božiček*), Morfem, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Mary at Grandma's: Out-Of-Control Princesses* (*Mica pri babici: Podivjane princeske*), Morfem, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Ugly Onion* (*Čebula Grdula*), Morfem, 2015, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Mary at Grandma's: Pirates from Merikaka Land* (*Mica pri babici: Pirati iz dežele Merikaka*), Morfem, 2014, under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Mary at Grandma's: The Magic Hat*, (*Mica pri babici: Čarobni cilinder*), Morfem, 2013, under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Yucky Pits*, (*Gnusna kalnica*), Morfem, 2013, under 9, fantasy fiction
- *Getting Ahead* (*Na zeleno vejo*), Modrijan, 2007, 13+, novel

Published in foreign languages:

- English:
  - *Mary at Grandma's: The Magic Hat*, Morfem, 2013, Slovenia
  - *Mary at Grandma's: Priates from Merikaka Land*, Morfem, 2014, Slovenia
  - *Mary at Grandma's: Out-Of-Control Princesses*, Morfem, 2016, Slovenia
  - *Yucky Pits*, Morfem, 2013, Slovenia
- Turkish: *Pis Çukurlar*, Final Kültür Sanat Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2013, Turkey



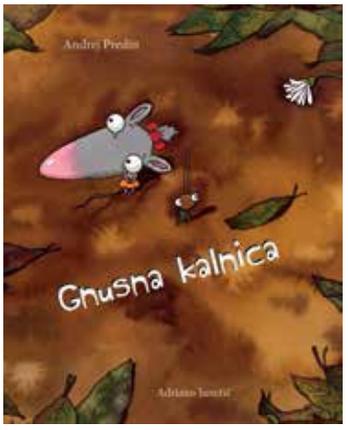
Mary at Grandma's: The Magic Hat



Aliens



Arlan Under the Carpet



Yucky Pits

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Vesna Radovanovič



The seemingly simple story offers the youngest readers a valuable message: through cooperation and dedication we can achieve anything. The story also has an extra message that touches upon intergenerational solidarity that unfortunately our 'human' world so lacks.

(from the 2019 Desetnica Award justification)

prose

Selected piece

***Little Cockerel Raises Hope* (*Petelinček prebudi upanje*),** Murska Sobota, Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2018, illustrated by Kristina Krhin

background

Little Cockerel Raises Hope is the fifth picture book in the (still continuing) series of animal stories about Little Cockerel. The protagonist Little Cockerel, with the help of his mother's advice, sorts out various messy situations and solves various problems he or one of the other characters find themselves in. In doing so he (at a symbolic level) shatters the taboos that exist in the "coop" and with his actions again and again manages to "shut the beaks" of agitators. In one of the recent books of the series Little Cockerel faces Old Roosters illness and transience.

Little Cockerel Raises Hope



excerpt
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

"I'd like to help him feel better. What can I do?" he asked Mother.
"It might be nice if you read him a story. What do you think?" Mother suggested.
"But the hens say he can't hear," Little Cockerel cried out.
"Well, we don't know that for sure. Even if he doesn't hear, it's worth trying. We all need someone close to us, especially when we're ill," Mother encouraged Little Cockerel.

Then he made up his mind. He took his favourite book of fairy tales and went up to Old Rooster in the corner of the coop. Pulling up a stool close to his bed, he asked him if he wanted to hear a story. At first Old Rooster did not pay any attention to him but when Little Cockerel stroked his feathers he turned towards him with a questioning look.
Little Cockerel read and read, becoming so engrossed in the story he almost forgot that he was reading to someone else. Eventually he looked up at Old Rooster. He noticed there was a sparkle in his eyes. This he was really happy about.

0–6

So Little Cockerel read out at least one story every day. On some days the hens also came to listen to him reading. They sat quietly around Little Cockerel and Old Rooster, and listened. Magpie and Little Duck also sometimes came into the coop. And the pair of peacocks would attentively listen to the reading through the window.

Strength slowly began to return to Old Rooster's frail body. He even pecked at the occasional grain and drank a cup of medicinal tea. One day he even thanked Little Cockerel in a raspy voice for reading the story.
Everyone clapped. Little Cockerel was very touched.

"I'd also like you to tell us something interesting from your childhood," Little Cockerel asked Old Rooster who had begun observing what was going on around him with ever greater interest.
So they either told stories to each other or read and became really good friends. Old Rooster confided in Little Cockerel his heartfelt wish, "Oh, how I would wish to once more greet the rising sun with a cock-a-doodle-doo! But I know that that is not possible, I cannot even leave the coop with these old legs of mine," he sadly looked at his twisted claws and spurs.

Little Cockerel tried to think of a way to make his old friend's wish come true. He asked Magpie for her advice. She immediately had an idea about what had to be done. She knew there was an abandoned frame of an old cart at the back of the farm. Duck helped them attach a basket to it and they brought it to the coop.

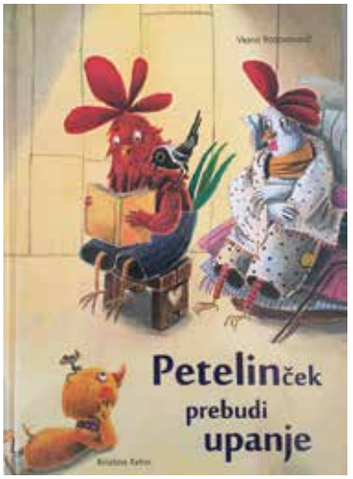
The following morning the crowing of *two* cockerels was heard for miles around. One, the younger, stood on the fence, the other, the older one, sat in the basket on the cart. Both were turned towards the sun and loudly greeted the new day.

Nominations in the field of children's literature

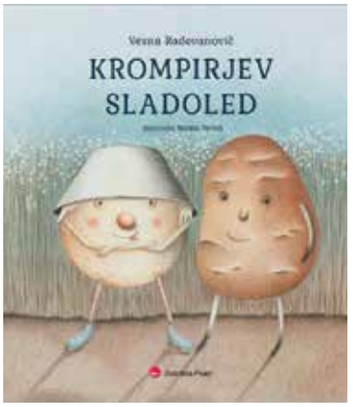
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2019 for *Little Cockerel Raises Hope*, 2009 for *Grandpa's Bike*
- The Desetnica Award, 2019 for *Little Cockerel Raises Hope*, 2018 for *Little Cockerel and the Royal Bird*

Select Bibliography

- *Potato Ice Cream (Krompirjev sladoled)*, Založba Pivec, 2022, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *I'd Like to Draw: Miki Muster (Risal bi: Miki Muster),* Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2022, 6+, short biografical fiction, picture book
- *Little Cockerel Raises Hope* (*Petelinček prebudi upanje*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2018, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Little Cockerel Falls in Love* (*Petelinček se zaljubi*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2017, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Little Cockerel and the Royal Bird* (*Petelinček in kraljevska ptica*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2016, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Little Cockerel* (*Petelinček*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2014, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Nest* (*Gnezdo*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2012, 6+, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Little Star* (*Zvezdica*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2010, 6+, realistic fiction, picture book
- *The Pink Bus* (*Rožnati avtobus*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2007, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Puffer-train* (*Puhačka*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2007, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book



Little Cockerel Raises Hope



Potato Ice Cream

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Anja Štefan



'*From dawn, through the day, and right until it gets dark, she gets things done, work gives her a spark,*' writes Anja Štefan in her poem about a bee, almost as if talking about herself. Since her debut over twenty-five years ago, the excellent children's author has created works that have become part of the canon in the treasury of Slovene texts and go beyond the framework of children's literature. /…/
In her original fairy tale *Rabbit's Little House (Zajčkova hišica)* she tells in a refined rhythm the timeless story of cooperation on the one hand and exploitation on the other, encouraging the reader to think about how individuals are treated within their community.

(from the award justification for the Prešeren Fund Award 2022)

poetry and prose

Selected piece

***Rabbit's Little House (Zajčkova hišica)*, Ljubljana, MKZ, 2021,**
illustrated by Hana Stupica



Rabbit's Little House

Rabbit's Little House

(translated by David Limon)

By the stream stood a little house and in it lived Rabbit. You could see from afar that he was house-proud, for the house was masterfully built, not from stone, but nonetheless very solid, not luxurious, but nonetheless attractive. Behind it was a large wood and in front of it a clearing, where Rabbit had a vegetable garden. It seemed it would be another good year for peas and carrots.
Then came a storm. It rained for seven days and seven nights, the stream rose and went out of control. It broke into Rabbit's house, so quickly that even three hundred rabbits couldn't have stopped it, let alone a single one. Rabbit sheltered in the attic and watched turnips, firewood and shoes floating in his kitchen –he ventured back down only when the waters retreated.
Oh dear! Mud everywhere, terrible disorder – and this was supposed to be his home? He collapsed onto a chair and cried, and at that moment Frog peered around the door.
"Oh, oh, oh, what a mess!" said Frog. "Yuck! Oh dear, oh dear! But – Rabbit is still alive and that's good. The house is still standing and that's good, too. It's a little muddy and that's not good – but we know what to do with mud. We frogs do, anyway," she said, jumping up. Using a small shovel and her bare legs she began taking the mud out of the house and when Rabbit saw how it was done, he started helping.
"There, you can do it," Frog encouraged him, "as if you were one of us. In the end you'll start enjoying it. You'll come to me and splash around in the mud all day long."
"Stop saying that, Frog, you know I won't. I never want to see mud again."
"Then close your eyes," said Frog.
"I feel like giving up…"
"Don't! Wait, I'll sing a song."
"Oh, come on, can't you see I'm sad?"
"That's precisely why! So that we can have a little laugh. So that we're not too serious. Listen – how does it go…, oh yes.

Mud is soft,
easy to move,
it's so simple
when you get in the groove,
Sssst – on the shovel,
Sssst – out the door,
for us frogs,
it's a great dance floor.

0–6

"It's good to have you here," Rabbit said with a smile. "You go on singing! Chase my grey thoughts away..."
And Frog sang – but not for long, because Squirrel appeared at the door.
"Rabbit, Rabbit, are you still alive?"
"Only half alive," said Rabbit.
"Nonsense," said Frog. "If I'm not mistaken, you're still kicking. How can half a rabbit push a shovel? Come on, we're doing fine. And if you join us, Squirrel..."
"Of course, of course, immediately," said Squirrel. "Ugh, disaster, where shall I start? Here, there, ah, it'll be alright, a house like this can take a lot. But I keep saying, why build on the ground?! I never get flooded..."
"You're not going to believe this," Frog interrupted her, "but some of us find it a little bit difficult to climb a tree. But whatever – it's good there are three of us now and we're glad of that, aren't we, Rabbit?"
"Not three – there's me, as well!" said a voice and Badger came in. "Oh, Rabbit, I was so afraid! He won't try and be too brave, I told myself. Because if he does, he'll get swept away. But no, I said, luckily, rabbits aren't too brave. And I was right again. I'm so glad you're still alive."
"Alive, but not much more," said Rabbit.
"Of course he's alive," said Frog, "and that's why he needs his house again. Here's a bucket, make a start, Badger."
It really was clear that Frog wasn't flustered by a bit of mud.

And so they all set to work. Rabbit shovelled the mud out of the house, Badger brought clean water, and Frog and Squirrel kept scraping, wiping and rinsing. They were making progress, but slowly. If only another animal came to help... Oh, look, Bear!
"So – how's it going?" said Bear as he shuffled up to the door.
"Slowly..." said Rabbit with a smile.
"We're keeping busy," said Squirrel.
"And rabbiting, to keep up the rhythm," said Rabbit jokingly.
"Why don't you join us, you're not made of wood," said Frog. She had always thought that Bear could move a bit faster now and again. But Bear just stood there, talking,
"Who'd have thought that water could be so wild. It seems impossible, and then suddenly it happens. It rises and you never know when it'll come again."
"Don't frighten us! Help instead!"
"I don't want to frighten you," said Bear. "I'm just pondering. You never know with water. Should Rabbit now tremble whenever it rains? No. Let's move his house. What I mean is – let's build a new one. There on the hill he'll be completely safe. It never floods there."
Who would hesitate at such a brilliant idea?
"Bear is darn right," said Frog. "Maybe it really would be better to move away from the stream."
"What about my little house?"
"It'll stay here. You can still garden, weave baskets, shell beans – you can come whenever you want. But we'll build your real house elsewhere."
"Among the oak trees."
"It's nice there."
"But how," Rabbit objected, "when this house is so very mine. I built it with my own paws."
"You'll build the new one, too, but with our help. And we'll bring you everything you want. So, do you agree?"
And finally, Rabbit said yes.
They went to get saws, axes, nails, a hammer and a plane. Together, they worked and the new house grew in front of their eyes. Bear was a good carpenter, everything sang beneath his paws, and the others weren't too bad, either. They passed things, held things, hammered and sawed, happily helping each other. They even sang to speed things along. No wonder Fox heard them.
"What's this? What's happening?" she said, observing them through the bushes. She didn't go nearer, if she did she'd have to help. And she didn't fancy that. Her paws were soft and well looked after, and she had a new bow around her neck. But above all she knew this: if she waited, the mystery would reveal itself. And it did.

As they dragged up Rabbit's old cupboards, table and benches, as they rattled around the house with his pots and ladles, as they washed his muddy clothes in the stream and hung them beneath the overhang, it became clear that this was Rabbit's new home.
"Is that possible?!" thought Fox sulkily. "That they'd build a house for him just like that?! They just come and build him a new house. For a common rabbit. Why a rabbit?! Is a rabbit something special? Is he more than a fox? I'd like a new house, too."
Fox had a perfectly decent house in the woods, but why not have two houses?!
"Let me think, let me think..." she repeated as she walked down the path. "If it all started with the flood... hm... I know."
She ran home and dug a shallow hole behind her house. She sieved the soil into it and brought some sand from the stream. She got a bucket and a rake, and then waited for rain. Let it pour, let it thunder, rain, rain, when would it rain again?! And when it really did thunder one night, she ran out like crazy as the first raindrops fell. Rain! Oh, rain! She caught the water from the gutter and carried it to the hole and then raked the soil hither and thither – yes, Fox was making mud. She then put it into a bucket, put a little more water into it from the gutter and then – splash – poured it all into her house. And again. And again. Let it flood! Let it look as if it was a real flood. And the house became muddy through and through.

Towards morning, the rain stopped and Fox sat on her threshold, looking glum.
"Ooooh," she began, "poor me! Everything is gone, everything flooded. Look! Mud! Is there anyone around?"

Of course, Rabbit was the first to come running. Now that he knew what a disaster meant, he really wanted to help, anyone, immediately. But – wasn't it a little strange: the house was flooded, but the path leading to it wasn't? The flowers were blooming, the garden was perfectly alright, even the yard was dry. Inside the house mud and outside all dry. Strange, strange!

"Oh, woe is me," moaned Fox, "sooner or later I'll get carried away. Where shall I shelter, where shall I go? Where can I find a safe home? Ooooh, if only someone would help me... Where is Bear – he would know what to do..."

"Bear is here," a voice said from the forest and not only Bear, but Badger, Frog and Squirrel all came running. But now they were there, hm, where had all that water come from? All that mud? Perhaps from above? Had a torrent flown through Fox's house?

To try and understand what had happened, Bear walked across the yard. And what did he see? In a hole near the fence lay the rake that Fox had forgotten to tidy away and not far away, an overturned muddy bucket.

"You know something, Fox," he said, "call us when you really get flooded. I don't want to be making mud cakes with you."

"I would!" said Frog. She jumped into the muddy hole and sang,

"It's not a real flood,
Fox is making mud,
baking dark brown cake,
what a pity it's a fake.
She must think we are thick
to fall for such a trick.
Let's leave her in the mud,
it'll really do her good!"

"Or she should get it out herself," said Squirrel.

"Because that which goes in, should go out," said Badger and he found what he said very clever.

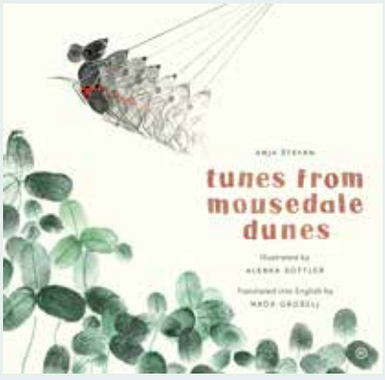
"And the rest of us – hey, follow me!" said Rabbit. "You know my door is always open!"

"Do close it sometimes, though! You know, because of the draught," said Bear jokingly. And they all went across the hill happily.

Fox was left on her own. What could she do? She went to get some water and then started: little by little, with a bucket and a cloth in her hands – mud is terribly annoying. She spent the whole week cleaning, but the walls were still a little brown. There was no other way – she had to paint the house. They say she did it with a brush, but I think she used her tail. Because her tail is still a little white at the tip.

Selected poems

Tunes from Mousedale Dunes (Drobtine iz Mišje doline), Ljubljana, MKZ, 2017, illustrated by Alenka Sottler
(translated by Nada Grošelj)



Tunes from Mousedale Dunes

Dance Away, My Little Mouse

Dance away, my little mouse,
dance and shake your tiny house,
just make sure your pittypat
doesn't take you near the cat.

Gingerbread

Gran and Grandpa Mouse, it's said,
bought a piece of gingerbread
but then decided on the way
to keep it for a rainy day.
From time to time they looked at it
but never dared to taste a bit,
and time went by and now they're dead
and who will eat their gingerbread?



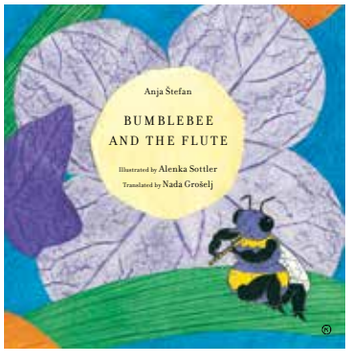
Tunes from Mousedale Dunes

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Prešeren Foundation Award, 2022
- The Večernica Award, 2018 for *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2007 for *One Hundred Puzzles*
- The Levstik Award, 2019 for *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*, 2007 for *A Nook at the End of the World*, 2001 for *Grind, Grind, Little Mill*
- The Golden Pear Award, 2018 for *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*, 2014 for *A Swing for All*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2014 for *A Swing for All*, 2008 for *Four Black Ants*
- The Desetnica Award, 2021 for *I Have Green Shoes*, 2020 for *Elf Eyes* 2019 for *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*, 2018 for *Bobby and His Golden Hens*, 2017 for *Fruit from Our Ship*, 2016 for *Another Hundred Riddles*, 2014 for *A Swing for All*, 2010 for *A Pot with Spots*
- The Levstik Award, 2021 for *Rabbit's Little House,* 2017 for *Another Hundred Riddles*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2021 for *Rabbit's Little House*; 2020 for *I Have Green Shoes,* 2018 for *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*, 2012 for *Devil's Wool*, 2008 for *Four Black Ants*, 2006 for *Bobby and the Boat*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *The Bear and the Hat,* 2021 for *Rabbit's Little House*, *I Have Green Shoes,* 2019 for *Seven Bears; Elf Eyes*, 2017 for *Looking for a Little House*; *Fruit from Our Ship*; *Hazelnuts, Hazelnuts*, 2016 for *The World Is Like Ringa Ringa Roses*, 2014 for *A Swing for All*, 2013 for *About the Firedrake*, 2012 for *Devil's Wool*
- The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, 2022, 2020, 2018



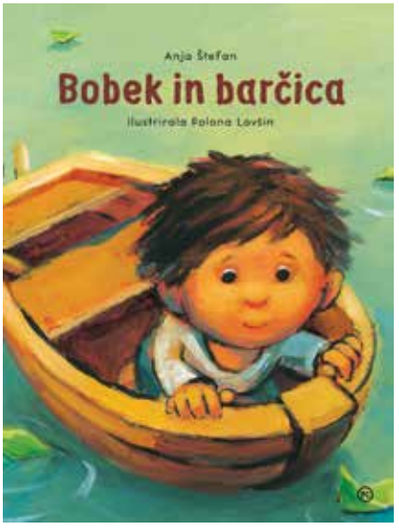
Bumblebee and the Flute

Select Bibliography

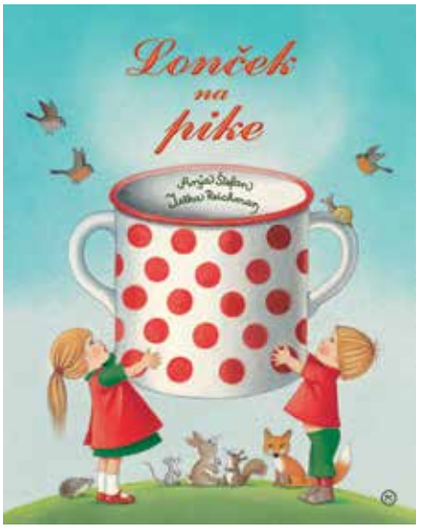
- *Four Black Ants* (*Štiri črne mravljice*), MKZ, 2022, 13+, fairy tales
- *The World Is Like Ring-a-ring o' Roses* (*Svet je kakor ringaraja*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2015 and reprints), under 6, poetry and fairy tales
- *Hazelnuts, Hazelnuts* (*Lešniki, lešniki*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2000 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *A Pot with Spots* (*Lonček na pike*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2008 and reprints), under 6, poetry
- *A Nook at the End of the World* (*Kotiček na koncu sveta*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2005 and reprints), under 6, fairy tales
- *Rabbit's Little House* (*Zajčkova hišica*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2000), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *The Bear and the Hat* (*Medved in klobuk*), MKZ, 2021, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *A Swing for All* (*Gugalnica za vse*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2013), under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *300 Rabbits (Tristo zajcev),* MKZ, 2021 (prvi natis 2019), 6+, zbirka prirejenih ljudskih pravljic
- *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes* (*Drobtine iz Mišje doline*), MKZ, 2019 (first edition 2017 and reprints), under 6, poetry

Published in foreign languages:

- Korean: *Bobby and the Boat*, Sibylle Books, 2007, South Korea
- Chinese: *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*, Rightol Media Limited, 2018, China
- English:
  - *Bumblebee and the Flute*, MKZ, 2020, Slovenia
  - *Tunes from Mousedale Dunes*, MKZ, 2020, Slovenia



Bobby and the Little Boat



A Pot with Spots

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Jana Bauer



The tranquil beginning of the picture book – with the hedgehog walking about the forest quite contentedly – turns into a chain of humorous incidents prompted by the desire, or indeed an urge, for a hug. … Surprising turns are followed by a surprising conclusion demonstrating that often, what we're looking for desperately is right in front of us.

(from the award justification for the Večernica Award, 2022)

prose

Selected piece

***How to Hug a Hedgehog (Kako objeti ježa)*, Ljubljana KUD Sodobnost International, ilustriral Peter Škerl**



How to Hug a Hedgehog

background

Hedgehog lives peacefully until he is one day suddenly overwhelmed with a mighty desire to hug someone. But who would hug a prickly hedgehog? No one seems to have the guts to do it. Poor Hedgehog, he feels sad and desperate. The good news is that Bobby the Fox lives close-by in the forest! He takes on the endeavour with the cunning shrewdness of a true fox. The main ingredient of the story about the miserable hedgehog and Bobby is sparkling wit. The hedgehog is completely desperate while Bobby, a little boy running around in a fox costume, is his opposite: he confronts the problem courageously, resourcefully, and efficiently. He has a number of ideas and proposes lots of solutions, none of which, however, seem to be the right one... A true hug can only arise out of true friendship.

excerpt

(translated by David Limon)

How to Hug a Hedgehog

It was a perfectly ordinary day. Hedgehog was wandering around the woods. He was a simple, cheerful hedgehog, with pointy prickles and an inquisitive nose. Suddenly something stopped him. He looked left. Nothing. Right. Nothing. Nothing in front of him. Nothing behind him. He wanted to take a step. He couldn't. What was stopping him was coming from within him. A desire. It was so strong that it stopped Hedgehog from taking another step. Hedgehog had to think.

I must hug someone, he said to himself.

He spotted an elephant splashing in a puddle.

"Hey, elephant," shouted the hedgehog, "can I give you a hug?"

"You know," the elephant shuffled from foot to foot. "I seem to have a fluttery affliction." He started flapping his ears. "See, I just get carried away." The elephant fluttered his ears and moved slowly towards the woods. "I must have caught it from the birds," he shouted before making his escape.

Hedgehog looked after him in astonishment. His desire was no smaller.

At that moment a bear came whistling past. Hedgehog's prickles stood up in joy.

"Bear!" he exclaimed. "Can you give me a hug?"

The bear instantly stopped whistling. "I would," he mumbled, "of course I would if …. ehm …. ehm …."

"If what?"

"If I wasn't so terribly unhappy!" said the bear, "And unhappiness can be contagious, you know." He waddled off so satisfied that he started whistling again.

Hedgehog sighed and went on. On the path by the old pine tree he came across a fox. Well, it wasn't a real fox. It was Bobby wearing a fox costume. But the costume looked so real. It had a hood with fox ears and a tail made out of soft fabric.

"May I hug you?" asked the hedgehog hesitantly.

"No," said Bobby the fox.

"Why not?" asked Hedgehog miserably.

Bobby scratched behind the ear on his hood. He was an honest fox. "Because you're a hedgehog and you're prickly," he explained.

6+



"I'm prickly?" asked Hedgehog with surprise. Bobby nodded. "You've got prickles. You're prickly. You'll have a job finding someone to hug you."
Hedgehog was devastated. He lay on the ground, flat on his stomach.
"Come on, hedgehog," said Bobby, "don't be childish, get up."
Hedgehog stared emptily into space, saying nothing. Nothing could lift his disappointed prickles up again.
"Alright," Bobby finally gave in. "You'll get your hug."
He rushed off and soon returned with a chair and signposts with all sorts written on them. He sat Hedgehog on a chair behind the bushes. And then he stuck the signposts into the ground by the path. Unfortunately, the signs did not attract any animal that wandered past. Bobby the Fox had almost given up when finally, someone came plodding up. It was a tortoise. A tortoise!
IF YOU LIKE A CHALLENGE, FOLLOW THE ARROW, the tortoise read on the first two sign.
ONLY FOR THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE, he followed the third sign.
IF YOU DARE TO HUG THE ANIMAL SITTING ON THE CHAIR, YOU'RE THE KING OF THESE WOODS, read the tortoise and shot into the bushes.
"Where is he?" he shouted. "Where's the lion?"
"What lion?" asked Bobby the Fox.
"You wrote that whoever overcomes the lion, will be the king of the animals."
"No, it says that whoever hugs the hedgehog, will be the king of these woods."
"Why?" said the tortoise in indignation. "Is he perhaps the king of the animals? No! And never will be. If you overcome the lion, you become the king. Or queen! Any more such nonsense and I'll beat you up." The tortoise walked off.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2022 for *How to Hug a Hedgehog*
- The Desetnica Award, 2020 for *Ding Dong Stories*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2022 for *How to Hug a Hedgehog,* 2018 for *Scary Fairy and the Wild Winter*; 2012 for *Scary Fairy in Wicked Wood*; 2003 for *The Witch Vanisher*
- The Desetnica Award, 2018 for *Scary Fairy and the Wild Winter*; 2012 for *Scary Fairy in Wicked Wood*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *How to Hug a Hedgehog,* 2021 for *How to Frighten a Monster*

Select Bibliography

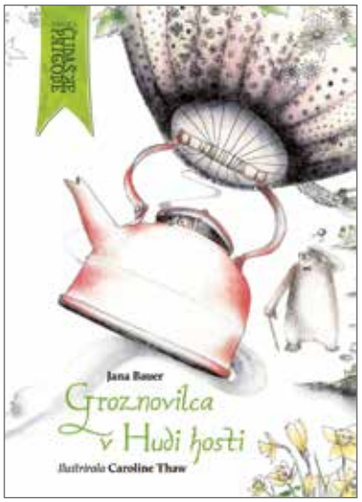
- *How to Hug a Hedgehog* (*Kako objeti ježa*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2022 (first edition 2021), short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *How to Frighten a Monster* (*Kako prestrašiti pošast*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2022 (first edition 2020), short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Scary Fairy in Wicked Wood (Groznovilca v Hudi hosti),* KUD Sodobnost International, 2021 (first edition 2011), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *How to frighten a monster* (*Kako prestrašiti pošast*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2020, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Ding Dong Stories (Ding dong zgodbe),* KUD Sodobnost International, 2018, 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Scary Fairy and the Wild Winter (Groznovilca in divja zima),* KUD Sodobnost International, 2016, 6+, fantasy fiction
- *In the Land of Gingerbread (V deželi medenjakov),* Vodnikova založba, 2006, 6+, short fantasy fiction
- *The Witch Vanisher* (*Izginjevalec čarovnic*), Vodnikova založba, 2002, 6+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *The Witch Vanisher* (*Izginjevalec čarovnic*), Texture Press, 2011, United States
- *Scary Fairy in Wicked Wood* (*Groznovilca v Hudi hosti*)
  - Croatian: *Strašna vila u Groznoj šumi*, Algoritam, 2013, Croatia
  - Polish: *Strasznowiłka w Groźnym Gąszczu*, EZOP, 2015, Poland
  - Lithuanian: *Raganiukė Gūdžiojoje girioje*, Nieko rimto, 2015, Lithuania
  - Icelandic: *Skrítin skógardís í skóginum ógurlega,* Óðinsauga útgáfa, 2015, Iceland
  - Spanish: *El haditerrible en el Bosque Furioso*, Malinc, 2017, Slovenia
  - Turkish: *Haylaz Peri Ürpertiler Ormanı'nda*, Çınar Yayınları, 2017, Turkey
  - German: *Die kleine Gruselfee*, S. Fischer Verlag, 2019, Germany
  - Serbian: *Groznić vila u Strašnoj šum*i, Laguna, 2019, Serbia
  - English: *Scary Fairy in Wicked Wood*, Sodobnost – Horizon, 2019, UK
- *Scary Fairy and the Wild Winter* (*Groznovilca in divja zima*)
  - Macedonian: *Grozovilata vo Strašnata šuma*, Skopje, Artkonekt, 2019, North Macedonia
  - Latvian: *Mežlaumina Baigaja biezokni*, Riga, Aminori, 2020, Latvia
  - Indonesian : *Peri Mengerikan di Hutan Seram*, Yogyakarta, Graha Cendekia, 2020, Indonesia
  - Croatian: *Strašna vila i divlja zima,* Ibis grafika, 2018, Croatia
  - Lithuanian: *Raganiukė ir užkerėtasis akmuo*, Nieko rimto, 2018, Lithuania
  - Polish: *Strasznowiłka i dzika zima*, EZOP, 2019, Poland
- *Ding Dong Stories*
  - Germani: *Ding-Dong-Geschichten*, Mohorjeva, Hermagoras, 2021, Austria
  - Croatian: *Ding dong priče*, Zagreb, Ibis grafika, 2019, Croatia
- *How to frighten a monster*
  - Croatian: *Kako prestrašiti čudovište*, Zagreb, Ibis grafika, 2020, Croatia
  - English: *How to frighten a monster*, Ljubljana, Sodobnost International, Horizon, 2020, Slovenija
- *How to Hug a Hedgehog*
  - Croatian: *Kako zagrliti ježa*, Ibis grafika, 2022, Croatia
  - Greek: *Πώς αγκαλιάζουμε έναν σκαντζόχοιρο,* Vakxikon Media & Publishing Group, 2022, Greece
  - Italian: *Come abbracciare un riccio*, Sinnos editrice, 2023, Italy

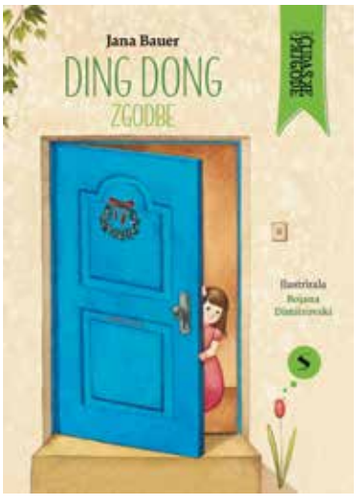


Scary Fairy and the Wild Winter



Scary Fairy in Wicked Wood





Ding Dong Stories



How to Frighten a Monster

e-mail (author):
jana.bauer@guest.arnes.si

6+

Borut Gombač



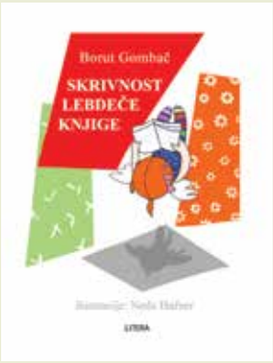
Borut Gombač's stories are charming, amazing, innovative, unpredictable, drawing the reader into the immensity of the author's vivid imagination, characterised by a refined narrative style and humour. In his storytelling the author often boldly wonders into the domain of *nonsense*, inviting the reader to step out of the boundaries of the rational and think about their own existence in the world we share with others, some like us, some different. *The Secrets of the Hovering Book* is a literary treat that with its complexity attracts both young and adult readers.

(from the award justification for the 2021 Desetnica Award)

prose

Selected piece

The Secret of the Hovering Book (Skrivnost lebdeče knjige), Maribor Litera, 2020



The Secret of the Hovering Book

excerpt
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

As Tihomir the librarian, slightly out of breath, propped his bike of a venerable age against the crumbling wall, he quickly ran his fingers through his tousled beard and greyish hair. Then he used the inside of his flannel shirt to wipe his glasses, fogged up by the morning dew. He spent the next few minutes fervently rummaging through the pockets of his small worn rucksack. It took him a while to find the big black key. With it he, after a few jangling attempts successfully unlocked the creaky wooden door with the sign on it that said:

The Old Children's Library

and finally entered. In the dark he felt for the switch on the wall and turned on the lights. Then he cried out loudly, 'Whaaaaaat are you doing here?'

Somewhere at the height of his forehead, he saw a book. As all this was taking place in a library, one of the endless library books would not have been worth a mention, let alone warrant such a loud reaction. The reason it was loud was because this book was not simply lying on a shelf or even on the library trolley, but quite simply hovering in mid-air.

Curious, Tihomir circled his hand above it to find the ropes it was suspended from. /…/ A few times he tried to catch it and take a closer look, but it always managed to somehow get away.

A daft book like this is not going to mess around with me. I've read too many for a single one to freak me out! he thought to himself.

So he called himself a time-out, as one would say in sports, or in this case the library, giving himself a little time to allow him to work out a strategy.

For a while he indifferently gazed out of the window, whistling idly to himself /…/ then he tried again and again bounced towards the evasive book, in doing so destroying two more chairs, a table and three lamps.

Then he finally gave up. Battered and bruised he crawled to the phone and called the head of the library, *Magistra* Sofia Čuk, 'Hello, *Magistra* Čuk, good morning! It's me, Tihomir ... Yes, I'm doing mornings this week. I would like to tell you that somewhere in between the portraits of Ela Peroci and... Yes, that's right, I am on the roster for next Saturday morning. I wanted to tell you that somewhere between the portraits of Ela Peroci and Leopold Suhodolčan, there is a book hovering... Aha…! Mhm…! Aha…! Mhm…! Aha… Mhm…! Aha…! Mhm…! Aha…! Mhm…! So, you think that there must be something wrong with the shelves..… Aha…! Mhm…! Alright, I will call him.'

And Tihomir did call him – Janko the Janitor, that is. /…/ The janitor arrived with a ladder over his shoulder, three screwdrivers in one and two hammers in another pocket, and he got straight to work. He attached the wobbly leg to the table. After fixing the broken lamps, he also replaced all four broken chairs. Then he simply propped up the ladder against the hovering book and, stepping up the rungs, commented loudly, 'It will probably be something with the electricity…' But he couldn't finish his sentence because the book suddenly moved and, together with the ladder, three screwdrivers and two hammers, Janko the Janitor nosedived right onto the chairs, the table and the lamps below.

When he once again attached the leg to the table, replaced three of the chairs and repaired the lamps for a second time, he hobbled away, muttering, 'It must be all the dust and the cobwebs!'

Tihomir the librarian then called Zinka the cleaning lady. She climbed onto the table, took a cloth and dusted the hovering book from all sides. 'Bit it was sparkling clean!' /…/ Tihomir apologised and promised not to call

6+

her again about such a trivial matter as a hovering book. He checked his watch. A few more minutes and the first visitors would start arriving. /…/

Exhausted and desperate, he collapsed into a chair. And, as if it too was tired, the hovering book also slowly landed on the borrowing counter.

No, you won't trick me, he thought to himself and turned away defiantly. But he couldn't help himself, he stealthily glanced towards the book just at the moment it invitingly opened itself.

Tihomir the librarian had always found three things hard to resist, a bottle of cold beer, apricot dumplings, and an open book. And because there was no beer or apricot dumplings around, he began to read. In fact, he only tried to start reading because the mischievous book snapped itself closed, briefly catching Tihomir's curious nose. He shouted angrily, 'Tell you what, darling, I've had enough!' He hit his fist against the counter and took a pair of scissors out of the drawer. 'I'll show you!'

Only then did he notice to his horror, that standing before him was a frightened elderly lady, white as vanilla pudding. She had brought along her two pre-school age grandchildren to join the library. Unlike their grandmother, the children didn't look frightened at all, instead they watched, wide-eyed, smiling and with great interest the librarian's peculiar shenanigans. Rather than vanilla, Tihomir's face now blushed to the colour of strawberry pudding as he stuttered, 'Oh, yes, of course, the first readers! Is that the time?'

He apologised to the grandmother and her two grandchildren /…/ and noticed that the mischievous book had vanished from the counter.

'I'll be right back!' he smiled bitterly /…/ and rushed off among the shelves at top speed. He searched wildly through the books, pushing them all off the shelves to see whether there is one among them that wouldn't fall onto the floor but stay floating mid-air. He even asked a few readers that had just arrived whether they might help him with this.

And I can tell you, many were prepared to help, some were even really excited about doing so. In this joint effort, they soon managed to throw all the books off their shelves. Then they did the same in the warehouse as well. They checked the entire building, even those hidden corners of the library only known by the very few librarians who had worked at the children's library for as long as Tihomir, but all in vain. They were unable to find the hovering book.

They couldn't find it yesterday, and they couldn't find it today. I don't know, perhaps it is one of those that is listed in the computer as being on the shelf but it most certainly isn't there. Or it might have flown off to some other library? I really don't know. In any case, I would like to use this opportunity for some advice and a warning. You ought to borrow as many books as possible from the libraries you visit. This way you just might find it one day. And if you are lucky enough to do so, grab it with both hands and don't let go until you read it from cover to cover. Who knows, perhaps the very last page will explain the secret of its hovering!

Nominations

- The Večernica Award, 2021 for *The Secret of the Hovering Book,* 2005 for *The Wide-eyed Little Alarm Clock*
- The Desetnica Award, 2021 for *The Secret of the Hovering Book*, 2005 for *The Wide-eyed Little Alarm Clock*

Bibliography

- *The Secret of the Hovering Book* (*Skrivnost lebdeče knjige*), Litera, 2020, 6+, short fantasy prose
- *Fog Dog* (*Psiček iz megle*), Založba Obzorja, 2016, under 6, short prose, picture book
- *The Wide-eyed Little Alarm Clock* (*Velike oči male budilke*), Aristej, 2004, 6+, short fantasy fiction
- *A Little Space and a Tiny Minute* (*Prostorček in Minutka*), Aristej, 1997, 9+, poetry
- *The Largest Newspaper in the World* (*Največji časopis na svetu*), DZS, 1993, 9+, poetry



The Largest Newspaper in the World



The Wide-eyed Little Alarm Clock



Fog Dog

e-mail (author):
borut.gombac@gmail.com

Majda Koren



Koren's protagonists, very different every time, are always childishly mischievous, playful and will not allow themselves to be pushed aside. The author's trademark is a stylistically concise, polished and minimalistic, yet humorous writing that [...] preserves language as the primary field of play, as a field of unlimited metaphorical potential.

(Alenka Urh, review in the journal *Sodobnost*)

prose

Selected piece

***Mitzy from 2A* (*Mici iz 2.a*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2009, illustrated by Matjaž Schmidt



Mitzy from 2A

background

Monsters are usually terrible and terrifying but nobody is afraid of Mitzy, a rather small monster that only reaches up to our knees and behaves more like a slightly naughty child with a great deal of imagination than like a monster.
The adventures of Mitzy have so far appeared in three books. In the first Mitzy is still at home and does not go to school. The second and third books describe her adventures in the classroom.
There are around twenty stories in each book. They are miniatures, minor every-day events that can happen to any child. Mitzy sometimes appears like a naughty child, at other times a protector of her school friends in trouble. If she cannot help them, she at least tries to console them – in her very own way, by tickling them, ruffling their hair, or simply giving them a hug.
Mitzy is one of the most adored characters in contemporary Slovene fiction for children, probably because she thinks in the same way children think.

excerpt
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

To School!

Around seven years ago Uncle Zlatko gave Simon a small furry toy monster for his birthday. It had pink fur and large green eyes. But the toy monster only pretended it was made out of fur. In actual fact it was a real live monster!
"You're alive!" Simon called out when it crawled off the shelf into his bed in the evening.
"Yes, hi, I'm Mitzy!" said the monster and fell asleep without saying anything else. From then onwards Mitzy and Simon were inseparable friends.
Years passed and Simon went to school. Mitzy stayed at home alone. Sometimes she would take a bath and make a real mess in the bathroom. In the kitchen she would find the biscuits that Simon's mother bought for their guests. All that was left were a few crumbs on the table. When she once found some of Simon's stickers she stuck them all over the walls in the flat and even stuck one on her forehead.

With Mitzy being bored at home all day and doing all these silly things, Mother and Simon decided that Mitzy should go to school.
She was to go the following day. Straight into Year 2 because she was too clever for Year 1.
Simon took her as far as the door to the classroom for Year 2 and then went off to the second floor where his own, Year-4 classroom was located.
"G'day!" Mitzy greeted everyone as she entered the classroom.
The children all sat quietly at their desks. Standing in front of the classroom at the whiteboard was Ms Mina, the teacher.
"Good morning Mitzy! Children, this is our new pupil. To start with she can sit next to Anže, as there's an empty space next to him," Ms Mina decided.
The children stood up and all shook Mitzy's hand.
It was then reading time and they turned to page twenty-nine.
"Anže, you start, please!" Ms Mina said.
Mitzy glanced at the reading book and glanced at Anže.

6+

Anže was pale as a ghost. He had great difficulty reading the letters from the book,
"The beee-aaaa-rrr… Bear."
And Mitzy quietly whispered at him,
"The bear sat under the pear tree and scratched his head."
And Anže repeated after her, "The bear sat under the pear tree and scratched his head."
Ms Mina was not happy,
"Mitzy, you must not whisper the text to Anže!"



Mitzy from 2A



Mitzy from 2A

"I have to, he's having such difficulty reading it! He's quite pale with worry!" said Mitzy.
"Alright then, you read the rest of the story, so Anže won't have such a hard time," Ms Mina told her, laughing.
Mitzy read the story about the bear in no time and all the children clapped enthusiastically.

My Favourite People

"Today we shall paint!" Ms Mina told the children. "We are going to draw our favourite people, with felt-tip pens and then use watercolours to colour them.
The children spread out some old newspapers so they would not get their desks dirty when painting. They also wore some old clothes as overalls so as not to get paint on their nice clothes.
Then they had to think about who their favourite people were.
Mitzy didn't have to think long. Her favourite people were Simon and his mother. Simon has medium, long blond hair, wears black trousers and a top with a hood. His mother changes the colour of her hair every month and wears jeans and glittery T-shirts.
Ms Mina put on some old-fashioned music so the children could listen to it as they drew.
Most of the children drew their mummy and daddy. Some drew school friends. Pia was also drawing mummy and daddy. She first drew her mummy, then she started drawing her daddy. Then she remembered that her two favourite people had fallen out and no longer live together.
Tears came to her eyes and fell onto the drawing of mummy and half of daddy.
Ms Mina came to see what was wrong. Mitzy followed her.
"I can't draw them because they're no longer together!" Pia explained, sobbing.
"You can still draw them, they are still your favourite people, even if they don't like each other anymore," Ms Mina consoled her.
"And they both love you just like before!" said Mitzy.
"Are you sure?" Pia asked doubtfully.
"Of course, it's true. I swear by a thousand monsters it is!" said Mitzy, ruffled Pia's hair and ran back to her desk to finish her own picture.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2006 for *Eva and the Goat*
- The Levstik Award, 2011 for *Mitzy from 2A*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2011 for *Mikey*, 2009 for *Mitzy from 2A*, 2008 for *Julia Is In Love, lol*, 2006 for *Tales of Zlatko the Rabbit*, 2004 for *Soupsie's Diary*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2022 for *The Magic Bone*

Select Bibliography

- *The Magic Bone* (*Čarobna kost*), MKZ, 2022, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *Inspector Joe, part 1 ½* (*Inšpektor Jože 1 ½. del*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2021, 6+, comics book
- *Pick and Pocket* (*Kapo in Bundo*), Ljubljana, KUD Sodobnost International, 2020, 6+, comics book
- *Mitzy from 2A* (*Mici iz 2.a*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 2009 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Mitzy the Little Monster* (*Mala pošast Mici*), MKZ, 2019 (first edition 1994 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Cook Me Up a Fairy Tale* (*Skuhaj mi pravljico*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2016, 6+, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Inspector Joe* (*Inšpektor Jože*), Mladika, 2014, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Louisa From Outer Space* (*Lojza iz vesolja*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2008, 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Julia Is In Love, lol* (*Julija je zaljubljena, lol*), Karantanija, 2008, 13+, realistic fiction
- *Eva and the Goat* (*Eva in kozel*), MKZ, 2006, 9+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *Inspector Joe, part 1 ½*, Ljubljana, KUD Sodobnost International, 2021, Slovenia, *Louisa from Outer Space,* KUD Sodobnost International, 2008, Slovenia
- Polish: *Pick and Pocket*, Druganoga, 2023, Poland, *Ugotuj mi bajkę!*, EZOP, 2017, Poland
- Estonian: *Keeda mulle üks muinasjutt!*, Päike ja Pilv, 2018, Estonia
- Latvian: *Uzvāri man pasaciņu!* Liels un mazs, 2018, Latvia
- French : *Frik et Frak*, EN CAVALE,Chouette Publishing Inc., Canada, France
- Spanish: *Capo y Pata*, Barcelona, Zahorí Books, 2022, Spain
- Catalan: *Cap i Pota*, Barcelona, Zahorí Books, 2022, Spain
- Italian: *Pick and Pocket*, Sinnos editorice, 2023, Italy



Cook Me Up a Fairy Tale



Tales of Zlatko the Rabbit

e-mail (author):
strudelj@gmail.com
website:
www.majdakoren.si

Miroslav Košuta



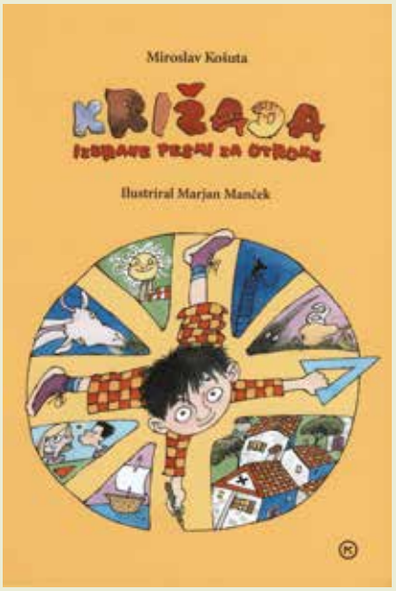
[...] the brilliant range of Miroslav Košuta's poetry just seems to fan out before the amazed eyes of his young readers especially because its unique colours and hues today shine just as brightly as thirty years ago when his first curious *Little Mouse* appeared in his verse.

(Igor Saksida in the publication *Živeti mejo*, 2007)

poetry

Selected poems

***Crossroads* (*Križada*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2006, illustrated by Marjan Manček
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



Crossroad

Lying in Wait with Bear Bait

To catch a bear, or two, or thee,
go sit up there in the old pear tree.
You can wait for the bear
right up there in the pear.

But as we sit up there,
waiting for the bear,
we cannot but stare
at that yummy pear.

Forget the bear
and pick the pear,
we'll eat the pear
instead of the bear.

What's in a Drop of Rain

In a drop of rain
is the tear,
rolling down
our cheek.

In a drop of rain
is the sun,
smiling
inside the tear.

Selected poem

***Bear With Mouse on His Shoulder*,** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2019, illustrated by Maša Kozjek
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Mouse Dreamed

Mouse dreamed soft and velvety dreams:
She had set off on the road one day,
beyond the clouds, and far further it seems,
to a sunny land full of treats and play.

Sad old Bear, down there, outside his empty den,
his snotty handkerchief waving goodbye,
just stood out there, waving again and again,
upset that Mouse would no longer come by.

But Mouse misses his pranks, his funny old tricks –
and wakes up in fear, cannot dream any more,
so she cuddles up close to his fur for a fix,
but Bear, fast asleep, just continues to snore.

6+

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Prešeren Lifetime Achievement Award, 2011
- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2015
- The Levstik Award, 1988 for *The Karst Is Great*
- The IBBY Honours List, 2008

Nominations in the field of children's literature

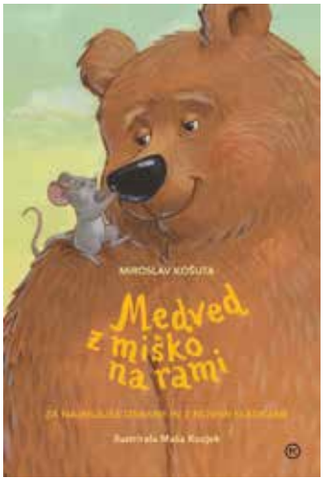
- The Večernica Award, 2018 for *Swallets*, 2003 for *Their Stories*
- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *Caress the Wind: Poems for the Young,* 2018 for *Swallets*, 2007 for *Mini Poems*, 2004 for *Their Stories*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *Caress the Wind: Poems for the Young*; 2020 for *To Love This Poem*, *Bear With Mouse on His Shoulder,* 2018 for *Swallets*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2018 for *Dragon in the Park*

Select Bibliography

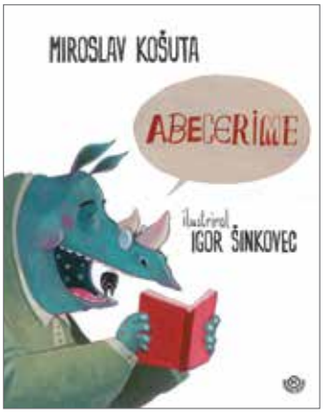
- *Caress the Wind: Poems for the Young* (*Božaj veter: pesni za mlade*), MKZ, 2021, 16+, poetry
- *To Love This Poem* (*Ljubezni to pesem*), Miš založba, 2019, 16+, poetry
- *Bear With Mouse on His Shoulder* (*Medved z Miško na rami*), MKZ, 2019, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Swallets: Seventy-Five Riddles and One Solution* (*Ponikalnice: petinsedemdeset ugank in ena ugotovitev*), Miš založba, 2017, 6+, poetry
- *Dragon in the Park* (*Zmaj v parku*), Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 2017, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *ABC Rhymes* (*Abecerime*), MKZ, 2014 (first edition 1979 and reprints), under 6, poetry
- *The Tree of Life: Selected and New Poems* (*Drevo življenja: izbrane in nove pesmi*), Mladika, 2011, 9+, poetry
- *Crossroads* (*Križada*), MKZ, 2006, 9+, poetry
- *Of Križ and Karst* (*Križko Kraške*), Zadruga Novi Matajur, 2005, 9+, poetry
- *Mini Poems* (*Minimalčice*), Mladika Trst, 2004, 6+, poetry

Published in foreign languages:

- German: *Fabeln auf Flienken Füssen*, Drava Verlag, 2001, Austria
- Italian: *Diario del nido di rondini*, Milano, Albe Edizioni, 2018, Italy



Bear With Mouse on His Shoulder



ABC Rhymes



To Love, This Poem



The Italian edition of *Diary of a Swallow's Nest*

e-mail (author):
miroslav.kosuta@gmail.com

Polonca Kovač



Polonca Kovač shot to fame with her first book, *Little Beasts from Večna Pot Road*, published in 1975 and in the following decades created a huge opus that includes not only fairy-tale-fantasy animal stories but also more realistic tales. [...] In an original, often humorous, witty way she addresses numerous themes that not only growing-up youngsters but also their adults are concerned with. Kovač is unique in Slovenia with her rare and often underestimated ability to combine the educational with the artistic and literary approach where the themes discussed often touch the reader as if they were passed on to them in a more serious context.

(from the award justification for the 2009 The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award)

prose

Selected piece

***Little Beasts from Večna Pot Road* (*Zverinice z Večne poti*),** Ljubljana, Mladika, 1994,
Illustrated by Melita Vovk

background

The collection includes seventeen stories about animals living in Ljubljana Zoo. The title alludes to the location of the zoo on Večna Pot (Eternal Way, one of the longest roads in Ljubljana). The author talks about the animals (e.g. the python, the penguins, the camel, a duck…) but also about people and their characters.

Crocodile Tale

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

There are two crocodiles living at the zoo. The first is six metres long, a greyish green colour and rather ugly. The second is also six metres long, a dirty green colour and ugly. They lie around all day, motionless on the rock like a pair of logs but, despite this, their lives are quite interesting. Their names are Mojmir and Vladimir and they don't get on really well. Mostly that is because Vladimir takes life rather seriously whereas Mojmir just enjoys it.

The first thing Vladimir does every morning is check the weather – temperature, air pressure, direction and strength of the wind – and he then calculates what the weather will be like.

"Hey, Mojmir," he says. "It will be sunny today."

"I know," says Mojmir. "I'm already sunbathing. My right paw is really nice and warm."

"But how did you manage to calculate that so quickly?" Vladimir is amazed.

"All I did was take a look around," Mojmir tells him.

"You're not even interested in the data!" Vladimir is offended while Mojmir mumbles, "Oooh, nice and warm, really warm…" with great enjoyment.

Then Vladimir starts thinking about their next task. What are they going to have for lunch today? Crocodiles eat literarily everything and anything, so their menu is very colourful. Vladimir tries to think of a few combinations – will it be beans with cabbage? No, we had that four days ago and the menu repeats itself every five to seven days. Vladimir thinks and thinks, calculating the possibilities and then triumphantly says,

"Hey, Mojmir, do you know what we're having for lunch today?"

"Today we're having fish," Mojmir says with great satisfaction, licking his lips which is no mean feat for a crocodile with its two metre mouth.

"Did you take into account all the combinations?" Vladimir asks sternly.

Mojmir just says "I can smell them, smell them…" his mouth watering.

During lunch Vladimir says, his mouth full of fish, "According to probability theory it could also have been something else."

"Quite possible," says Mojmir, happily munching away on his fish.

It is the visitors to the zoo that keep Vladimir busiest. He counts them, puts them into categories and compares the data. In the evening he reports to Mojmir:

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"Hey, Mojmir, today we had fifteen men, thirty-seven women and one hundred and five children. That is 2.7 percent less than last Wednesday and 1.3 percent lower than the average Thursday."
"Whatever," says Mojmir. "But I most liked that old man with the polka-dot tie."
"What old man with a polka-dot tie?" Vladimir asks, confused. "Am I now supposed to count ties as well?"
"I don't even know why you count," says Mojmir. "I just liked the man. His young grandson fell into the puddle and got soaked, covered in mud, and the grandfather simply said not to worry, that it would all soon dry."
"And what are you trying to prove with this?" Vladimir wants to know.
"Nothing," says Mojmir. "I just liked it."

From that day onwards Vladimir cannot help himself, and he now also includes ties in his counting. "So much work, so much work," he grumbles bitterly. "But then ties are also data."
Mojmir in the meanwhile sunbathes on the rock, thinking how kind he would be with his baby crocodile grandchildren if he was the grandfather with the polka-dot tie.

One day Mojmir suddenly turns his head and listens. "The grandfather in the polka-dot tie is coming now."
"Impossible," says Vladimir. "We've just had two polka-dot ties go by and according to probability theory…" But he has to stop, because standing there, right next to their enclosure, is the grandfather with the polka-dot tie.
"These are giant reptiles, dangerous to humans," he explains to his grandson.
"Oh, just listen to him," says Vladimir and hisses. "But tell me, how did you manage to calculate so quickly that the man with the polka-dot tie was about to appear."
"I didn't calculate anything," says Mojmir humbly. "My heart started beating faster and I knew it was going to be him."
"Sometimes you really get on my nerves," says Vladimir.
"Oh well, sorry," Mojmir says.
And then they continue lying on that rock, like two motionless logs.



Little Beasts from Večna Pot Road

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2009
- IBBY Honour List, 2008 for the translation of *Grimms' Fairy Tales* (J & W Grimm *Pravljice,* MKZ, 2006)
- Večernica Award, 2000 for *Kaja and Her Family*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

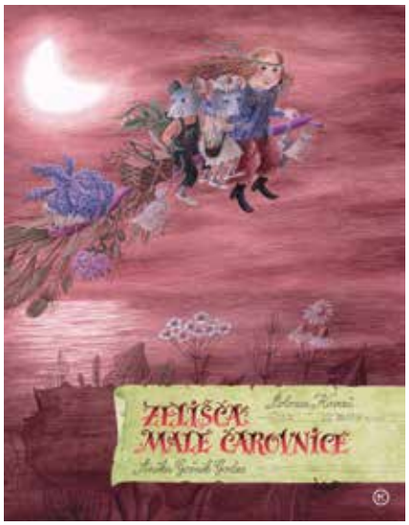
- The Hans Christian Andersen Award, 2014
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2018 for *Who Dreams What,* 2016 for *Mountain Garden, Open for All,* 2014 for *Kaja and Her Family*

Select Bibliography

- *The Little Bear* (*Mali medo*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2000 and reprints), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Herbs of the Little Witch* (*Zelišča male čarovnice*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 1995 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction and educational prose
- *Five Puppies Looking for the Right Home* (*Pet kužkov išče pravega*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 1982 and reprints), under 6, fantasy fiction
- *Who Dreams What: Selected Stories* (*Kaj se komu sanja: Izbrane zgodbe*), MKZ, 2017 (first edition 1990), under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Kaja and Her Family: Tell Me About Divorce* (*Kaja in njena družina: povej mi o ločitvi*), MKZ, 2013 (first edition 1999 and reprints), 6+, realistic fiction
- *Stories from A to Z* (*Zverinice od A do Ž*), MKZ, 2012 (first edition 2007), 6+ short fantasy fiction
- *Little Beasts from Večna Pot Road* (*Zverinice z Večne poti*), Mladika, 1994 (first edition 1975 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Dwarfs on Pixie Hill* (*Palčki na Smogovskem griču*), Mladika, 1994, under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *The Problems and Messages of Paffy the Puppy* (*Težave in sporočila psička Pafija*), MKZ, 1986, under 6, fantasy fiction
- *Little Jack and Uncle Refrigerator* (*Jakec in stric hladilnik*), MKZ, 1976, under 6, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

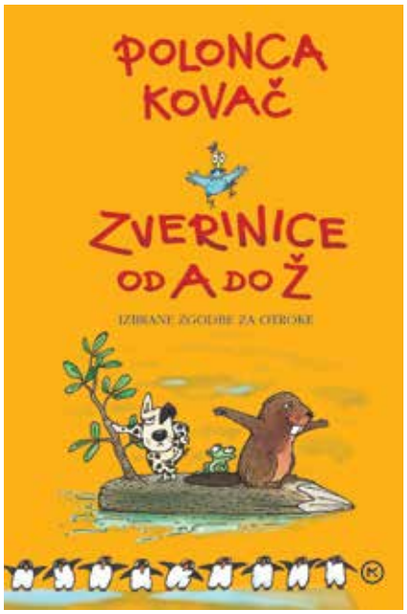
- German: *Onkel Kühlschrank, die Glückstrommel und der Kanarienvogel*, Manfred Pawlak, 1985, Germany
- *Herbs of the Little Witch*
  - Slovak: *Bylinky malej čarodejnice,* Slovart, 2016, Slovakia
  - English: *Herbs of the Little Witch,* MKZ, 2009, Slovenia
  - Czech: *Byliny malé čarodějky, F. Ráček,* Klobouky u Brna, 1997, Czech Republic
  - Lithuanian: *Mažosios burtininkes vaistažoles,* Vaga, 1997, Lithuania



Herbs of the Little Witch



Who Dreams What: Selected Stories



Stories from A to Z



The Little Bear

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6+

Svetlana Makarovič



Even with her first collection of mostly animal stories from 1972, *Mouse Is Asleep*, Svetlana Makarovič presented herself as a mature and compelling storyteller. Since then, dozens of her picture books, collections of stories and poems, cassettes and CDs have come to be a kind of gold standard of Slovene literature for children – a mighty and lasting opus, unlike any other in its diversity, imaginative power and originality.

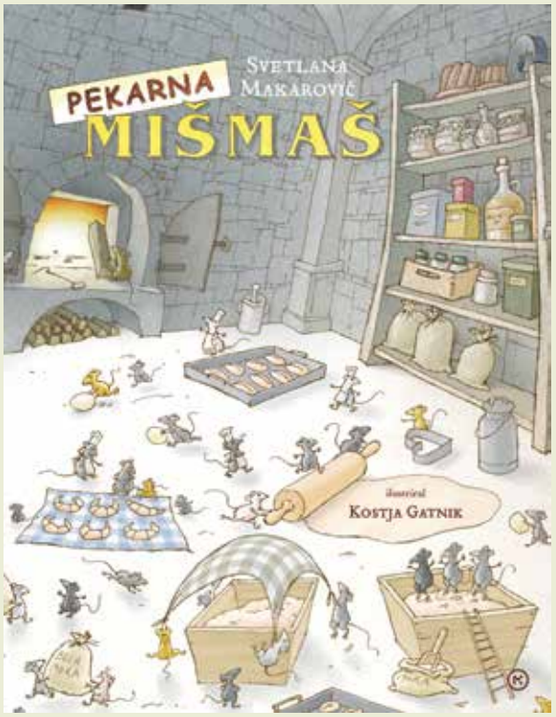
(from the award justification for the 2011 The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award)

poetry and prose

Selected piece

***Mishmash Bakery* (*Pekarna Mišmaš*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2019, illustrated by Kostja Gatnik
(translated by David Limon)

Mishmash Bakery



At the very end of Mouse Village there once stood a beautiful old house. The sign above the door said:

MISHMASH BAKERY

Early in the morning the most wonderful smell of fresh bread would waft around the whole village so that the villagers woke up without alarm clocks, washed in the clear stream and then gathered in front of the bakery. Every day would begin with seven kinds of exceedingly tasty bread: round loaves of brown farmhouse bread made from fragrant rye flour into which small cumin seeds were kneaded, barley rolls with a crispy crust, corn rolls with a smooth, brown crust, buckwheat bread into which one day walnuts would be kneaded and the next day poppy seeds, and various small white breads – from crescent rolls to small buns and bagels. Of course, there was also snow white bread, as light as a breeze, risen very high and with a crown of plaited dough on top. And every Saturday there was a different surprise for the village children: salty pretzels, gingerbread, biscuits, buttery cakes filled with walnuts, jam tarts and cinnamon sticks that simply melted in your mouth.

Mishmash the baker was quite an unusual man. No one knew where he had come from, he spoke little, never sought anyone's the company and never entered anyone's house, however much he was invited. He had dark, lively eyes and a small moustache below which there was always a smile – he looked very much like a sprite and it is quite possible that that is precisely what he was.

Every month Mishmash bought three small bags of flour and no more from the village miller Gertrude.

No one could understand how it was possible to bake so much wonderful bread out of so little flour, but Mishmash only smiled mischievously when asked about this. In the end people somehow accepted that Mishmash's baking was his own business and no one else's – only Gertrude the miller, a stingy and gossipy woman, could not hold back her curiosity. Or her envy. And anyway, she was upset with Mishmash because the fact that he bought only three bags of flour meant that she had to load her cart with seven bags of flour and drag it an hour's walk away to Mr Chicken the baker in Chicken Village.

Mr Chicken the baker, well, he was a completely different type from Mishmash. He used huge amounts of flour but made only small amounts of bread, which was heavy and sticky and barely edible, and smelled of chicken pooh to boot. This is why the villagers from Chicken Village preferred to go to Mouse Village and buy Mishmash's bread. Can you imagine how angry Mr Chicken the baker was at Mishmash because of this? He would sit all day in front of his dilapidated bakery, scratching his head with his dirty fingers, wondering how he could harm Mishmash. But Mr Chicken the baker was not the cleverest of men and could not think of anything

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suitable. Around him waddled his clucking hens, equally stupid and mean as he.

One day, when Gertrude the miller and her black cat had dragged the creaking cart, loaded with bags of flour, along the dusty road to Chicken Village, Mr Chicken the baker was already completely beside himself – he had nearly run out of flour.

"What took you so long", he shouted at Gertrude and her cat instead of a greeting.

"Well, what can I do when this blooming cat is so lazy," Gertrude said, trying to come up with an excuse. And anyway, it's all Mishmash's fault.

"You're right there, Mishmash is our misfortune", said Mr Chicken the baker with a sigh. "But listen, Gertrude, couldn't you somehow find out how he bakes his bread?"

"How can I," said Gertrude tetchily. "I've often snooped around there, but everything is always dark and quiet. The door to the bakery is always bolted – how else can I get in?"

"Most likely he bakes in the cellar. Here, this is a hook with which you can remove the bolt from the outside, like this… Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, this'll do it," Gertrude said, more than ready.

That same evening, when it was completely dark, Gertrude crept up to the Mishmash Bakery. The heavy oak door was of course bolted, but you should know that no bolt is strong enough to resist a woman's nosiness… Gertrude used the hook Mr Chicken the baker had given her and persevered with the bolt for as long as it took to succeed. Then she snuck into the hall and down the stairs to the cellar…

What Gertrude saw through the keyhole of the iron door to the cellar completely took her breath away. The cellar was a large, underground hall with stone walls; on the shelves there were sacks of flour, grits, salt and sugar, jugs of milk and cream, packets of yeast and spices… In the middle of the hall, there were three troughs filled with dough, whilst at the back glowed a large old bread oven. The hall was full of mice of different colours. Some were bringing flour and pouring it into the troughs, some were getting the yeast ready, others were fanning the fire or bringing oil, salt, cumin and water, and then they washed their little paws and quickly started kneading the dough. Black mice were kneading dough for the brown bread – tefete-tefete. Grey mice were speedily kneading the barley flour into the dough intended for the barley rolls – tifiti-taf tifiti-taf. Yellow mice were kneading corn dough – tufi-taf tufi-taf. A horde of silvery mice kneaded the buckwheat dough with walnuts – tuf-tafata tuf-tafata.

When ready, the dough went into a bowl, was covered with a cloth and left to rise. The young mice were making pastries for children - tifitifitip-tap.

Master Mishmash, look, a thief! She stuck her tail into the honey and licked it! Oh, and what about you, licking that bowl? Silence, mice, quarrelling spoils the best baking because the dough is afraid to rise if it hears harsh words...

It's time for making some white, milky bread now. Sieve, heat, quickly! Is the oven hot enough? Oh, what a nice warm glow. Oh dear, Mishmash, I've singed my whiskers...

"I've seen enough," Gertrude said to herself and crawled back home.

The mice put the risen dough on an oven-peel and pushed it into the oven.

At that moment, the old clock on the wall of the bakery struck midnight. Mishmash looked meaningfully around the hall and drew a large circle with his hand. And, hey presto, large chandeliers lit up, music played and the mice changed into cute little people, dressed in festive clothes made from silk, brocade, velvet and linen with gold threads woven into it.

Everywhere there were bunches of flowers in beautiful cut-glass vases and on the tables various dishes and fruit, and old wine glistened in the glasses. Mishmash sat on a velvet throne in the middle of the hall, smiling modestly while the lively little people shouted cheerfully: Long live Mishmash, our friend and king! Long live good bread, long live all that is good! Then little gentlemen danced with little ladies that were fanning themselves excitedly with tiny fans made from silken grey down. Everyone cheered and toasted each other and, all in all, they were the liveliest crowd there ever was. Then they sat around Mishmash's throne to talk about one of the most wonderful things in the world – bread. They told stories and fairy tales about bread, sang songs about bread, asked each other riddles about bread and discussed how they could make even better bread than that now baked in Mishmash's Bakery. And they talked about how bread used to be baked more than a thousand years ago.

Meanwhile at the mill, Gertrude woke up her cat and carried it to the bakery door.

"Here, crawl through this opening, quickly," she whispered to him. "Then go down the stairs into the cellar. You can slip in under the door. It's full of mice in there and when you're in, you should gobble them all up."

The cat did as it was told and crawled into the hall and stared in awe.

"Where are the mice?" he shouted when he saw all the little ladies and gentlemen in their colourful clothes. The little people ran off in fear but Mishmash picked up the cat and offered him something to eat. The cat trusted him immediately. He told Mishmash how Gertrude had told him to eat the mice and how badly she treated him, he told Mishmash everything.

"Look, Cat," said Mishmash, "if you promise that you'll never hunt mice again, you can be our regular guest and friend. Because, you see, these little folk around you are an ancient people. They were bewitched into mice, except for one hour every night between midnight and one. So you can never know if the mouse you're just about to catch is one of them. So, what do you say?"

"Of course," said the cat, "of course I'll leave the mice alone, just let me stay with you. And Gertrude can eat her sour pap herself."

The clock struck one. The hall once again turned into an ordinary bakery and the mice stretched their tired limbs and yawned. The fragrance of freshly baked bread spread from the oven. Together they carried the bread to the shop and then went to bed.

In the morning, Gertrude the miller was the first up. She stood in front of the bakery and waited for the villagers.

"One walnut crescent, please," she said.

Mishmash gave her a crescent and turned to the next customer. That is when Gertrude shrieked at the top of her voice,

"There's a mouse hair in the crescent, Mishmash. How can that be?"

Mishmash gave her an astonished look.

"That's impossible", he said.

"How is it not possible? You know very well why it is possible. Look everyone! There's a mouse hair in the crescent."

The villagers gathered round Gertrude.

"Let's have a look, what hair?" a neighbour asked.

"Oh, it's already fallen on the floor," said Gertrude. "But it doesn't really matter, it was a mouse hair."

"And how do you know it was a mouse's?" another neighbour asked.

"Ha, how do I know? Just ask Mishmash whether it belonged to a mouse or not."

Mishmash looked on angrily and sadly at the same time. Gertrude had discovered his secret.

One villager got angry,

"Never mind one hair. Mishmash's bread is the best far around. Mister Mishmash, five loaves of bread for me."

But the quarrelsome Gertrude refused to give in,

"I'll tell you how Mister Mishmash here bakes his bread. Mice do it for him. He's a wizard I tell you. And that bread is bewitched."

People were speechless at first, but then they burst out laughing. "The woman has gone crazy, she's hallucinating," they said. "Get her away from here."

"I saw it, I saw it with my own eyes," Gertrude shouted. "They weren't ordinary mice, everything down there is under a spell."

"Gertrude, pull yourself together," a neighbour said to her. "Do you know what you're saying?"

"I know, I know," Gertrude shouted. "Go and have a look down there and you'll see I'm not lying. You're buying bewitched bread, people!"

The villagers got interested and they called the mayor.

"Hello, Mister Mishmash," said the mayor. "What's the matter?"

Mishmash was so sad that his moustache drooped very low.

"Why don't you ask Gertrude over there," he said quietly and refused to talk about it anymore.

"Gertrude is wicked and crazy," said the villager who had bought five loaves of bread. "She's making up a silly story about mice that bake bread for our baker and about magic spells."

When the mayor found out what it was all about, he laughed at first as he did not believe that such a thing was possible, but he, too, was just a little bit interested in how Mishmash could bake such good bread without any assistants. So he made a proposal,

"If you'll allow me, Mishmash, I'd like to watch you work tonight."

Mishmash said nothing, refusing to talk.

"Silence means confirmation," said the mayor. "See you tonight then."

People left and talked about Mishmash and his bread all day. Some believed old Gertrude's story whilst others did not, but they were all curious to see what Mishmash's bakery was like.

At dusk, everyone gathered outside the bakery. The mayor knocked on the door. No one answered. The mayor knocked once again.

Everything was quiet. The villagers got worried, hoping that nothing had happened to Mishmash. They kept knocking in vain and in the end decided to break in.

But when they got into the hall, everything was empty. They saw stairs leading down to the cellar, but they were covered with a thick layer of dust and old cobwebs.

They went down to the cellar and broke into the big hall. It was empty, full of dust and huge old cobwebs. It seemed as if no one had been there for years, all the cobwebs were undisturbed and there were no footsteps in the dust, no trace of life.

"Hello, Mishmash," shouted the mayor.

Only an echo from the empty walls replied. People looked at each other nervously and shook their heads.

Then they decided to get out.

They searched the whole house, but could not find Mishmash. They never saw him again and never again ate bread as hood as his.

The villagers never found out what happened to Mishmash. But they did know that it was all quarrelsome Gertrude's fault and no one in the village wanted to talk to her again.

I too don't know much else about Mishmash the baker. But on one of my recent travels I stopped in a village called Mousewick as I had heard that exceptionally good bread was sold there. I found a bakery with a sign MISHMASH BAKERY.

The baker had a long, black moustache and lively black eyes. But it could have been another baker with the same name. I didn't dare ask him how he bakes his bread. After all, it is none of my business. The main thing is that his bread is good, isn't it? Half a loaf of white bread, please!

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Levstik Award, 2015 for *A Moonlight String*, 1975 for *Cosies on the Flying Spoon*; *Where to, Cosies?*, 1973 for *Mouse Is Asleep*
- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2011
- The Prešeren Lifetime Achievement Award, 2000 (declined)
- The Golden Order for Merits for exceptionally successful and quality work in Slovene literature and its international recognition, 2009
- The IBBY Honour List, 1994 for *Gold Catyarn*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2004 for *Holidays at Aunt Magda's*, 2016 for *Kuzma, the Thirteenth Gremlin*
- The Hans Christian Andersen Award, 2016, 2002, 2000, 1998
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *Ballad Stories;* 2020 *A Tramp and a Night Lamp,* 2018 for *A Honey Fair Tale*, 2017 for *The Carrot Dwar*, 2016 for *A Moonlight String*, 2015 *Kuzma, the Thirteenth Gremlin*, 2013 for *The Ballad of Sneguročka*
- The Večernica Award, 2010 for *We, the Cosies*

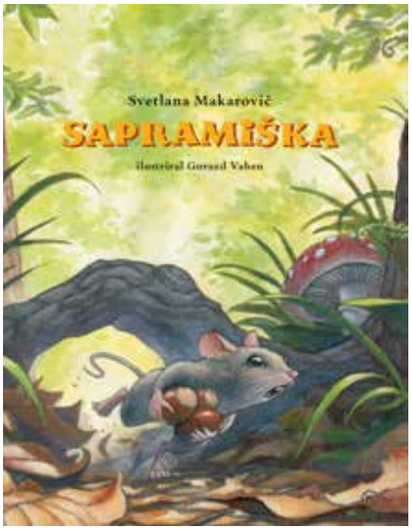
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- *Mishmash Bakery* (*Pekarna Mišmaš*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 1974 and reprints), 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *The Carrot Dwarf* (*Korenčkov palček*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2016 and reprints), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Skipmouse* (*Sapramiška*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 1974 and reprints), 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *Gold Catyarn* (*Zlata mačja preja*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2014 and reprints), under 6, fairy tales
- *Oka the Owl* (*Sovica oka*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 1997 and reprints), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *The Fearsome Wolf* (*Strašni volk*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 2019), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Kuzma the Gremlin Wins a Prize* (*Škrat Kuzma dobi nagrado*), MKZ, 2019 (first edition 1974 and reprints), 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *A Tramp and a Night Lamp* (*Potepuh in nočna lučka*), MKZ, 2019 (first edition 1977 and reprints), 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *A Special Kind of Squirrel* (*Veveriček posebne sorte*), MKZ, 2017, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *Svetlana's fairytales* (*Svetlanine pravljice*), Miš, 2008, 9+, fairy tales

A selection of Published in foreign languages:

- English:
  - *Skipmouse,* MKZ, 2017, Slovenia
  - *Svetlana's Fairy Tales*, Miš založba, 2008, Slovenia
  - *Gal in the Gallery*, National Gallery, 2006, Slovenia
- Russian: *Ballada o Sneguročke*, MKZ, 2012, Slovenia
- Hungarian: *A holdfényes húr*, Center za slovensko književnost, 2009, Slovenia
- Spanish:
  - *El forn d'en Musaranya,* Barcanov, 2006, Spain
  - *La tia Magda, Alfaguara,* 2002, Spain
- German:
  - *Knuddelpfötchen*, Baunach, 1997, Germany
  - *Oka, die Eule*, Baunach, 1997, Germany
- Italian: *I due cossovìri nel cucchiaio volante*, La scuola, 1984, Italy
- Czech: *Šotek Kuzma vyhrává cenu*, Albatros, 1978, Czechoslovakia
- Slovak: *Škriatok Kuzma,* Mladé letá, 1977, Czechoslovakia

Skipmouse





Zofka the Witch

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6+

Neža Maurer



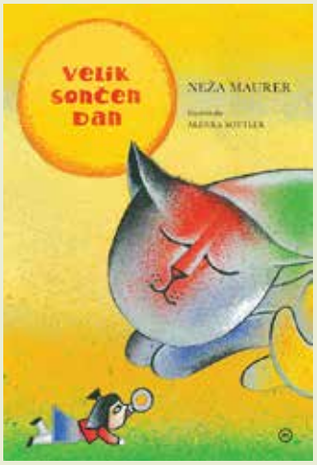
The child in the poems is resourceful and bursting at the seams with imagination. But the child that is constantly moving also knows how to calm down, sit on a branch and listen how its song echoes across the world... And this world is not only one of play and mischief. It is not always just beautiful and carefree. God only knows how anxiety and fear sneak into the child's soul. Yet the emotion that shines across Neža Maurer's poetry is love though and through.

(Peter Svetina in the foreword to *A Big Sunny Day,* an anthology of Neža Maurer's poems published to celebrate her seventieth birthday)

poetry

Selected poems

***A Big Sunny Day: Selected Poems for Children and Youth* (*Velik sončen dan*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2013, illustrated by Alenka Sottler
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



A Big Sunny Day

Three Puddles

It's been raining all day long,
drizzling all through the night,
filling up three puddles, right:

In the first puddle a frog,
in the second a duckling,
and me sitting in the third –

all shouting loud to be heard.

Where?

Where have all the mountains hidden?
They've wrapped themselves in grey,
long dresses woven of fog and mist,
and left for places far away.

Where have the flowers disappeared,
and the birds and leaves from the trees?
Sitting upon the autumn wind,
they flew off to dance on a breeze.

On these grey, dull autumnal days,
We too would like to leave this place -
but the mist also hides the path
and the wind blows straight in our face.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2013

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2018 for *Something Very Beautiful*

Select Bibliography

- *Something Very Beautiful: Selected Poems for Children* (*Nekaj zelo zelo lepega: zbrane pesmi za otroke*), Sanje, 2018, 6+, poetry
- *You Are My Heart* (*Ti si moje srce*), Društvo Jasa, 2014, 6+, poetry
- *A Big Sunny Day: Selected Poems for Children and Youth* (*Velik sončen dan: izbrane pesmi za otroke in mladino*), MKZ, 2013, 6+, poetry
- *Do You Know Čeri?* (*Veste, kdo je Čeri?*), Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 2013, under 6, realistic fiction
- *Rabbit's Exercise* (*Zajčkova telovadba*), DZS, 2004, under 6, poetry
- *Ring Girl* (*Prstančica*), Karantanija, 2002, under 6, fantasy fiction
- *The Devoted Badger* (*Zvesti jazbec*), Karantanija, 1999, 6+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *Live, Love & Leave*, Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 2012, Slovenia
- Croatian: *Tata Javor*, Naša djeca, 1990, Croatia
- Serbo-Croatian: *Tražio sam Kukavicu*, Drugari, 1989, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Ida Mlakar Črnič



Under its shell the story's humour hides a theme that is far from humorous but needs thoughtful consideration: What happens to those who have 'served their turn', grown old, can no longer keep up with their duties? Sprinkles refuses to be branded an exhausted old cow even by her unusual behaviour. Then she runs away on a bicycle and after a terrifying journey reaches and abandoned house where she meets 'a ragged horse in a shabby tailcoat' who is no longer able to pull his cart.
The end of the fairy tale, shows that there is a place in this world for an old horse dancing the step and a cow singing the blues – people accept them for what they are and both protagonists are happy by the sea – the cow even starts purring with satisfaction.

(from the award justification for the 2016 Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award)

prose

Selected piece

***The Cow That Barked at the Moon* (*O kravi, ki je lajala v luno*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2015, illustrated by Peter Škerl

(translation copyright Miš založba)



The Cow that Barked at the Moon

Sprinkles let out a sigh that would move a stone. The great moon was shining in through the barn window, smiling at her with sparkling eyes.
"Watch it, you silly cow, you're going to trample me," squawked the Hen and turned away. Sprinkles tied her bundle into a knot and stepped quietly, not to wake anyone else, into the clear spring night.
"I'm off," she said to the Dog, who whined softly in the darkness.
"Hurry," he yapped, "they're coming for you tomorrow."
Sprinkles nodded bitterly. She hadn't given milk in a long time. She was a tired old cow who, instead of mooing, made strange noises.
"A cow that barks, yaps and howls at the moon," voices whispered behind her back, "is no good. What's the Dog for, then?"
"Maybe Sprinkles has a cold," the farmer speculated. "We ought to call the doctor!"
At noon, an ambulance pulled up at the farm and a doctor scrambled out of it. He listened to Sprinkles' heart, examined her gullet, and tapped her knee with a tiny hammer. He then tested her hearing, demanded she stand on one leg, close her eyes, and touch her muzzle with her front hoof.
"Ahem," he cleared his throat at last and tapped his fingers on the roof of the car. "It's nothing to worry about. Sprinkles is a frazzled old cow. A week at the seaside is what she needs."
"Well, yes," agreed the farmer, "but what about her yapping?"
The doctor scratched his bald head and pondered. "Well, that's the odd thing. The cow doesn't seem to have a cold or pneumonia, and her vocal cords are fine. It must be something in her head."
"Her head?" gawked the farmer. "Are you suggesting that our Sprinkles is – mad?"
"Er, er," fidgeted the doctor. "Mad is not the right word. This is a sensitive time for Sprinkles. Perhaps that why she's barking and growling. I'll pick her up tomorrow to examine her thoroughly in my clinic."
The news of the mad cow spread like lightning. Everyone agreed that Sprinkles had once been industrious, but now she was a dotty old cow. Is it any wonder she started barking at the moon?
"The barking cow," said the Goat, "must leave at once."
"But why?" asked the Hen, who was always at sixes and sevens.
"It could be contagious," the sparrows strutted about.
"Get on the bicycle and take to your heels," the Dog advised Sprinkles. "You'll have reached the sea by morning."
Sprinkles placed her bundle on the rear rack sadly, clambered onto the bicycle, and darted down the hill without looking back once.
The night was full of strange shadows and ghastly noises, and the cow felt sick at heart. She had never been so far from home. As the moon began to fade, she felt so tired that she pulled up outside a ramshackle cottage.
She entered cautiously.
The house appeared as deserted, old and solitary on the inside. Sprinkles was so frightened she lay down on the floor and howled at the moon with sorrow.
Not a moment later, a silvery, clattering noise came from the adjacent room as somebody started to stamp their feet hammer and tongs on the floor – cloppity clop, cloppity

6+



The Cow that Barked at the Moon

clop, cloppity cloppity clop – as if to scare off the uninvited guest.

Sprinkles snapped to attention and growled, then barked so loudly that the clatter in the adjacent room died down in a trice. Finally, sleep overtook her.

In the morning, she was woken up by an unfamiliar voice: "There isn't a farm around where word of you hasn't spread, Sprinkles. Can you do anything besides barking, growling and howling at the moon?"

Sprinkles opened her eyes. Leaning over her was a ragged horse in a shabby tailcoat, holding out a cup of coffee.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"They call me Van den Giddyup. I used to be a circus horse. And then I pulled carts until they started to reproach me for staggering and not being able to pull any longer. I may be old and scraggy now, and I suppose it's time I was sent to the knacker's yard, but I'm not throwing in my towel just yet. I may not be fit for pulling carts, but I'm still light on my feet. Look!"

Van den Giddyup performed a nimble, rollicking tap dance that Sprinkles' eyes struggled to follow.

"You're very good," she said with admiration and sighed heavily.

"Who taught you how to bark at the moon?" the horse inquired.

"I taught myself," Sprinkles responded humbly.

"You have a strong and beautiful voice. You could learn how to sing."

Sprinkles shook her head. "I can yap, bark and growl, but I can't sing."

"Listen," Van den Giddyup explained, "those who sing with feeling must also growl, howl and bark. Only in a different way. It would be a shame if you didn't try."

The horse raised his top hat and bowed elegantly as if standing in front of a crowded hall. He then spun on his back heels and started to caper wildly, tapping out a rhythm so fast and fierce with the metallic plates on his hooves that Sprinkles was swept off the ground. She could feel the unrelenting beat of the drums, trotting and dancing with every corner of the house and the globe, in her stomach. Then, Van den Giddyup started to sing in a husky bass and Sprinkles was overcome with an irresistible urge to sing along. Their voices blended beautifully.

The horse seemed content. "We're giving our first performance this evening," he decided. Sprinkles growled and whined softly that it was too soon, but Van den Giddyup was adamant. They must earn their dinner.

As the evening drew near, they mounted the bicycle and headed into town: the horse pedalled, while Sprinkles was seated on the rear rack.

As the air grew colder and the south wind blew, she realised how close to the town she had come the evening before. A crowd of people gathered in a small square to take a walk before bedtime.

The cow and the horse laid their hat on the ground and performed their act from start to finish. The people were thrilled. How could they not be? Who has seen such a thing as a tap-dancing horse or a cow that sings the blues before?

In jest, Sprinkles yapped and whined like a puppy, which delighted the small children, then bared her teeth and growled at three rascals so menacingly that they made off in a flash.

The people laughed and the first coins started to pour into the hat.

As the sun leaned towards the sea, Sprinkles and Van den Giddyup sat down on the shore, dipping their hooves into the water. They felt tired, but happy. "We have everything now," said the horse, "a home, music, dancing, and we have each other. We'll make excellent wandering minstrels."

Sprinkles looked at the setting sun, breathing in the salty breeze from the sea, and listened to the shrieking of the seagulls and the murmur of the waves, then, all of a sudden, she purred with contentment.

Softly and tenderly, like a cat.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2016 for *The Cow That Barked at the Moon*
- White Ravens, 2019 for *Nearby Here Lives a Girl*, 2016 for *The Cow That Barked at the Moon*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

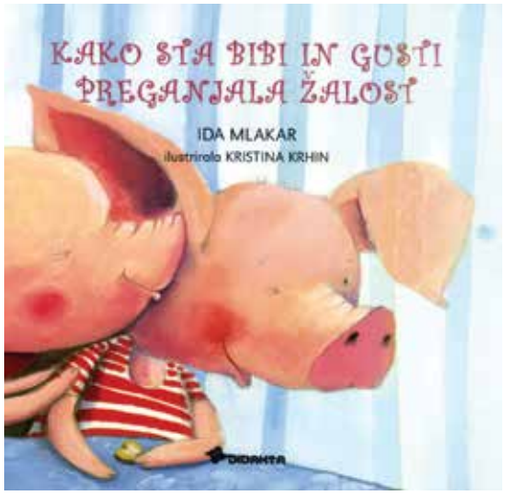
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2011 for *How Bibi and Gusti Spread Happiness*, 2009 for *Magic Gingerbread*, 2007 for *How Bibi and Gusti Smoothed Over Their Quarrel*, 2004 for *How Bibi and Gusti Drove Away Sadness*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *How Bibi and Gusti Tried to Tame Time*; 2021 for *How Bibi and Gusti Wanted to Climb a Hill*; 2020 *Bibi and Gusti*, *Close to Here,* 2019 for *How Bibi and Gusti Watered the House*, 2016 for *The Cow That Barked at the Moon*, 2011 for *How Bibi and Gusti Spread Happiness,* 2006 for *How Bibi and Gusti Smoothed Over Their Quarrel,* 2004 for *How Bibi and Gusti Drove Away Sadness*

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- *How Bibi and Gusti Smoothed Over Their Quarrel* (*Kako sta Bibi in Gusti porahljala prepir*), Didakta, 2021 (first edition 2006), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *How Bibi and Gusti Spread Happiness* (*Kako sta Bibi in Gusti sipala srečo*), Didakta, 2021 (first edition 2010), under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *How Bibi and Gusti Wanted to Climb a Hill* (*Kako sta Bibi in Gusti prezvijačila hrib*), Didakta, 2020, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *How Bibi and Gusti Watered the House* (*Kako sta Bibi in Gusti zalivala hišico*), Didakta, 2019, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Nearby Here Lives a Girl* (*Tu blizu živi deklica*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2019, 6+, realistic fiction, picture book
- *When Houses Dance* (*Ko hiše zaplešejo*), Zala, 2019, 6+, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Cow That Barked at the Moon* (*O kravi, ki je lajala v luno*), Miš založba, 2015, 6+, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *About the Mouse Who Read Stories... and Cherries* (*O miški, ki je brala pravljice... in češnje*), Didakta, 2012, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Magic Gingerbread* (*Ciper coper medenjaki*), Ajda, IBO Gomboc, 2008, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- Lithuanian: *Burtai šmurtai*, Nieko rimto, 2018, Lithuania
- Croatian: *U blizini živi djevojčica,* Zagreb, Ibis grafika, 2022, Croatia, *Čarabaralo*, Zrinski, 2018, Croatia
- Chinese*: Xiaowushi de taoxue mozhou*, Guanhxi jiaoyu chubanshe Nanning, 2014, China
- English: *Close to Here*, Sodobnost International, Horizon, 2020, Slovenia, *Magic Spells*, KUD Sodobnost International, 2012, Slovenia
- Spanish: *Aquí cerca vive una niña*, Ciudad de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2021, Mexico
- Urdu: *Yahi Qareeb He Aik Larki Rehti Hai*, Ferozsons, 2022, Pakistan
- Macedonian: *Close to Here,* Skopje, Čudna šuma, 2023, North Macedonia
- Greek: *Πιο κοντά,* Vakxikon Media & Publishing Group, Greece



How Bibi and Gusti Drove Away Sadness



How Bibi and Gusti Spread Happiness



How Bibi and Gusti Watered the House

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Desa Muck



Maggie the Magic Flea is a series of talking animal tales. The first book, *Maggie the Magic Flea and Charlie the Saint Bernard*, is foremost a warning to (future) dog owners about how pets suffer if people mistreat them.

(Dragica Haramija, *Vloga živali v mladinski književnosti / The Role of Animals in Children's Literature*)

prose

Selected piece

***Maggie the Magic Flea and Charlie the Saint Bernard* (*Čudežna bolha Megi in bernardinec Karli*)**, MKZ, 2012 (from the series *Maggie the Magic Flea*), illustrated by Maša Kozjek



Maggie the Magic Flea and Charlie the Saint Bernard

background

Ten books have been published so far in the series Maggie the Magic Flea. The main characters are always Maggie the Flea from the title and one other animal, a different house pet every time, taking turns in the protagonist role: a dog, a rabbit, a pair of turtles, a budgerigar, a couple of pet rats, a cat, a skunk, a hamster, a horse and two goldfish. Maggie is carried through the streets by Zak the dog and in fact has no magical powers, she simply finds a realistic solution to every problem. At the end of each book is also a chapter by a vet who explains in a simple way all the biological information about the animal from the story (what it is, how we prepare a home for it, what care it requires…) The series is illustrated. All the books begin with the same introduction: *We people are mistaken if we believe that we choose our own pet. In fact they choose us. Finding the right person for them is hard for the animals. That is why they are helped along by magic fleas (Latin name Siphonaptera magica), also known as Maggie. If you ever find yourself lovingly observing your new pet and happen to see something sparkle on them like a pearl or silver flash, then that was Maggie the Flea. She will then lead to you the animal you belong to.*

excerpt

(translated by David Limon and Maja Visenjak)

Then she told the flea many things Maggie had already sensed. That Charlie was very lonely and often depressed. That although he never complained, she could often hear him sighing. She told Maggie how his owners had been finding him a nuisance ever since Igor came along and how Charlie loved that boy but was never allowed to go anywhere near him. She also said Charlie was a very good friend. Since her eyesight had been getting worse, he always warned her of danger.

Then Maggie told Massena about her plan and the cat immediately agreed to help.

"Anything for our Charlie!" she said.

But things did not go quite so smoothly with Charlie.

"It's not fair. It's a trick!" he said and shook his head firmly when Maggie and Massena revealed their plan to him.

"What about you pining away in this kennel all day long, is that fair?" said Maggie angrily.

"Is it fair to little Igor, who wants to play with you as much as you want to play with him? Is it fair that he'll spend the rest of his life being afraid of big, friendly dogs?" said Maggie. And when they whispered something else into his ear, he chuckled and finally nodded in agreement.

They set to work that very night. It was summer and the window of the first floor room where Simon and Catherine were sleeping, was partly open. Massena had no problem slipping in. Then Maggie gave Charlie a sign to start barking in warning. A voice in the bedroom said, "Shush, you stupid dog. Quiet! You'll wake the whole street."

At one time, deeply offended, Charlie would have stopped barking, but now he went on. Only a few second later, Catherine could be heard shouting: "Help! Burglars!"

Simon joined in.

"Help! Call the police! I've been attacked. And they're armed. Ow!!! Ow!!! Ow!!!"

After Catherine and Simon had gone to bed in the evening, Massena opened the gate in Charlie's enclosure. She had to work really hard on this, but now Charlie was able to push it without any problems and run to

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the house. There was shouting and the sound of things being broken coming from inside. He jumped in through the kitchen window and ran upstairs. He saw Massena jumping around the wardrobes and cupboards, letting out strange, frightening almost human sounds. It sounded terrifying. Simon and Catherine were sitting on the bed, their heads covered with the blanket, letting out muted screams. Charlie gestured to Massena and she took a golden necklace with a blue heart and jumped out of the window and onto a tree. Charlie then started growling so viciously that even the bravest person in the world would have been scared. He ran around the room, scattering slippers and clothes, having a whale of a time. His owners under the blanket became silent for a minute and then started shouting,

"Get him, Charlie! Get him!"

When everything had settled down, they peeped out and there by the window they saw in the moonlight a shadow of a huge dog wagging his tail. They put on their reading lamps and saw Charlie, who was unable to hide a big smile. They were just about to run to him and give him a hug, when Catherine shouted, "That beautiful golden necklace with the blue heart that you gave me for Valentine's has vanished. It was here, on the dresser. It's been stolen!"

On hearing this, Charlie jumped out through the kitchen window again. Beneath the bushes next to the fence Massena was already waiting for him and gave him the necklace. At that moment the door opened and the garden was lit up by the light from the house. Mashenka quickly hid. Charlie proudly walked up to Simon and Catherine with the necklace in his mouth. He dropped it onto the threshold, at Catherine's feet. He did not get so many hugs and strokes even when he was still a puppy. Catherine gave him ten kisses on his nose.

Maggie the Magic Flea and Charlie the Saint Bernard



At that moment a car with a flashing blue light stopped in front of the house. The neighbours had called the police when they heard all the noise. Igor, woken up by the sirens, came running out of the house enthusiastically to have a look at the car. He loved police cars and police officers. The officers carefully checked the house and the garden, but found nothing.

"The burglar must have been very skilled," they concluded. "He left no traces or fingerprints! All we found were animal tracks."

They sipped their hot tea and nibbled oat biscuits, deep in thought.

"It's a good thing we got your description of the attacker," said the Police. "Can you give it to us again, you may remember something else."

Simon said seriously,

"He had huge eyes that glowed greenish in the dark. He was very big, much bigger than me, terribly strong, like ten grown men, and very nimble. He had no problems jumping onto that wardrobe and then off again."

"I'm sure we'll find him. There can't be many burglars whose eyes shine green in the dark," said a police officer. Charlie had to try really hard not to roll on the floor with laughter.

When the police officers were leaving, the one that looked like the boss patted Charlie on the head and said, "You've got a wonderful dog here. Good job he wasn't locked in his kennel, otherwise we may not have been chatting like this now."

After the police left, Simon and Catherine argued a bit which one had forgotten to lock the gate, but in the end they agreed it did not really matter. What did matter was that it had been unlocked.

"I'll tell you something, Charlie," said Simon, "you'll live in the house from now on. You really are a wonderful dog and you deserve to be an equal member of the family."

Then he carried Igor, who had nodded off at the table, to his room. The boy, half asleep, asked, "Does that mean I'll be able to play with Charlie?"

"Of course, as soon as you get up," his father told him. The boy gave him a big hug and fell asleep immediately. Catherine sat on the floor and put Charlie's big head in her lap.

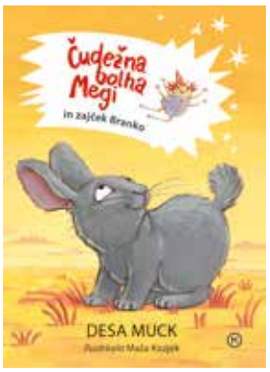
"I'm sorry, my beautiful, brave dog!" she whispered in his ear. Charlie became embarrassed about being praised for a trick. Maggie, who was sitting in his ear, sensed this. She hissed, "Stop that guilt immediately! OK, so the police really did come for nothing. That was wrong. To remedy that I'll find them the best police dogs in the city. And now you're not locked in that kennel, you'll really be able to defend the house if anything should happen. Just think about it, you'll be guarding a child so that no bad people can do any harm to him."

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 1998 for *Lying Suzy*
- The Levstik Award, 2005 for *Annie and Her Great Worries*, *Annie and Her Holidays*, *Annie and a Big Secret*
- My Favourite Book Award, 2003–2007 for the series *Annie*
- IBBY Honour List, 2006 for *Annie and Her Great Worries*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

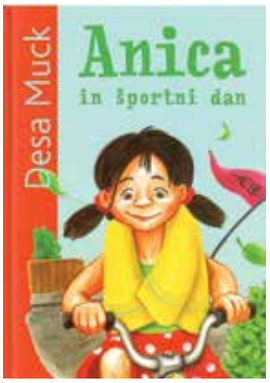
- The Večernica Award, 2005 *Annie and A Big Secret*, 2004 *Annie and Her Great Worries*, 2002 for *Annie and the Rabbit*, 1997 for *The Clawer*



Maggie the Magic Flea and Ben the Bunny



Maggie the Flea and the Rats Annie and Katie



Annie and the Sports Day



Annie and her First Love

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- *Maggie the Magic Flea and Funky the Ferret* (Čudežna bolha Megi in dihurček Jurček), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2015), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Deadly Seriously about School* (*Blazno resno o šoli*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2000 and reprints), 13+, realistic fiction
- *Maggie the Magic Flea and Sparky the Cat*(Čudežna bolha Megi in muca Živka), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2014 and reprints), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Deadly Seriously about Sex* (*Blazno resno o seksu*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 1993 and reprints), 13+, realistic fiction
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- *Maggie the Magic Flea and Charlie the Saint Bernard* (Čudežna bolha Megi in bernardinec Karli), MKZ 2020 (prva izdaja 2012, več izdaj), 6+, fantastična pripoved
- *Maggie the Magic Flea and Ben the Bunny* (Čudežna bolha Megi in zajček Branko), MKZ 2020 (prva izdaja 2012, več izdaj), 6+, fantastična pripoved
- *The Giant Hen* (*Kokoš velikanka ali Kako je Slovenija dobila svojo podobo*), Muck Blažina, 2020 (prva izdaja 2007, več izdaj), 6+, pripovedka
- *Lying Suzy* (*Lažniva Suzi*), MKZ, 2012 (first edition 1997 and reprints), 13+, novel

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *The Giant Hen* (*Kokoš velikanka*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2007, Slovenia
- German:
  - *Wahnsinnig ernst über Sex: Tips für Jugendliche*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 1999, Austria
  - *Auf und davon*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2004, Austria
  - *Kremplin, der unsterbliche Magier: eine romantische Gruselgeschichte*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2005, Austria
  - *Welche Farbe hat die Welt*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2002, Austria
- Serbian:
  - *Panika*, Laguna, 2017, Serbia
  - *Jeca i zeka*, Mladinska knjiga, 2009, Serbia
  - *Jeca i sportski dan*, Mladinska knjiga, 2009, Serbia
- Macedonian: *Panika*, Ars Lamina, 2019, North Macedonia
- Croatian:
  - *Totalno ozbiljno savršeni*, Mozaik knjiga, 2012, Croatia
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  - *Alina si ziua sporturilor*, Editura Mladinska, 2009, Romania
- Czech: *Jakou barvu ma svet*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt , 2002, Austria
- Slovak: *Akej farby je svet*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2002, Austria
- Hungarian: *Milyen szinu a vilag*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2002, Austria
- Romani:
  - *Sej Farba hi u them*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2007, Austria
  - *Saj feschto hi le them*, Hermagoras Klagenfurt, 2002, Austria

Matjaž Pikalo



With minimal means, Pikalo manages to put into sentences through children's eyes the new age lifestyle that is a thematic *novum* in Slovene literature for children, while at the same time entirely unpretentious and not at all tawdry in the way it flirts with the reader.

(from the award justification 2002 for the Večernica Award)

prose

Selected piece

***Puddle* (*Luža*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2012, illustrated by Damijan Stepančič

background

Matjaž Pikalo published a trilogy of stories for children between 2001 and 2009: *Puddle*, *Samsara* and *Genius*. Unlike Puddle, Samsara is already at school, in first class and, being a girl like no other, handles her adventures and mishaps in her very own way. Genius are the protagonists of the third book. They are brother and sister Gen and Nius. Gen is in his first year, Nius is still at nursery school. They narrate or write the story together, each in their own way, the way they see it with their own eyes. This is also the uniqueness of this book. All three books are noted for their particular humour and the author's ability to transpose into the world of children.

excerpt

(translated by Aleksandra Furlan and David Rix)

We Are Not Tadpoles

We were all sitting in a hammock, actually. We were playing pirates. The hammock was our ship. I was the pirate captain. I had a hook instead of one hand. I had one eye covered with a black eye patch. But it had a tiny hole in the middle, so that I could see through it. I was cheating a little bit about being a real pirate. We were all wearing handkerchiefs on our heads. We were real pirates. Only that I didn't have a sword, because we are not allowed to carry real weapons. Or imaginary ones, come to that said Mito. That's why I had a monocular so that I could watch the sea.

"Sails up, girls, get off." Said I, because there were too many of us in the hammock.

Because of this we almost sank. Only Lana could stay, because she was the pirate princess. She is not as heavy as the big-bottomed Milenca. She went to read a book. Tisa and Nika were jealous of Lana, because she could stay with me. Little Ela could also stay with me on the ship. She was my little monkey. We almost sank also because Mak and Maj fought about who will put up the sails. They were my sailors. They fought so much that they fell overboard. Water splashed over the ship, because they knocked over the shelves, where there was a bowl of tadpoles that Columbia had brought to the playgroup.

"Darn tadpoles, you are!" shouted Anamarija. "Who is going to catch them all now?! What a day, honestly? For crying out loud?"

We don't drink water from the tap, but only from the bottles, actually. I was all wet everywhere, but I didn't cry. Nobody called me Puddle because this was an accident. In the water under the ship there were lots of tadpoles.

"Tadpoles will grow into frogs", said Ernej, who knows everything, but he doesn't know how to say his name right. "Tail and gills come off and frogs come out."

Through the monocular I could see a shark's fin sticking out of the water. This was dangerous for Mak and Maj. It was Mito. He is the big boss in our playgroup. Another lady came with him.

"This is our psychologist," said Mito. "She will make a test with you about the big school."

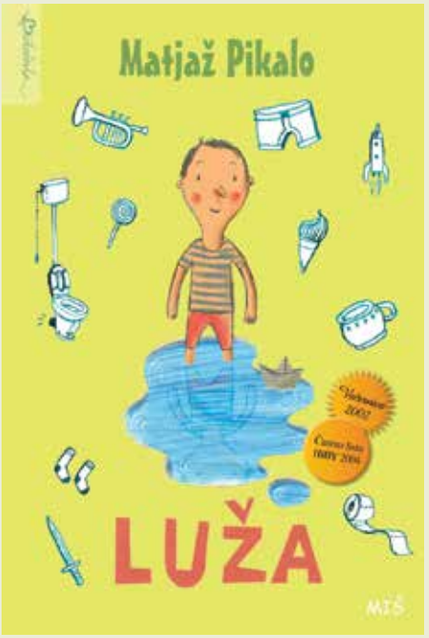
I don't know what psychologist means. I only know that she wore glasses. She had big eyes. When she saw so many tadpoles her eyes got even bigger. The playgroup children as she called us had to get off the ship and sit at the table. Mito and Anamarija had to pick up the tadpoles.

"So, playgroup children, I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you are ready for the big school."

She asked me where I lived and at what number. I told her I lived in space, and that I didn't know the number. Maybe one, maybe more, I said. She said I could have

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known that at least. Then she asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up.
"A frog!" I instantly replied.
"Do you really want me to write this in my notebook?!" She said loudly and looked at me without glasses.
I said yes, to write that I want to be a frog when I grow up.
"You are a proper tadpole, you," said she, and put her glasses back on, and wrote this in her note book.
Then she asked the same question to the other playgroup children. Mak and Maj said that they will be boxers. Ernej said that he will be a tongue, because he likes tongues, Milenca said that she will write cookery books, and Lana said that she will get married. Tisa will not get married, because she is not speaking to Lana. Because of this Nika and Ela won't get married either. I wish very much that Lana will marry me.
When I came home I told my mum what the psychologist asked me. She said that it's not important that I don't know how big space is, but what is important is that we love each other, actually.



Puddle

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2002 for *Puddle*
- IBBY Honour List, 2004 for *Puddle*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2016 for *Red Rocket*, 2010 for *Genius*, 2008 for *Gardner on the Lake*, 2006 for *Samsara*

Select Bibliography

- *Red Rocket* (*Rdeča raketa*), eBesede, 2015, 13+, novel
- *Puddle* (*Luža*), Miš založba (new edition), 2012, Prešernova družba, 2001, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Beasts Friends* (*Zverinice prijateljice*), Novi Matajur, 2012, 9+, poetry
- *Genius* (*Genija*), Prešernova družba, 2009, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Gardner on the Lake* (*Vrtnar na jezeru*), MKZ, 2007, 13+, novel
- *Think Good and Wise* (*Misli dobro in modro*), Buča, 2007, 6+, poetry
- *Marinamarina* (*Marinamarina*), Buča, 2007, 6+, poetry
- *Justsara* (*Samsara*), Prešernova družba, 2005, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Listen to the Shell* (*Prisluhni školjki*), Didakta, 2001, 6+, poetry
- *Blue e* (*Modri e*), Cankarjeva založba, 1998, 16+, novel

Published in foreign languages:

- Slovene - English - Spanish - Chinese edition: *Misli dobro in modro / Think Good and Wise / Piensa bien y sabiamente / How, how, how*, Buča, 2007, Slovenia
- English - German - Croatian - Italian edition: *Marinamarina* (*Marinamarina*), Buča, 2007, Slovenia
- Italian: *Amice bestioline* (*Zverinice prijateljice*), Založba tržaškega tiska in Novi Matajur, 2012, Italy
- Romani: *Živutrikane amalinja* (*Zverinice prijateljice*), KD Hudi Grad-Alt Guttenberg, 2018, Slovenia



Gardner on the Lake

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website:
www.pesnik-pikalo.si

Andreja Peklar



Andreja Peklar has written and illustrated an excellent picture book about the friendship between a little girl and the moon. The motif of the motherly moon watching over the child is playfully reversed and depicted through convincing literary and artistic means. Especially noted is the book's overall artistic concept, giving it an exceptional atmosphere that is artistically expressive but never explicit or single-layered.

(from award justification for the 2019 Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award)

poetry and prose

Selected poem

***The Moon and Me* (*Luna in jaz*),** Ljubljana, KUD Sodobnost International, 2019
(translated by David Limon)



The Moon and Me

The Moon and Me

I so love the *Moon*…
We'll go for a walk I say,
And the naughty thing runs away.
I look for her... she's hiding,
I call for her…
I hear her laughing.
Then it's my turn to hide,
But straight away she's at my side.
Sometimes we count stars…
...one, two, three...
But before we reach a hundred,
We start to feel so sleepy.
Oh *Moon*, you've become so thin, like a mouse's tail!
Is it still you?
'It is, it is, are you worried?'
Her voice is quiet and slow like a snail.
Tonight, in the woods, playing hide-and-seek:
Rabbit and Bear and *Moon*…
Moon, where are you?
Where are you?
Where are you?
Where are you?
'I found her, she's here!
Ssshhh, don't wake the poor dear!'
I bring her a lamp, she's afraid of the dark.
Moon is slowly waking.
Open your eyes, sleepy head!
We're taking a long, secret voyage.
The boat is waiting!
We sail and we sail, and the boat glides silently.
Look, on the surface of the sea,
Two travellers, just like you and me!
The trees throw shadows so darkly,
Moon shines with all her might.
All the way home, she follows me...
...and when I sleep, she is there all the night,
Watching over me till daylight.



The Moon and Me

6+

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2019 for *The Moon and Me,* 2017 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*, 2006 for *The Boy With the Red Cap*
- Merit Award, Hii Illustration, China, 2018 for *The Moon and Me*
- Honorary mention, Global illustration Awards, Frankfurt Buchmesse, 2017 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*
- The Hinko Smrekar Recognition Award at the Slovene Biennial of Illustration, 2016-17 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*
- Best of the Best, Hiii illustration, China, 2016 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*
- Purple Island Award, Nami Island International Picture Book Illustration Concours, Korea, 2015 for *The Moon and Me*
- International Golden Pen of Belgrade Award, Serbia, 2007 for *The Guardian*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The IBBY Honour List, 2018 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *A Thousand Birds;* 2020 for *The Moon and Me,* 2017 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*
- The Illustrators' Exhibition at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Italy, 2018 for *The Moon and Me*
- White Ravens, 2017 for *Ferdo, the Giant Bird*, 2006 for *The Boy with the Red Cap*

Select Bibliography*

* Andreja Peklar's bibliography for children's picture books is extensive in her successful role as illustrator, however in this context only works where she is the literary author as well as the illustrator are listed

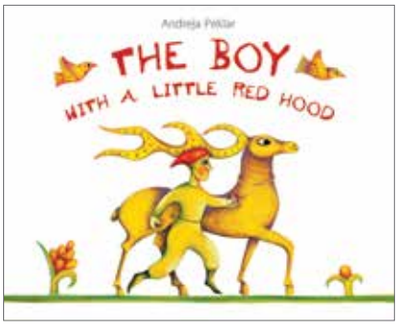
- *A Thousand Birds* (*Tisoč ptic*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2021, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *Pupa* (*Buba*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2020, do 6 let, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Moon and Me* (*Luna in jaz*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2019, 6+, poem, picture book
- *Ferdo, the Giant Bird* (*Ferdo, veliki ptič*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2016, 6+, wordless picture book
- *The Guardian* (*Varuh*), Inštitut za likovno umetnost, 2006, 9+, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Boy with the Red Cap* (*Fant z rdečo kapico*), Inštitut za likovno umetnost, 2005, 9+, fantasy fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

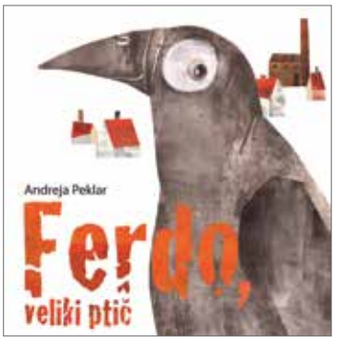
- English:
  - *Moon and Me*, KUD Sodobnost International, Horizon, 2020, Slovenija
  - *The Boy with a Little Red Hood*, Mehta Publishers, 2014, India
  - *The Guardian*, Mehta Publishers, 2014, India
- Mongolian: *Сар биэ хоёр*, Nepko Publishing, 2022, Mongolia, *The Moon and I*, NepkoKids, 2019, Mongolia
- Macedonian: *Месечината и јас*, Prozart Publishing, 2022, North Macedonia
- Chinese: 月亮月亮是你吗**,** Dandelion Children's Book House, 2022, China
- Urdu: *Chand Our Main*, Ferozsons, 2022, Pakistan
- Turkish: *Aye ve Ben*, Nobel Çocuk, 2022, Turkey
- Italian: Io e la luna, Il leone verde, 2022, Italy
- Greek: *Το φεγγάρι κι εγώ*, Vakxikon Media & Publishing Group, 2022, Greece



The Guardian



The Boy with the Red Cap



Ferdo, the Giant Bird



A Thousand Birds

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Andrej Rozman Roza



Andrej Rozman – Roza, poet, writer, playwright, actor, all-round creator of various artistic forms in a variety of media, is best known in youth literature as a writer of poetry and prose for children. [...] Foremost, regardless of the media in which the author expresses himself, Rozman's work is full of comedy that contains just enough cynical sharpness to give the reader food for thought.

(Dragica Haramija, *Nagrajene pisave / Award-winning Writing*)

poetry and prose

Selected piece

***The Enchanted Frog* (*O začaranem žabcu*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2019, illustrated by Zvonko Čoh
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



The Enchanted Frog

A grandmother with her granddaughter used to visit the pond and she would tell her stories. She once told her the story of the princess and the frog who was no ordinary frog but an enchanted prince. Hiding among the leaves, also listening to the story, was Fred the Frog. After hearing the story, he could not get it out of his head. The more he thought about it, the clearer it was to him why he felt so different to other frogs. There could be no other reason – he too must be an enchanted prince. He stopped tidying up the pondweed behind him. He no longer cleaned the frogspawn. He no longer croaked in the frog chorus. Instead he spent all day at the edge of the pond, waiting for the princess to come along and drop her golden orb into the water, so he could dive in, bring it back to her and demand the princess kiss him in return so he would change into a prince.

He practiced by occasionally diving down to the bottom of the pond, picking up a pebble and carrying it up to the shore. Then he went back to waiting and waiting.

Whenever a girl would approach the pond, he would get very excited. But none of the girls had a golden orb. They all came and went without needing his help at all.

"How's things, Prince? Are you still a frog?" the other frogs would make fun of him.

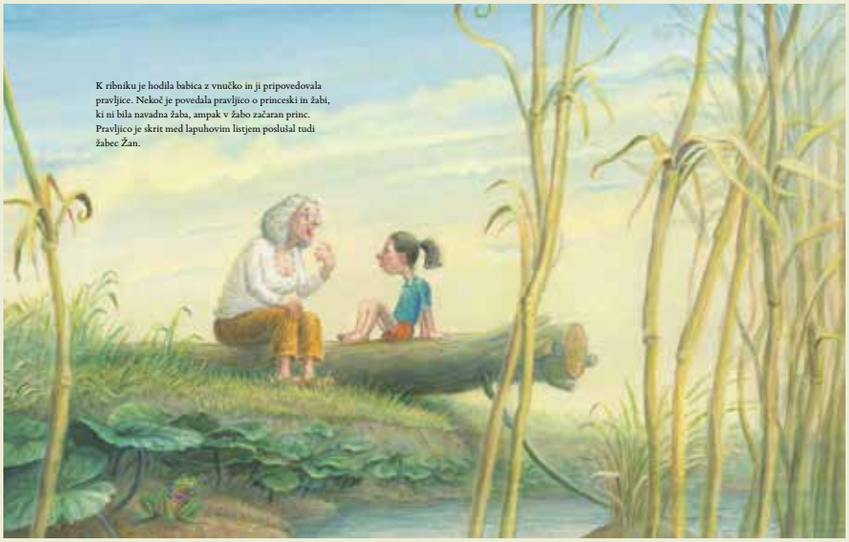
"Perhaps the Princess has found another prince."

"Or her orb fell into some other pond and she's now crying her eyes out that you are not there."

"Some other pond? I didn't even know there was such a thing!" Frank was amazed, convinced that the world was no bigger than what he could see from the edge of the pond he lived in.

"Of course," croaked the old frog Waterlily. "The world is endless and there are countless ponds in it."

"Oh, goodness," Fred sighed. "That means the Princess could be anywhere."



The Enchanted Frog

6+

"Oh no, it doesn't," Waterlily shook her head. "There is order in the world. Every princess must find her right prince. If you really are a prince who was turned into a frog, the princess will find her way to this pond."
"Unless it is not only you who were turned into a frog but the princess as well," Ben the Croaker commented.
"Is that possible?"
"Of course it is. So just take a good look at the girls in our pond and think whether any of them could be an enchanted princess."
Fred immediately thought of Frida the Frog. She was just like the Princess in the story about the pea that he once heard the grandma tell her granddaughter. Even the tiniest pebble in the mud bothered her. She was the only girl frog he got on with. In fact, she was the most wonderful girl frog in the entire pond.
So he went and asked Frida whether she had ever thought that she might be an enchanted princess.
"Of course," Frida croaked. "I have long felt so very different to other frogs. And ever since you said you were an enchanted prince I think it's quite possible I am in fact a princess."
"Do you think that if we kiss we might turn back into humans?"
"We can try," Frida ribbited.
They kissed shyly. Both remained frogs. They were a little disappointed at first but then they decided that this was much better than one of them turning human and the other staying a frog. So they lived on as the enchanted prince and princess happily ever after.

Selected piece

Poems from the Rhyme Farm (Pesmi iz rimogojnice), Ljubljana, MKZ, 2017, illustrated by Zvonko Čoh
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



Poems from the Rhyme Farm

A Truly Made-up Story

When day broke that evening I slowly hurried, formally dressed in my old torn tracksuit, down the straight bendy road to the next room where the other three singers of the duo of which I was the only member were already singing silently at the top of their voices. I was so calm that my hands shook. For the first time in my life I was performing before a crowd of one thousand who did not even half fill the tiny room on the third floor of our bungalow. My programme included sad old traditional mourning songs that I had written myself and spoke of the happy aspects of life. Even though it was pitch black because of all the lights in the room, I managed to reach the chair in the middle of the stage that was twice as big as the room in the middle of which it stood. As I always perform standing up, I sat down and grabbed my guitar that was on the floor leaning against the chair. I extended its bellows and blew into the mouthpiece of my pocket piano a song about how very important it is to always and everywhere speak only the truth.



6+

Selected piece

***Rhymeusines and Lettervermin (Rimuzine in črkolazen)*,** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2019, illustrated by Zvonko Čoh
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



Rhymeusines and Lettervermin

I need to tell you something

There should be someone for everyone
that we can trust enough
to entrust ourselves to them at times
when things are looking tough.

There should be someone for everyone
to understand us, lend an ear
when our soul is frozen over
when our heart is full of fear.

Someone we can tell even those troubles
we'd like to delete from our mind
someone we can also tell things
with words that aren't easy to find.

Because being able to talk to someone
is more important that what you wear,
and is one of those rare things you can do
even if you have no money to spare.

Talking isn't only chit chat for fun,
the best kind of talking is really done
when we openly share with someone kind
all the things that lie heavily on our mind.

Talking is closeness, warmth and affection,
that gets rid of any sense of dejection
as a family, a group, your woes you forget
even when you don't have the internet.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2020 for *Rhymeusines and Lettervermin,* 2019 for *Poems from the Gallery*, 2008 for *How Oscar Became a Detective*
- The Kristina Brenkova Award for the Original Slovene Picture Book, 2011 for *Urška*
- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2021
- The Levstik Award, 2009 for *100 + 1 Riddles*, 1999 for *Worm-ridden Poems*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, 2018, 2017, 2016
- The Večernica Award, 2016 for *Prestories and Aftertales*, 2013 for *The Choflys*, 2008 for *How Oscar Became a Detective*, 1998 for *The Secret of Sporks*
- The Desetnica Award, 2016 for *Prestories and Aftertales*, 2015 for *Bob the Beaver*, 2009 for *100 + 1 Riddles*, 2014 for *The Choflys*, 2013 for *Mr Philodendron*, 2008 for *How Oscar Became a Detective*, 2007 for *Mikey Goes Round the World for the First Time*, 2006 for *The Umbrell*, 2004 for *Let's Exercisea*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *Rozman-Stories-Songs-Riddles*; 2020 for *The Enchanted Frog, Rhymeusines and Lettervermin,* 2015 for *Animal Farm*, 2014 for *Poems from the Rhyme Farm*, 2011 for *Selected Roza's Poems in Action*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2019 for *The Enchanted Frog*, 2013 for *Poems from the Rhyme Farm*, 2006 for *The Umbrella*
- IBBY Honour List: 2022 *Rhymeusines and Lettervermin*

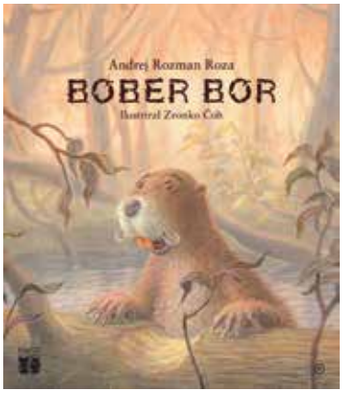
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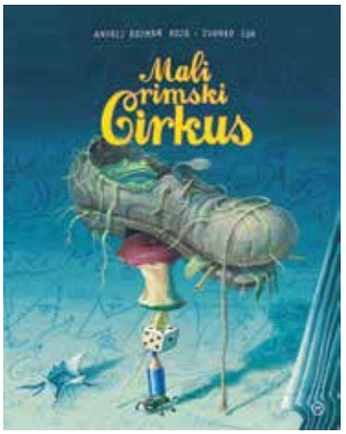
- *The Choflys* (*Čofli*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2012 and reprints), under 6, short fantasy fiction
- *Pretales and Aftertales* (*Predpravljice in popovedke*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2015 and reprints), 6+, short stories
- *Rozman-Stories-Songs-Riddles* (*Rozimnica*), MKZ, 2021, 6+, zgodbe, pesmi in uganke
- *Little Rhyming Circus* (*Mali rimski cirkus*), MKZ, 2019 (first edition 2001 and reprints), 6+, poetry
- *The Enchanted Frog* (*O začaranem žabcu*), MKZ, 2019, under 6, fairy tale, picture book
- *Rhymeusines and Lettervermin* (*Rimuzine in črkolazen*), MKZ, 2019, 6+, poetry
- *Poems from the Gallery* (*Pesmi iz galerije*), National Gallery of Slovenia, 2018, 13+, poetry
- *How Oscar Became a Detective* (*Kako je Oskar postal detektiv*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2017 (first edition 2007 and reprints), 9+, short realistic fiction
- *Poems from the Rhyme Farm* (*Pesmi iz rimogojnice*), MKZ, 2017 (first edition 2013 and reprints), 6+, poetry
- *Bob the Beaver* (*Bober Bor*), MKZ, 2013, under 6, fairy tale, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

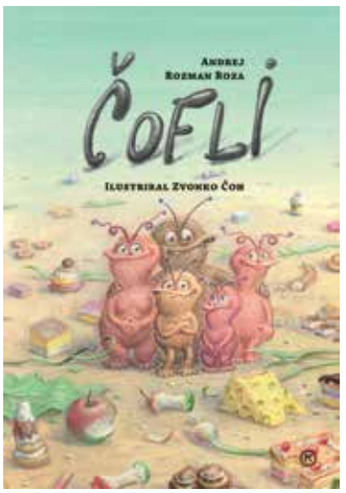
- Lithuanian: *Kaip Oskaras tapo detektyvu*, Nieko Rimto, 2018, Lithuania
- Croatia: *Kako je Oskar postao detektiv*, Ibis grafika, 2018, Croatia
- Macedonian: *Gospodin Filodendron*, Darko Spasov Polatski, 2017, Macedonia
- English: *The Chuffles*, MKZ, 2022, Slovenija; *Little Rhyming Circus*, sample translation (selected poems from *Mali rimski cirkus*), JAK; *How Oscar Became a Detective*, Vodnikova založba, KUD Sodobnost International, 2007, Slovenia



Bob the Beaver



Little Rhyming Circus



The Choflys



Rozman-Stories-Songs-Riddles

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Andrej E. Skubic



The award goes to the second volume of the brilliant four-book series The Pesky Trio, consisting of intertwined short tales of friendship between two boys and a girl. The very first volume, *That Door Should Not Have Been Opened*, is an ingenious and stylistically brilliant work (authentic kids' slang, wordplay on personal names) which builds on an everyday eight-year-olds' antics to expose various stereotypes and underline the importance of creativity and friendship: Liam, Tommy and Leah become the invincible Pesky Trio. In *Granny No Longer Has a Phone*, the author goes even further: the adventures of the Trio are combined with an opportunity for sincere child empathy at the loss of someone close.

(from the award justification for the 2019 Večernica Award)

prose

Selected piece

***The Pesky Trio: That Door Should Not Have Been Opened* (*Ne bi smel odpreti tistih vrat*),** MKZ, 2018, illustrated by Tanja Komadina



That Door Should Not Have Been Opened

background to the series

Mischievous Liam and dreamy Tommy are schoolmates and best friends. There is no end to their roguery, they like drawing freaks and fiends, and teasing the girls – until they one day inadvertently hurt the feelings of the 'class ugly' Leah. Although their friendship is tested when this happens, the three of them soon discover they have much in common and become inseparable allies, the 'Pesky Trio'. Together they have a number of adventures and face the trials of growing up: modern technology, mischievous sisters, big-headed classmates, the school bully, new pets, destructive builders, school psychologists and first crushes. Exciting and entertaining stories by the established and award-winning writer Andrej E. Skubic with excellent illustrations by Tanja Komadina.

excerpt

(translated by the author)

Mud grenades

"I have a plan," Liam said to Tommy. Hiding behind a tree, they were spying on the girls gathered at the running track in the school playground. Liam and Tommy had their stash of mud grenades lined up on a low tree branch. Unfortunately, the girls had even more mud grenades in stock by the track, since they had to be prepared for defence at any time.

"What plan?" Tommy asked.

"I'll distract them," Liam said. "I'll ask them to race with me to the end of the track. If anyone is faster, I'll lend her my Bakugan. Meantime, you pick up their grenades and bring them over, we'll give them a shower!"

Tommy had some reservations. It's true, all the girls would love to chase Liam, they all had a bit of a crush on him. But it was not only Petra and Julia but Leah as well, the bumbling Princess of Uglyland. She was practically sure to refuse to race to avoid embarrassment, being a lousy runner. And if she stays with the mud grenades, the plan is useless.

"No worries, you just be ready!" Liam said and walked over to the girls.

They started to talk and Tommy watched. He was envious of the attention the girls paid to Liam. Especially as he knew that Liam had a bit of a crush on Julia – and to be listened to by a girl you have a crush on? They had much less understanding for him, his drawings of freaks and fiends. And then, all of a sudden, he saw the three of them – not just Petra and Julia, but Leah as well, lined up next to Liam and prepared to bolt.

"One, two, three, go!" Liam yelled and off they went like a shot.

Tommy immediately started for the mud grenades the girls had lined up, but as he wanted to grab them, he saw that there were too many. He could not pick them all up in one go; and there was nowhere near enough time to go twice. The runners were near the middle of the track!

In a hurry he noticed a puddle in the grass next to the track. On the spur of the moment, he grabbed the water with his hands and started sprinkling the mud grenades. Just a few splashes, and all the grenades were just runny smudges. Only Leah, who gave up in the middle of the track and turned around, could see what he was doing.

He dashed back to the tree before Liam, Petra and Julia

6+

turned around at the end of the rack. Of course, Liam won – he was really fast. No Bakugan for you, girls! And not just that, as soon as he turned around he ran back to Tommy. Time to attack!
Petra and Julia chased him angrily, but Liam was already in line with Tommy.
"Where are theirs?" he yelled.
"Shut up and fire!" yelled Tommy, who had no time to elaborate. They grabbed the grenades and took a fighting stance.
Petra and Julia immediately rushed to their arsenal. Leah, who had seen what Tommy had done, shouted in vain for a tactical retreat. As soon as the girls reached their grenades, all three were caught in a storm of mud. It was not the worst that the first grenade hit Petra's leg. When the two grabbed THEIR grenades and took a swing, the runny mud splattered in all directions except at Liam and Tommy. They were both suddenly covered all over, their clothes, faces, hair, mouths.
Tommy and Liam roared, their grenades went woosh, woosh, woosh. Even Leah, who stood far away, barely managed to skip out of the way of one aimed at her belly.
"Tommy, you're a genius!" Liam yelled.

Awards in the field of children's literature

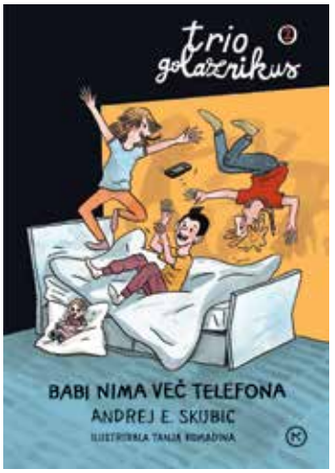
- The Večernica Award, 2019 for *The Pesky Trio: Granny No Longer Has a Phone*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

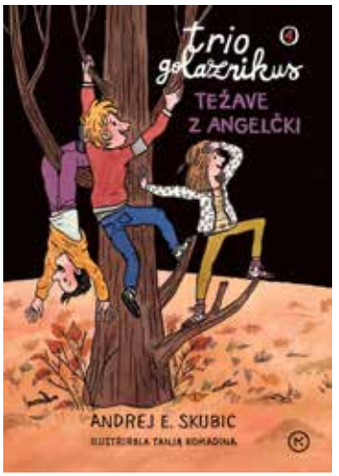
- The Desetnica Award, 2020 for *Granny No Longer Has a Phone*
- The Levstik Award, 2019 for the series *The Pesky Trio*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *Love and Scary Things,* 2021 for *Diversionary Tactics and Traitors*, *Roksy Finds a Home,* 2020 for *Problems with Angels, Pests from the Wardrobe,* 2019 for *That Door Should Not Have Been Opened; Granny No Longer Has a Phone*

Select Bibliography

- *The Pesky Trio 8: Attack on the Secret Base* (*Trio Golaznikus 8: Napad na tajno bazo*), MKZ, 2022, 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 2: Granny No Longer Has a Phone* (*Trio Golaznikus 2: Babi nima več telefona),* MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2018 and reprints), 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 1: That Door Should Not Have Been Opened* (*Trio Golaznikus 1: Ne bi smel odpreti tistih vrat*), MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2018), 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 7: Love and Scary Things* (*Trio Golaznikus 7: Amor in strašne stvari*), MKZ, 2021, 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 6: Diversionary Tactics and Traitors* (*Trio Golaznikus 6: Diverzanti in izdajalci*), MKZ, 2020, 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 5: Roksy Finds a Home* (*Trio Golaznikus 5: Roksi najde dom*), MKZ, 2020, 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 4: Problems with Angels (Trio Golaznikus 4: Težave z angelčki*), MKZ, 2019, 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Pesky Trio 3: Pests from the Wardrobe (Golazni iz omare),* MKZ, 2019, 6+, realistic fiction
- *A Telephone or a Thousand Things* (*Telefon ali tisoč stvari*), MKZ, 2018, 9+, fantasy fiction



Granny No Longer Has a Phone



Problems with Angels

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a.skubic@gmail.com

6+

Milan Dekleva



The collection *Poems For Hungry Dreamers* (1981) undoubtedly represents the peak of modernist nonsense verse for children. [...] Poetry is the 'effect' of words, a taste of the colourful, a playful construction of a world in which everyday things merge in ways that transform everyday life into a paradox illusion that the reader can freely build upon with their own string of associations.

(Igor Saksida in the journal *Preseganje meje*)

poetry and prose

Selected poem

***First Words Book of Poetry* (*Pesmarica prvih besed*)**, Radovljica, Didakta, 2009, illustrated by Silvan Omerzu

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

First Words

Our first words are the light of dawn,
a mother's kiss and new worlds drawn.

Our first words are the music of the world,
of a tiny heart with its sails unfurled.

At first they might seem a little confusing,
as if hiding in the snow, secret and bemusing.

Quietly jumping around the house and the yard,
to hear and understand them isn't that hard.

Sometimes funny and playful with a joyful leap,
sometimes hungry and tearful, ready for sleep.

We need to nurture them like flowers,
lovingly watered each day, all hours.

All these first words that are uttered anew,
are never forgotten by me or by you.



First Words Book of Poetry

Selected poem

***Poems For Hungry Dreamers* (*Pesmi za lačne sanjavce*)**, Ljubljana, Partizanska knjiga, 1981, illustrated by Štefan Planinc

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Dreams Have Hats With Pom-Poms Bright Red

Dreams have hats with pom-poms bright red
so they don't feel the cold as they fly through the snow,
on their visits to Eskimos and white arctic foxes.
Once these dreams are let out of their boxes,
as we lie, waiting to go to those faraway places
sweet, soft and supple, like doughnuts in bed,
they hold our hand as an old friend who we know.

And when dreams still feel cold, the snow is too deep,
they sneak past our hearts into bed, and fall fast asleep.



Poems for Hungry Dreamers

9+

Selected poems

Sayings and Verses in Swimming Trunks and Dresses (Pregovori in reki v kopalkah in obleki), Ljubljana, Buča, 2019, illustrated by Melita Vizjak and Erika Pavlin
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Slow and Steady Wins the Race

"I know," said the snail,
"that those who hurry all day,
see no purpose, sense or way."
"I know," replies the nail,
"that it's certainly best,
and life is great if you're fixed and can rest."

The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From the Tree

A famous physicist once lay in the grass,
so it is said,
when an apple fell onto
his very wise head.
"Aha!" he called out
with infatuation,
"Now I can see, this is all gravitation!
So that's why an egg is never far from a chicken
and the cream is all eaten before it can thicken.
Why then,"
he continued to ponder,
"do all who are so drawn to Earth,
want to go to Heaven and yonder?"

Fear-Muncher



Dream Exchange



Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2011 for *First Words Book of Poetry*
- The IBBY Honour List, 2010 for translation *Bi se gnetli na tej metli?*, the Slovene translation of Julia Donaldson's *Room on the Broom*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2017 for *Dream Exchange*, 2016 for *Hide and Seek*
- The Večernica Award, 2016 for *Dream Exchange*, 2001 for *Alice in the Computer*, 1998 for *Are Cream Cakes Dangerous*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2020 for *Little Alma on a Great Journey*, 2016 for *Dream Exchange*
- The Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2020 for *Little Alma on a Great Journey*

Select Bibliography

- *Little Alma on a Great Journey* (*Mala Alma na veliki poti*), MKL, 2020, 6+, biographical prose, picture book
- *Sayings and Verses in Swimming Trunks and Dresses* (*Pregovori in reki v kopalkah in obleki*), Buča, 2019, 6+, poetry
- *Book-Muncher* (*Knjigožer*), Morfemplus, 2018, do 6 let, short fantastic fiction, picture book
- *Riddles for Annies and Dannies* (*Uganke za Anke in Janke*), Morfemplus, 2017, 6+, poetry, picture book
- *Fear-Muncher* (*Strahožer*), Morfemplus, 2016, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Dream Exchange* (*Menjalnica sanj*), MKZ, 2015, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Hide and Seek* (*Skrivalnice*), Morfemplus, 2015, 6+, poetry, picture book
- *First Words Book of Poetry* (*Pesmarica prvih besed*), Didakta, 2009, 6+, poetry, picture book
- *Alice in the Computer* (*Alica v računalniku*), Cankarjeva založba, 2000, 13+, poetry
- *Are Cream Cakes Dangerous* (*A so kremšnite nevarne*), MKZ, 1997, 9+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- Bosnian: *Odjedanje božjega*, Kulturni vikend djece iz BIH, Vodnikova domačija, 1995, Slovenia

e-mail (author):
milan.dekleva@gmail.com

Mate Dolenc



Mate Dolenc's animal stories are essentially tales of modern society that the narrator – a wise old man – observes from a distance simply because people are incapable of understanding certain deep truths. Perhaps children are more capable of accepting them. [...] The author triggers in the reader a consideration of values. This is an intimate deliberation by the individual capable of establishing a deeper relationship with a truth, orientated towards myths, those universal and timeless stories.

(Dragica Haramija, *Nagrajene pisave /Award-Winning Writing*)

prose

Selected piece

***Little Oyster's Revenge* (*Maščevanje male ostrige*),** Ljubljana, Mladika, 2011, illustrated by Adriano Janežič

background

The collection, *Little Oyster's Revenge,* contains twenty short stories. Although the protagonists are animals, the author mostly addresses social relationships. The first two stories (*Who Are You, Cat?* and *Missing*) as well as the last one (*Books, Brooks, Flames*) take place in a house at the edge of the forest near Lake Bohinj. In the others, the author takes us to Adriatic islands, the Gulf of Piran and the Zoo in Ljubljana. The animals tell the author quite a few things about how they see humans, and we are certainly not seen in as positive a light as we would like to imagine.

Little Oyster's Revenge



excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Who Are You, Cat?

The narrator explains how he never liked cats even though they used to live in his woodshed. They were feral cats that he would leave food for but would never allow him to pick them up…

But by summer, as they grew a little, something changed. They would no longer just vanish but would watch me from a distance. One of them, however, a black cat, stayed closer. All the others would run out into the meadow. The black cat stayed on the patio and hid under the table. Later he climbed onto the bench and observed me from there. If I approached him, he would jump off the bench and move a little further away but he never ran off. Then I ignored him. I walked past him. I did not even glance at him and he stayed on the patio, following me with his eyes.

One day I stood at the edge of the patio, looking across the meadow. Then I felt something rubbing against my leg. I looked down and there he was, the black cat. He was staring straight into my eyes.

"Oh, hello," I said. "So you've finally plucked up the courage, have you, black cat?"

"Meow," he replied.

So I called him Meo.

The following day he allowed me to stroke his back. He moved away at first but then followed me into the house. He scratched the carpet and stared at me. Wherever I went he followed me and watched me. And purred all the time. All the other cats, including the mother, still kept running away. Only the black cat stayed close to me.

"Who are you, Meo?" I asked him. I remembered stories about reincarnation – when somebody dies they turn into someone else and live on as the next being. They can become a bird, a fish, an elephant, a cat.

9+

Who was Meo?
The summer ended and winter set in. The other cats all disappeared, only the black cat stayed on. I often went into town and only returned days later, I was sometimes even away for a week or two – Meo was still there, he would come running out of the woodshed, rub against my leg and instantly start purring. I was not sure what he ate when I was not there – perhaps he even caught mice. But cats are clever and find a way, he would probably get fed at other houses in the valley.
In the evenings he would lie on my bed and we would watch TV together. He ate the food I ate – even a pizza I brought in one evening. What he liked best were fish, just like me. Whenever I went off to the shop or an inn he would hide in the woodshed and when I came back he would come out onto the patio and follow me into the house. He became a true friend.
We once stood at the edge of the patio, gazing at the stars. The snow on the ground twinkled as if tiny lights were sprouting from it. There were remnants of a fish bone on Meo's plate outside and the same on my plate inside the house. We had had fish for tea. That was when I remembered my friend Mile who had died a year earlier. I recalled how we once sat on top of our boat, anchored at some remote Adriatic island, staring at the stars. At some point he said, "I've just found the front page for your book." He pointed to the sky, to the stars. "The Adriatic Constellation. That's what I will put on the cover of your book."
He was a painter and a designer and I was shortly due to publish my book *The Adriatic Constellation* with his design. He transferred the stars from that island onto the cover of my book.
I looked down at my friend the black cat. "Now I know who you are," I told him. "You're Mile." His bright eyes stared at me from his black coat. A true friend never dies. They just transpose into another living being.

Awards in the field of children's literature

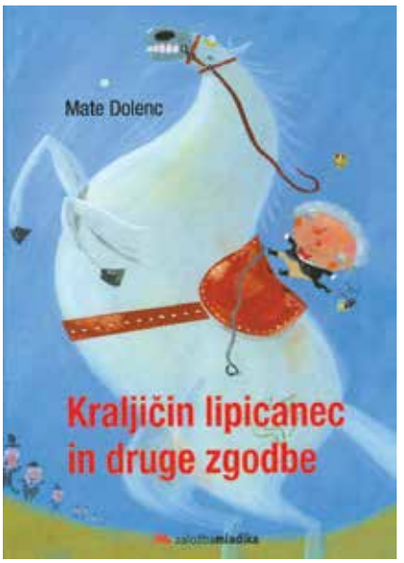
- The Večernica Award, 2011 for *Little Oyster's Revenge*
- The Desetnica Award, 2015 for *The Little Prince from the Island*, 2004 for *Flying Ship*
- The Levstik Award, 1986 for *The Land of the Sea at the Railway Station*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

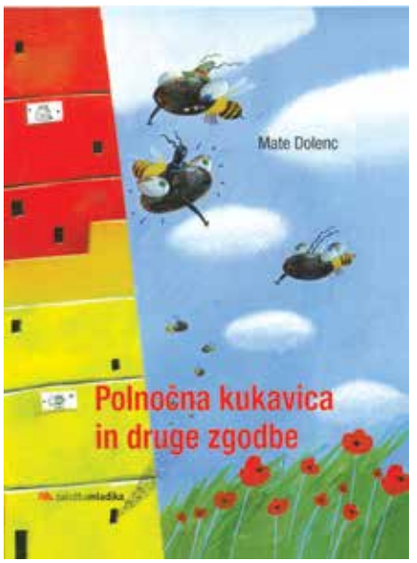
- The Večernica Award, 2013 for *The Little Prince from the Island*, 2009 for *The Princess's Lipizzaner and Other Stories*, 2008 for *Midnight Cuckoo and other Stories*
- The Desetnica Award, 2013 for *Little Oyster's Revenge*, 2010 for *The Princess's Lipizzaner and Other Stories*, 2007 for *Swan's Mistake and Other Stories*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2013 for *The Little Prince from the Island*

Select Bibliography

- *The Length of Time (Kako dolg je čas),* Beletrina, 2019, 16+, fantasy fiction
- *The Little Prince From the Island* (*Mali princ z otoka*), Didakta, 2012, 13+, realistic fiction
- *The Cows Told Me* (*Krave so mi povedale*), Mladika, 2012, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Little Oyster's Revenge* (*Maščevanje male ostrige*), Mladika, 2010, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *The Queen's Lipizzaner and Other Stories* (*Kraljičin lipicanec in druge zgodbe*), Mladika, 2009, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Midnight Cuckoo and Other Stories* (*Polnočna kukavica in druge zgodbe*), Mladika, 2008, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Swan's Mistake and Other Stories* (*Zabloda laboda in druge zgodbe*), Mladika, 2006, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *The Sea Bed Tells a Story* (*Morsko dno pripoveduje*), Mladika, 2005, 6+, fantasy fiction
- *The Flying Ship* (*Leteča ladja*), Mladika, 2004, 9+, fantasy fiction



The Queen's Lipizzaner and Other Stories



Midnight Cuckoo and Other Stories

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Barbara Gregorič Gorenc



In her poems the author touches upon various psychological states, emotions and feelings, especially negative ones, suggesting solutions to them. /…/ She thus opens up a broad range of sensations and situations faced by young people and adults alike. The solution to the problem in each poem is offered by the animal from its title...

(Gaja Kos, *Delo*, 2021)

poetry

Selected piece

***Uncertain Poems*, MKZ, 2020, illustrated by Damijan Stepančič**

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



Uncertain Poems

THE FIGHTING BULL

Sometimes
I hate
a thousand things!
So much
I have
smoke coming out of my ears!

But the FIGHTING BULL
does not rush to strike...

Instead, it shows me
things I REALLY like!

THE HOPEFUL BIRD OF PREY

I sometimes
go
from day to day
without a thought
and quite astray ...
when on my shoulder sits
a HOPEFUL BIRD OF PRAY,

it pecks at my ear
(that really breaks the spell)
wakes me up
and reassures me:
All is well!

THE DOZY DROMEDARY

When you cannot sleep
because in your mind
solutions to problems
you're trying to find
- out of the dark? out of light?
the DOZY DROMEDARY
appears in sight
with a humpful of sleep
it whispers you stories
about an oasis
with kind faces
and you follow
him right there...

MERRY MARMOT

When you're happy, happy – happy,
the MERRY MARMOT
comes along squealing:
REMEMBER
the colour of happiness
the smell
the taste
the sound
the feeling!

TIGERS

I am scared
and I am worried.
What comes tomorrow?
What in three days' time?

We know neither
when or where
who or how
or even why at all?!

TIGERS are always there,
always in the game!

Never tame,
growling, prowling!

Stealing all my
energy!

Fear in my stomach
forms a great big cluster
but it melts with the courage
I am able to muster!

HUMMINGBIRD

I summon with a word
the tiny HUMMINGBIRD
and it flies up close,
brushes against my cheek!

At times, the fluttering wings
inside your mind
truer than truth itself
you may find.

9+

Nominations in the field of children's literature

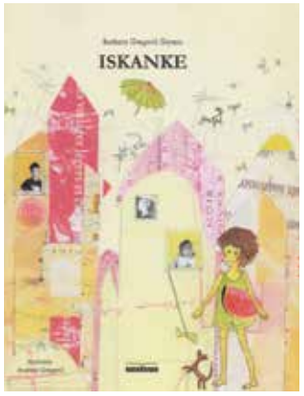
- The Večernica Award, 2021 for *Uncertain Poems*; 2006 for *Three Dots...*
- The Levstik Award, 2021 for *Uncertain Poems*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2021 for *Uncertain Poems*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2021 for *Uncertain Poems*



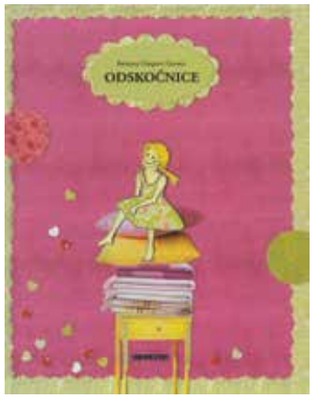
Hummingbirds and Tigers

Select Bibliography

- *Hummingbirds and Tigers (Kolibri in tigri)*, Založba Zala, 2022, 9+, poetry
- *Yamamai (Jamamaj)*, Mladika Scarl, 2022, 9+, poetry
- *Uncertain Poems (Negotove pesmi),* MKZ, 2020, 9+, poetry
- *If Lily Would... (Če bi Lili ...)*, Mladika, 2016, 6+, poetry
- *Hidden Graffiti (Skriti grafiti)*, Viharnik, 2011, 9+, poetry
- *Date Tips (Navodila za randi)*, Viharnik, 2006, 9+, poetry
- *Three Dots... (Tri pike...)*, Viharnik, 2005, 9+, poetry
- *Lazy Moon (Lena luna)*, Mladika, 1998, 9+, poetry
- *Locked Up Wolf* (*Zaklenjeni volk*), Mladika, 1997, 9+, poetry
- *The I Won't Poems (Nebomske pesmi)*, Državna založba Slovenije, 1994, 9+, poetry



Searchling Poems



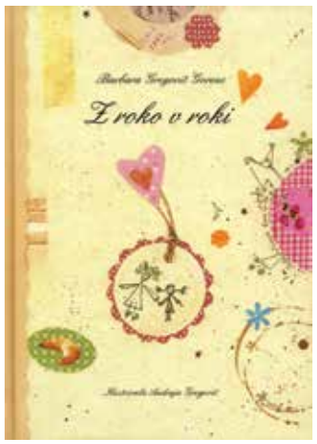
Take-off Poems



Hidden Graffiti



Three Dots...



Hand in Hand



Date Tips

e-mail (author):
barbaraggorenc@gmail.com

Nataša Konc Lorenzutti



Any character of a self-confident child, especially a little girl, is welcome in children's literature. [...] The protagonist is very cleverly presented. The reader takes on the girl's perspective and at the same time distances themselves from it when she is being mischievous or when her understanding of the world is childishly limited. [...] The book is a celebration of imagination and of exploring language. [...] Certain fragments of the stories also touch upon the unconventional and, precisely because of this, very welcome themes that should not be taboo in children's books, yet need to be handled with sensitivity.

(Ivana Zajc, review in the journal *Sodobnost*)

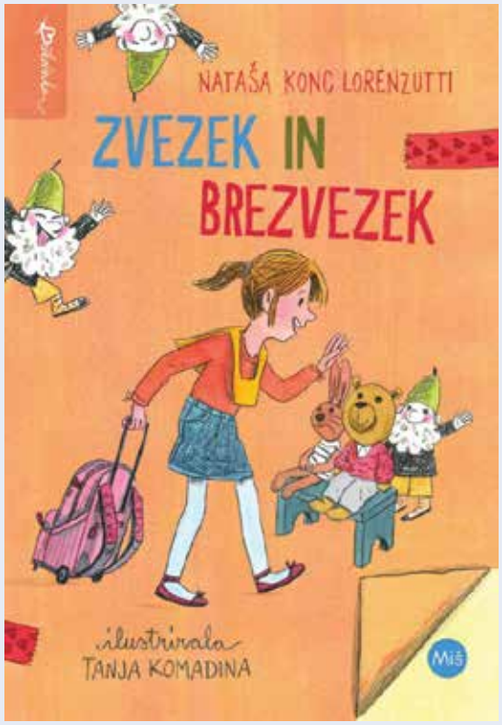
prose

Selected piece

***Notebooks and Gibberish Pads* (*Zvezek in brezvezek*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2018, illustrated by Tanja Komadina

background

The central character in this book, intended for children in the first three years of primary school (and younger children being read to by their parents), is the narrator Nika who lives with her mother and father and two older brothers (Tin in the first year of secondary school, and Ton, who has just started at university) and two sisters (Lija, who goes to sixth class, and Lučka, who is in ninth year, the last class of primary school). Nika is in her first year. Through her perspective, each chapter serves the author to illuminate a tiny event from the child's everyday life that the child sees and understands entirely differently to how adults and older children see and interpret it, leading to a series of clever plots and stories. All the other family members and characters from the wider family and school surroundings are involved in the events. The literary time is restricted to a single school year, from day one with Nika attending her first day at school to the last day when she is presented with her yearly school report.



Notebooks and Gibberish Pads

excerpts

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

You Get Used To All That

"Well, what's school like? Everything still fine?" Ton asked at the end of the week.
"Yep," Nika replied.
"Is that all you'll tell us?"
"Yep. It's enough that all of you talk."
"That's true. What's the point of going into details! Most people are not interested anyway. They just ask in order to ask something. It's only parents who are really interested in knowing how you get on."
"What about you?"
Ton thought for a while.
"Yes, I'm interested," he said.
"Well, right then, I'll tell you. Not good."
"Why not?"
"Homework every day, not enough time to change for PE, kids shouting in the breaks…"
"You get used to all that."
"Did you get used to doing homework?" Nika was surprised.

9+

"Yeah," Ton started fidgeting. "But later, when I was older, I… got unused to it… I didn't always do my homework at secondary school. I started getting really bad marks in maths."
"And then?"
"I had to get used to it again, otherwise I would still be at secondary school now."
"Alright then, I'll do my homework. What about changing for PE?"
"You get used to that, you get on with it and you change in no time."
"What about the shouting?"
"You have two options. You can start shouting yourself, or just learn how to switch off your ears."
"Switch off?"
"Yes. You go to some corner and draw or do something else. When you become immersed in what you are doing the noise fades away. But I chose the first option. I shouted along with the others, so as not to be left out."
"Oh, dear. Do you still shout at school?"
"Dear Sis, I go to the university now. Can you imagine students there shouting?"
"I don't know, because I don't know what a university is."
"It's a school for pupils my age and even older."
"And they don't shout?"
"They shout at night, in the student halls, at parties."
"Will you shout along with them?"
"I don't know. Forget about that now. Have you done your homework?"
"I'll do it tomorrow."
"Not a good idea. If you do it today, you don't have to think about it at all on Saturday and Sunday."



Notebooks and Gibberish Pads

"Did you use to do yours on Fridays?"
"No," Ton smirked.

It's Urgent

"I need bubbles for school," Nika said cautiously in the car as Mother was driving home.
"Bubbles?"
"Yes, bubbles you blow. It's urgent."
"Soap bubbles?"
"I don't know…" Nika was confused.
"Do you mean those bubbles you blow from soapy water?"
"I don't know," Nika repeated.
"And what will you do with them?"
"Well, blow them."
"In what class."
Nika thinks for a while.
"Art class," she replied.
"You will blow bubbles at art class?" Mother was surprised.
"Yes," Nika said decisively. "We will put them out on paper… so the bubbles burst on it."
"That won't show up on paper."
"Well, I don't know what the teacher was thinking," Nika was becoming a little angry.
The teacher asked for bubbles. So Mother needs to buy some!
"Well," said Mother. "We can ask Daddy to bring some. He can bring them in the evening when he comes home from town."
"It'll be too late in the evening," Nika objects. "Let's go into town right now."
"No, now we are going home. I'm tired from work. You don't need the bubbles until tomorrow," Mother insists.

In the afternoon Mother told Father to buy some soap bubble mixture.
Nika listened in.
- What do they need bubbles in art class for?
- I don't understand either. But if the teacher asked for them we need to buy some.
- And where can I get this stuff?
- At the stationaries or a toy shop.
Great! As long as Daddy gets the soap bubbles, then Nika will come clear. She didn't really lie. It was all just a joke. Jakob brought such bubbles to school today and Nika would really like some too. As long as daddy buys some! Then she will explain that it was not the teacher who asked for them. Funny how they both fell for it! Why on earth would they need soap bubbles at art class? So gullible!

Awards in the field of children's literature

- Golden Pear Award, 2016 for *Who's In Charge Today*
- IBBY Honour List, 2020 for *Notebooks and Gibberish Pads*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

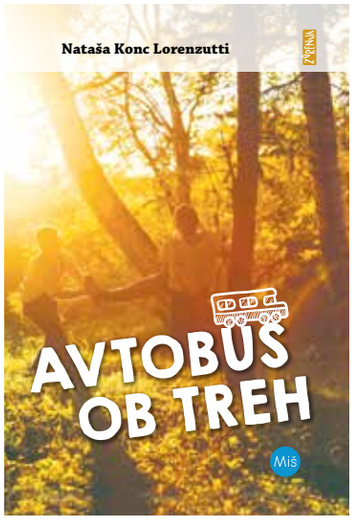
- The Večernica Award, 2022 for *Tronci,* 2017 for *The Three O'Clock Bus*, 2016 for *Who's In Charge Today*, 2013 for *What Kind of Tree Grows From a Cat*
- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *Tronci,* 2021 for *To the Back of Beyond,* 2019 for *I'm No Brat*, 2018 for *Who's In Charge Today*, 2017 for *Cheeks Like Cherries*, 2015 for *Elevenager*, 2014 for *What Kind of Tree Grows from a Cat*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2007 for *Just Big Enough*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *Tronci*, 2021 for *To the Back of Beyond,* 2018 for *I'm No Brat*, 2017 for *The Three O'Clock Bus*, 2013 for *What Kind of Tree Grows from a Cat*
- The Levstik Award, 2019 for *I'm Not Brat*

Select Bibliography

- *To the Back of Beyond* (*Gremo mi v tri krasne*), Miš založba, 2021 (first edition 2020 and reprints), 13+, realistic novel
- *Tronci* (*Tronci*), MKL, 2021, 6+, realistic fiction
- *What Kind of Tree Grows From a Cat* (*Kakšno drevo zraste iz mačka*), Miš založba, 2021 (first edition 2012), 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Three O'Clock Bus* (*Avtobus ob treh*), Miš založba, 2018 (first edition 2016 and reprints), 13+, realistic novel
- *Notebooks and Gibberish Pads* (*Zvezek in brezvezek*), Miš založba, 2018, 6+, realistic fiction
- *I'm Not a Brat* (*Nisem smrklja*), MKZ, 2017, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Who's In Charge Today* (*Kdo je danes glavni*), Miš založba, 2015, 6+, realistic fiction
- *Cheeks Like Cherries* (*Lica kot češnje*), MKZ, 2015 13+, realistic novel
- *The Society Of Older Brothers* (*Društvo starejših bratov*), Miš založba, 2013, 6+, realistic fiction
- *Elevenager (Enajstnik), MKZ, 2012,* 13+, realistic fiction



I'm Not Brat



The Three O'Clock Bus



What Kind of Tree Grows From a Cat

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natasa.konc-lorenzutti@guest.arnes.si

Maša Ogrizek



Maša Ogrizek created a story about initiation into adulthood and also into a genuine friendship, in an unobtrusive way making the reader face the fear of change, separation and death, while also weaving into the story a number of questions on the minds of teenagers as well as some deeper ones that we are all concerned with during 'phases of transition.' Whenever we move on and change, it is inevitable that we also look to the past, wonder whether we are going in the right direction and whether our friends will follow us…

(Katja Klopčič Lavrenčič, review in the journal *Sodobnost*, 2022)

prose

Selected piece

***Fox Moon (Lisičja luna)*, Miš založba, 2021, ilustrirala Tina Dobrajc**



Fox Moon

background

Full moon. Mum has night shift again, so Zoe will spend another lonely evening in a cottage on the edge of the forest. While contemplating, she is startled by a penetrating meow. Following the cat, she squeezes through the skylight and climbs the branches of a tall oak tree. She suddenly spots two glowing eyes. She loses her balance and plunges into the depths ...

A fantasy adventure into the deep magical Evergreen Forest is accompanied by exceptional illustrations, painted by an academic painter and illustrator Tina Dobrajc, who has created an enchanted atmosphere of a wild forest and has captured the heroes in their transformation.

excerpt

(translated by Tom Smith)

The Spell of the Antlered Witch

Zoe sat very still, almost motionlessly, on the edge of the bed, trying to make out the slightest sound. Everything was quiet, so she tiptoed to the door and gently pressed the handle. To her surprise, the door opened, although she was convinced that the antlered bird had locked her in. There was not a living soul in sight, yet the thought of escaping didn't even cross her mind. She was utterly exhausted. The room was dimly lit by the moonlight and a fire crackling in a small stove. It felt homely. She climbed into the freshly made bed. A bouquet of wild strawberries was waiting for her on the pillow. She ate the sweet fruits with great delight and sank into a dream.

In the morning, Zoe was woken by the sound of a flute. At first, she thought it was the song of a strange bird, but then the sound was joined by other flutes. Some had a high-pitched, jolly sound, others low-pitched lazy ones. The tunes at first alternated, as if talking to each other, then they merged into one merry melody, as if they were all dancing together.

Sunlight poured through the window. The fire in the stove had long since burnt out, but the room was still pleasantly warm. Zoe looked out the window and was stunned by what she saw. Although October was drawing to a close and the oak tree, which poked through the roof of her house, was almost completely bare, the forest in this place was bursting with greenness. Shrubs were weighed down by an abundance of raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and other fruits. "Either the antlered bird had taken me far, far away, or I'm in some kind of magical place," pondered Zoe. The interior of the hut was just as fabulous. The sides of the bed were hand-carved to perfection and the walls were embellished from floor to ceiling with beautiful patterns. Zoe was completely mesmerised. While admiring her surroundings, she noticed a big spider's web hanging over her bed. It looked as if it had been woven out of a rope. She stepped on her toes to take a closer look and spotted a red silk ribbon right in centre of the web.

"It's just like the one Mum uses to tie the end of her braid!" it occurred to Zoe.

9+

Then, washing over her like a cold wave, she remembered the nightmare she had during her first night sleeping in the hut in the middle of the woods. She dreamt about falling in slow-motion into some kind of a tunnel. Above her appeared a white circle of light in which she saw her mother's face. Her mother then threw a red rope into the tunnel after her to pull her back up, but Zoe couldn't grab hold of it.

"Mum must have come back from work by now. She must be worried sick," Zoe thought.

It was then that the door opened. A girl-bear was standing at the entrance. Her body was so enormous she had to bow her head to get in. Her hands and feet had already transformed into bear paws. A stumpy tail was poking out of her trousers, small bearlike ears were decorating the top her head, and she had a snout instead of a nose. Zoe, who had completely forgotten that she too was changing into an animal, was horrified beyond belief. She reflexively tapped the top of her head and realised the fox ears were still there. And her tail started wagging.

"You'll get used to it in no time," said the visitor reassuringly. "I'm Bearica," she added, stretching out her paw.

"Zoe," the girl-fox shook her paw. Despite the strange girl's enormous size, she felt she needn't be afraid her. "Can I ask you something?" uttered Zoe hesitantly. "You don't by chance happen to have a mirror?"

"You're such a cute fox!" said Bearica sprightly. "Nope, there are no mirrors in the camp. The antlered one says they lie anyway."

Her words were theatrically accompanied by a booming sound of a drum.

"Speak of the devil," chuckled the girl-bear loudly. "Come! It's newcomers' reception time, and the chief doesn't tolerate lateness," she announced in a serious tone this time, and pulled Zoe out through the door.

Despite running all the way, they were last to arrive at the assembly area. They joined the group of children sitting in a circle. Most were already in their late stages of animal transformation. Three of them stood out immediately. A boy-rabbit, a girl-owl and a boy-skunk. All three were sitting close to Zoe, and were, just like her, still mostly human.

"You guys are the newcomers," whispered Bearica, upon noticing Zoe's confused stare. "You all arrived yesterday at blood moon."

"Have you been here long?" Zoe was curious.

"I came one month ago. It was harvest moon then," whispered the girl-bear. "Anyway, no one stays longer than two moons."

"What do you mean?" asked Zoe surprised. But she didn't get an answer, as the old woman shot them a strict look. She was striding into the centre of the circle, striking the drum evenly as she walked.



Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2022 for *Fox Moon*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *Fox Moon*, 2021 for *Cluckrissa in Cackleville*
- The Večernica Award, 2018 for *The Lady With the Hat*
- The Levstik Award, 2017 for *The Lady With the Hat*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2020 for *Home Sweet Home,* 2019 for *Cluckrissa in Cackleville,* 2018 for *The Lady With the Hat; A Wonderful Tale*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2014 for *Elephant in the Tree*

Select Bibliography

- *Luka From the Neighbourhood* (*Luka iz bloka*), Miš založba, 2022, 6+, comic book
- *Fox Moon* (*Lisičja luna*), Miš založba, 2021, 9+, fantastic fiction
- *Cackleville (Koko mesto*), Miš založba, 2021, 1+, picture book
- *Forest Journal* (*Gozdni dnevnik*), Silva Slovenica, 2020 (first edition 2017), 6+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Cluckrissa in Cackleville* (*Koko Dajsa v mestu*), Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2018), 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Home Sweet Home (Ljubo doma),* ZTT, 2019, 6+, realistic fiction
- *The Lady With the Hat* (*Gospa s klobukom*), MKZ, 2017, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *A Wonderful Tale* (*Krasna zgodba*), Miš založba, 2017, 9+, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Elephant in the Tree* (*Slon na drevesu*), ZTT, 2014, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Azure Red (Sinjerdeča/Rossoazzurra*), ZTT, 2013, 13+, fantasy fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *Journey to a Big Forest; Forest Journal; Guardians of the Forest;* Silva Slovenica & Slovenian Forestry Institute, 2016,2017, Slovenia
- German: *Die Reise in den großen Wald; Waldtagebuch; Die Hüter des Waldes,* Silva Slovenica & Slovenian Forestry Institute, 2016, 2017, Slovenia
- Greek: *Ταξίδι σε ένα μεγάλο δάσος, Το ημερολόγιο του δάσους, Κηδεμόνες του δάσους,* Silva Slovenica & Slovenian Forestry Institute, 2016, 2017, Slovenia



Cluckrissa in Cackleville



A Wonderful Tale



Home Sweet Home; Tales of dwellings, furniture and household appliances

e-mail (author):
masaogrizek@yahoo.com
website:
masaogrizek.com

Sebastijan Pregelj



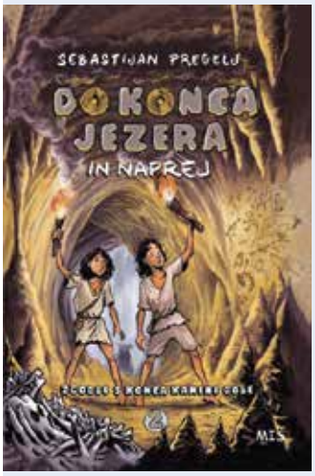
The series about one of the most interesting historical periods in the area of what is now Slovenia with its own exciting story, referring to important artefacts of our cultural heritage and excellent illustrations, is an interesting reading adventure that successfully entices young readers with both its educational and fictional aspects.

(Alenka Urh, review in the journal *Sodobnost*)

prose

Selected piece

***To the End of the Lake and Beyond: The Second Part of the Tales from the End of the Stone Age* (*Do konca jezera in naprej*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2016, illustrated by Jure Engelsberger



To the End of the Lake and Beyond

background

Tales from the End of the Stone Age is set at an exciting time, at the transition from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age, a time that radically changed people's lives and stimulated social changes.

Events are set in the area of the Ljubljana Marshes that were at the time inhabited by pre-historic, pile-dwelling people. Pile-dwelling culture can be found on the edges of rivers, lakes or marshlands in Slovenia as well as Austria, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and France. Under a Swiss initiative all six countries applied for the sites of prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps to be added to UNESCO World Heritage List. This was achieved in 2011.

The protagonist of the books is Juniper, a brave and inquisitive boy, age nine at the beginning of the series. His desire to see, explore and know more is the driving force of the story. He likes hunting and fishing and is very curious to know what lies beyond the mountains and beyond the sea that he heard a merchant from distant (Mediterranean) lands talk about. The series follows Juniper and his (later) partner Raven from childhood to maturity when they will share their experiences and knowledge with others.

The book's black and white illustrations sometimes almost approach the style of comic strips but remain open and mysterious enough to leave the interpretation of the events to the imagination of young readers. Nature, clothing, weapons, building techniques and other historical characteristics of the time in which the story takes place are unobtrusively included in the visual part of the story.

An important part of the series is its educational aspect. The story includes archaeological discoveries and the most important finds of recent decades, such as, for example, the oldest wooden wheel, trade routes and also the world's oldest musical instrument that was discovered in Slovenia (the Divje Babe Flute). In this way it combines the events of the story with the informative part in a separate section at the end of each book. Each book also lists its sources.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Juniper stood at the edge of the pile dwelling before dawn. He watched as the hills and mountains tore themselves from the dark and slowly gained form and colour. Father said that behind them were even taller mountains, permanently covered in snow and ice. Behind those mountains is the end of the world. In the other direction, the large salty water. Where the water ends the world also ends. Juniper did not believe him.

At the pile dwelling Juniper was considered a hero. Last spring he managed to chase away a bear and saved a shepherd with an entire flock of goats and sheep. Besides this, he had tamed a falcon. Nobody could recall anyone recently doing anything like it. His grandfather gave Juniper his knife as a reward for his courage. Father made him a bow and, with his brother and the other men, also carved out a logboat. Juniper was the youngest boy with his own bow and logboat. The other boys were jealous but also admitted that he deserved them.

Juniper, however, did not only think about hunting and fishing. He also did not spend much time deliberating about the flock or the wheat his tribe would sow in the autumn and harvest in the summer. He was more

9+

interested in what was beyond the mountains and on the far side of the large salty water. He was interested in all the things that others at the pile dwelling never talked about.

He found out about all these things mostly from Whistle, the merchant who stopped over at the pile dwelling before the start of last winter. Juniper was able to imagine all the things the man who had come from far away talked about. He was determined that, next time he came, he would ask him to take him along with him.

"If he won't want to take me with him, I'll just secretly follow him," Juniper decided.

The first rays of the sun illuminated the lake. The surface, the mist above which was beginning to thin out, glistened in yellow, blue and green hues. As the people at the pile dwelling were only just waking up, Juniper had already filled his logboat with a few beaver skins, dried meat and a mighty pair of stag antlers. He could hardly wait for his mother to come from the house so they could set off. This morning they were going to visit Wisent Crannog. Mother needed some new pots and Juniper offered to take her there.

"At last!!" Juniper jumped up when he saw her on the platform. "Ready to go!" he called from the jetty.

"Let's go then," Mother smiled. She stepped down to the jetty and carefully jumped into the logboat that Juniper then immediately pushed away from the pile. The falcon also stirred. It flapped its winds above their heads and flew up into the sky.

"Do we have everything?" Mother asked.

"Don't worry," the boy replied. "We have everything, the antlers, the hides and some meat."

Juniper rowed towards the sun, keeping close to the shore.

[...]



To the End of the Lake and Beyond

Wisent pile dwelling was at the far end of the lake, the pile dwelling closest of all to Green Hill where the Dragon lived. One reason Juniper was not going to miss out on this trip. Besides, this is the pile dwelling where Wisent's aunt Sunflower lives. An old woman who knows the past, sees into the future and understands secrets. Her words reach the remotest crannogs on the lake. Everyone respects and abides by what she says. Even the strongest and bravest men never go against her words. They are afraid of the evil that might befall them were they not to listen to her.

Like everyone, Juniper also knew numerous stories about Sunflower and her incredible powers. It was said, among other things, that if she is bitten by a snake the poison does not affect her. She can also squash a scorpion with her bare hands and her hand will not even swell up. Juniper wanted to meet Sunflower in person. The visit to Wisent pile dwelling was a chance for him to do so.

Juniper's mother Dawn wanted to visit Wisent's wife Lilly, who was renowned for her pottery.

"I need some new pots and a few nice spoons," Mother had said to Father a few days ago. "We don't have to use wooden ones as if we were savages." To convince him she added, "Just remember the expression on Wels's face when I placed a real spoon before him." Saying that Dawn smiled and told Father to get some hides and meat ready that she could exchange for the pots.

As Wisent pile dwelling appeared behind the willow branches touching the surface of the water, Juniper started rowing harder. It did not take long for the front of the logboat to touch the jetty. Standing on the jetty was Bull, Wisent's eldest son.

Bull greeted them loudly and grabbed the end of the logboat to stop it swaying on the water and allow Juniper and his mother to get out. He tied the logboat to a pile and escorted the guests to the large hut where Lily was waiting. The women embraced and exchanged a few words.

In the meantime Juniper looked around the crannog. Unlike their own homestead, Wisent pile dwelling was constructed against the shore. There were ten huts on the platform and a further four on the shore. Behind the huts were fenced-off gardens, and grazing beyond the gardens were sheep, goats and large cattle. The animals were guarded by a dog that kept barking.

"Juniper," Lily suddenly addressed him. "How you have grown!" The boy turned round in surprise. "This is Raven. You know each other, you just haven't seen each other in a long time," Lily put her right hand around a girl standing by her side. "She can show you around the crannog. You can go and have a look at the animals. She will introduce you to our dog," said Lily, pushing the girl lightly towards Juniper.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2021 for *The Return*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

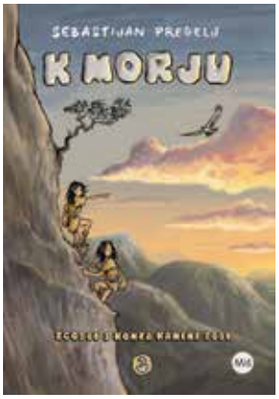
- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *The Return,* 2018 for *To the End of the Lake and Beyond*, 2017 for *Juniper, a Boy From a Pile Dwelling*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *New Home,* 2021 for *The Return*, 2020 *In Snow and Ice,* 2019 for *By the Stone Tower*, 2018 for *Towards the Sea,* 2016 for *Juniper, a Boy From a Pile Dwelling; To the End of the Lake and Beyond*

Select Bibliography

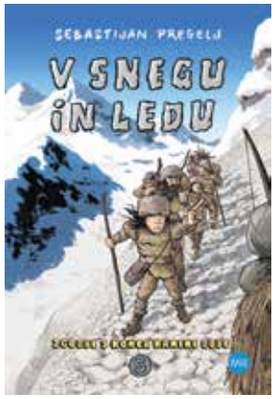
- *Stories of the Duchy of Carniola 1: The Witch Below the Castle (Zgodbe Vojvodine Kranjske 1: Coprnica pod gradom),* Miš založba, 2022, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 7: New Home* (*Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 7: Nov dom*), Miš založba, 2021, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 5: In Snow and Ice (Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 5: V snegu in ledu)*, Miš založba, 2021 (first edition 2019), 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 4: By the Stone Tower (Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 4: Pri kamnitem stolpu),* Miš založba, 2021 (first edition 2018), 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 6: The Return* (*Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 6: Vrnitev*), Miš založba, 2020, 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 3: Towards the Sea (Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 3: K morju),* Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2017), 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 2: To the End of the Lake and Beyond (Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 2: Do konca jezera in naprej),* Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2016), 9+, realistic fiction
- *Tales from the End of the Stone Age 1: Juniper, a Boy From a Pile Dwelling (Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe 1: Deček Brin na domačem količu),* Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2016), 9+, realistic fiction
- *Babujan the Ghost and an Unexpected Move (Duh Babujan in nepričakovana selitev),* Miš založba, 2016, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Babujan the Ghost and Friends (Duh Babujan in prijatelji),* Miš založba, 2014, 9+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- German:
  - *Das Gespenst Babujan und seine Freunde,* Drava Verlag, 2017, Austria
  - *Das Gespenst Babujan und der unerwartete Umzug*, Drava Verlag, 2017, Austria



Towards the Sea



In Snow and Ice



Juniper, a Boy From a Pile Dwelling



Babujan the Ghost and Friends



Babujan the Ghost and an Unexpected Move



Stories of the Duchy of Carniola 1: The Witch Below the Castle

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Barbara Simoniti



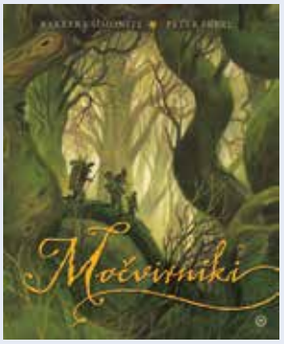
The marshland that Barbara Simoniti chose as the location for her novel is a world people rarely venture into, yet a place teaming with life. The inhabitants of Marshland Mead have been given human characteristics and communicate in Marsh language, an extremely rich and precise language in which every tiniest blade of grass, every slightest breeze, every kind of noise, has its own name. Marshlanders are communicative and funny, not easily ribbited into silence! Thirty-nine stories, chronologically set out as chapters of the novel, with Peter Škerl's beautiful illustrations enhancing the fundamental feature of the author's narration: gracefulness and mysteriousness.

(from the award justification for the 2015 Desetnica Award)

prose

Selected piece

***Marshlanders: Tales from Greenwood Forest* (*Močvirniki*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2012, illustrated by Peter Škerl



Marshlanders: Tales from Greenwood Forest

background

Somewhere amidst the ancient trees in Greenwood Forest is the settlement of Marshland Mead, hidden on the banks of a meandering stream. Its inhabitants are various damp-loving animals: salamanders, frogs, toads, newts, spiders, ants and several others. In their hidden wetland, the Marshlanders enjoy a settled and traditional way of life, led by Wadewick the mayor, their children attend the Marshland school where FitzFrog is teacher, their newspaper, The Marshland Gazette, is published by Puddlepitt the editor, Herbinah the herbalist and Crosscroft the spider attend to every sprained ankle or broken claw at the local infirmary. Although the Marshlanders love their peaceful way of life there is constantly something happening in Marshland Mead! They can be surprised by a violent storm, have visitors from far-away places, and the children are constantly pulling pranks.

Chapter 3: The Marshland Gazette

(translated by the author)

[…] It was a nice, grey day, as the Frecklecotts strolled down the lane. They were heading towards Elm Estate on the far side of Hawthorne Hurst to the home of Puddlepitt the frog, editor of The Marshland Gazette. Puddlepitt the newspaper editor leaped about during the week, collecting news and preparing his articles. On Fridays, however, he held a news meeting in the great hall of the editorial office in Elm Estate. All the inhabitants of Marshland Mead and its outskirts were invited to report on news, events, as well as developments or stories suitable for the newspaper. Puddlepitt the frog then edited the texts and printed The Marshland Gazette by Monday in the attic printing shop.

When Frecklecotts the salamanders entered the hall on the ground floor of Elm Estate, many Marshlanders and others who lived nearby were already there. They had their green papers spread on the table and were talking in animated voices. When the newcomers were spotted, they were greeted kindly. Glenda the cook of Beech Butt waved to them and beckoned them to sit near her, "Nice of you to come," whispered Glenda the salamandress to mother Frecklecate. "This is the quickest way for you to learn about our way of life!"

"Well, let's begin on page one," said Puddlepitt the frog, initiating the meeting after an introductory cough. "First and foremost: the conditions of the water and weather in Marshland Mead. Frecklecott, the lock-keeper of Hawthorne Haven, will oblige us with his first report!"

"There is nothing out of the ordinary at the sluice," replied father Frecklecott. "Together with Rainwright the alderman of Bankside Beech, we've established that there is sufficient water in the Marshland Brook for the time being, yet there are hot and dry days on the horizon."

"Right," concluded Puddlepitt, "let's prepare our usual Water Report. Next: The Main News. What's been going on over the last few days?"

Everybody brooded.

"I'm afraid almost nothing," uttered MacToad the farmer of Elder Earth after a long pause, scratching his head.

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"Well, postman," inquired Puddlepit the editor, "do you have any news?"
Trickle the postman from the family of fire-bellied toads was an open-minded toad, seeing and hearing everything on his rounds. On top of that, there was a lot to be learned at the post office in Juniper Jut.
"Humph, it seems that drought has already stricken the area," replied Trickle the fire-bellied toad, stretching his legs in his typically bright yellow gaiters.
[…]
"Nothing worthy of The Marshland Chronicles," announced Wadewick the salamander in dismay.
[…]
"So let's move on to page two of the newspaper: School News," continued Puddlepitt the editor. "How are things at school?" he asked, addressing the teacher. FitzFrog from the family of forest frogs harrumphed before speaking and readjusted his neckerchief, "Nothing special there. With the school year drawing to a close and the dryspell approaching, we must think about when the holidays should begin." [...] "How about Frecklecotts the salamanders write something about their arrival," suggested FitzFrog the teacher, turning to the newcomers, "about their previous life in Black Tarn and how they found their bearings here, in Marshland Mead?"
"An excellent idea!" leaped up Puddlepitt the editor, who could make the best out of everything. "All three of you could write something so that we get different viewpoints!"
"All right, we'll do it," agreed Frecklecott the new lockkeeper, with his wife Frecklecate nodding in agreement.
"Next," resumed Puddlepitt the frog once again. "We've already come to Entertainment on page three. Has anyone brought any contributions?"
Several Marshlanders began fumbling with their papers on the table.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Levstik Award, 2013 for *Marshlanders*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

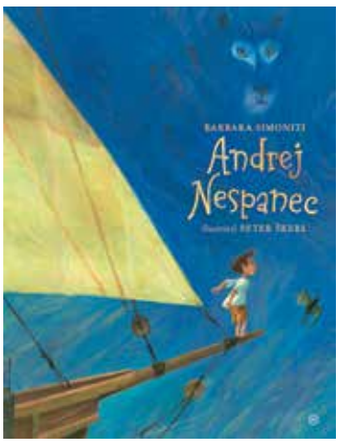
- The Večernica Award, 2013 for *Marshlanders*
- The Desetnica Award, 2015 for *Marshlanders*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2015 for *Sleepless Andrew*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2013 for *Marshlanders*

Select Bibliography

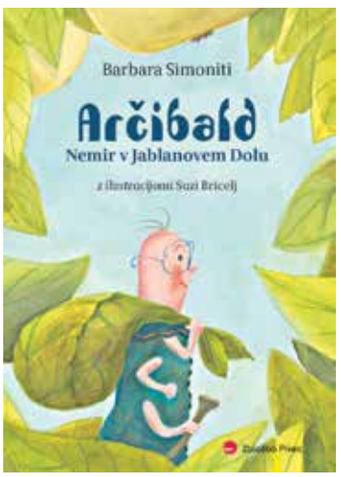
- *Hair on Skin* (*Las na koži*), Založba Pivec, 2020, 6+, short realistic story picture book
- *Archibald: Adventures in Apple Grove* (*Arčibald: Nemir v Jablanovem Dolu*), Založba Pivec, 2019, 6+, short fantastic stories
- *Sleepless Andrew* (*Andrej Nespanec*), MKZ, 2014, under 6, short fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Marshlanders: Tales from Greenwood Forest* (*Močvirniki: Zgodbe iz Zelene Dobrave*), MKZ, 2012, 9+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- Macedonian: *МОЧУРЛИВЦИ: Приказни од Зелената Кориja*, TRI Publishing Centre, 2019, North Macedonia



Sleepless Andrew



Archibald: Adventures in Apple Grove

website:
www.barbarasimoniti.com

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Primož Suhodolčan



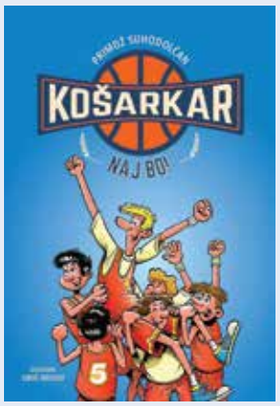
A relaxed humour and childish joyousness have distinguished Suhodolčan's books all along. The three defining parts of Suhodolčan's children's and young adult literature are humour, intertextuality and a unique way of conveying his stories.

(Igor Saksida, foreword to *Sprout: From Lanky to Legendary*)

prose

Selected piece

***Sprout – From Lanky to Legendary* (*Košarkar naj bo!*),** Ljubljana, Karantanija, 2018, illustrated by Uroš Hrovat



Sprout – From Lanky to Legendary

background

Primož Suhodolčan is one of the most popular children's authors in Slovenia. His cherished writing style can best be described as action-comedy entwined with a sizeable helping of wit and imagination. A special place in the author's opus undoubtedly goes to the series about Sprout, the basketball player. The books are realistic sport and adventure fiction that combine in their theme sport and love and present the daily troubles of a growing teenager (school, revision, disagreements with parents). Four books have been published so far: *Sprout: From Lanky to Legendary* (first issue 1995), *Let Him Cycle!* (first issue 1997), *Sprout Strikes Back!* (first issue 2000), and *Sprout and Basketball Giants* (2019). This is a story about a boy who is so tall he could put a necktie on a giraffe and so thin the sun shines right through him, a boy who eats everything on his plate and then eats the plate as well, a boy who is so lazy that the bed has to come to him every night or he would fall asleep standing up. Few people know his real name. Everybody just calls him Sprout. In the second book Sprout, Metka and Smodlak cycle out to the countryside to spend the holidays with Sprout's grandma and grandpa. In the third book, after an unsuccessful game with a terrible intrigue behind it, Sprout decides he will no longer play basketball but then changes his mind. The fourth book is a story about the basketball club being shut down…

excerpt

From Baby to Giant

(translated by Erica Johnson Debeljak)

This is a story about a boy who was so tall he could put a necktie on a giraffe and so thin the sun shone right through him, a boy who ate everything on his plate and then the plate too, a boy who was so lazy that the bed had to come to him every night or he would fall asleep standing up. Few people knew his real name. Everybody just called him Sprout. His shape and the way he walked made him look as if he might break apart at any moment and fall to the ground in a pile of rattling bones.

Since Sprout was so tall, everything else was too short for him – his pants, the nights, and most of all his bed. His room, of course, was too short too, so his father tore down one wall and placed half of his bed in the kitchen and the other half in the bedroom. Sprout was the first person in the world to have his bed in two rooms. He slept with his head in the kitchen and his feet in the bedroom. In the morning his mother went first into the bedroom, "Good morning feet!" Then she went into the kitchen and said, "Get up, head, it's seven o'clock!" Good thing he had his mother to wake him up in the morning because otherwise Sprout wouldn't have known where to put the alarm clock – at his feet or his head.

When Sprout was a baby, he was such a miniscule mite that he had to wear a bell around his neck or he would get lost in his crib. Everybody was relieved when he started to grow but, oh my goodness, he grew so fast that the long pants he wore in the winter were turned into short pants the next summer. He had to sit in the front row at school so he could stretch his legs all the way to the blackboard. Tundra, the geography teacher, whose huge half-bald head had earned him his nickname, always made fun of him, "Son, those toothpicks would definitely win first prize in an exhibition of human limbs!"

Sprout's favourite food was beans. Beans with rice, beans with onions, beans with crackling, boiled beans, baked beans, bean pudding. But most of all, he loved beans with beans. "Beans, beans, beans three times a day always keeps the doctor away!" Sprout liked to chant with his mouth full of beans.

9+

He ate like a locust and turned into a sloth when he was full. He was so lazy that he couldn't fall asleep at night because he couldn't be bothered to close his eyes.
When asked to do chores round the house, Sprout always offered to mow the lawn. Then he would go to the neighbour's farm and invite the sheep over for a snack. The sheep thoroughly mowed the lawn in a couple of hours. "Lawn mowed, sheep full! Two for the price of one," Sprout said.
Nothing excited him. Nothing upset him. If he got a bad grade at school, he blamed it on fate or on the black cat that had crossed his path in the morning. The last thing that occurred to him was to study harder. He simply said to himself, "Maybe it will be a white cat next time."
No amount of nagging could make him change. You know what people say, in one ear and out the other. With Sprout, it didn't go in in either ear but went out of both.
Everybody teased Sprout because of his height except for Skipper, his gym teacher, "Boy, if I don't make a basketball player out of you," Skipper said, "I haven't earned the right to skip!"
Sprout had no idea that basketball would be the thing that finally changed his life.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- My Favourite Book Award, 1999 – 2002 for *Sprout – From Lanky to Legendary*, My Favourite Book Golden Award 2008 for *Sprout – From Lanky to Legendary*, 2010 – 2012 for *Warning Fairy Tales!*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

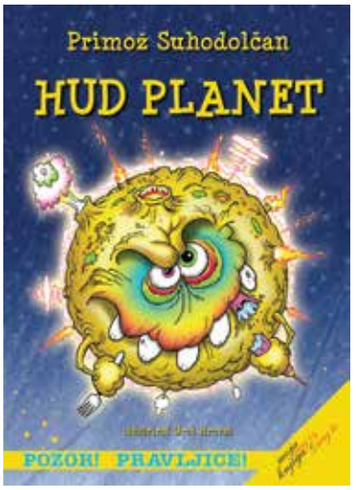
- The Desetnica Award, 2012 for *Cool Planet*, 2011 for *The Knight Without a Cow*, 2010 for *Max and Sanja*, 2008 for *The Donkey Doctor*, 2005 for *Pizza Rules*, 2004 for *Animal News II*

Select Bibliography

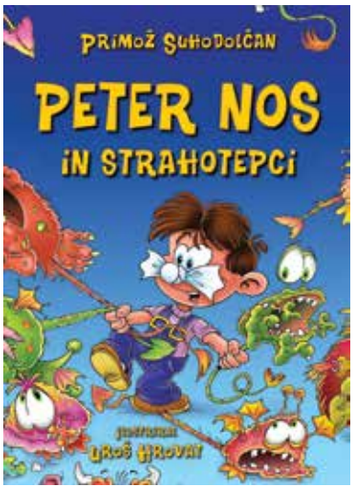
- *Sprout – From Lanky to Legendary* (*Košarkar naj bo!*), Suhodolčan, 2022 (first edition 1994 and reprints), 13+, realistic fiction
- *The Donkey Doctor* (*Doktor za osle*), Suhodolčan, 2022 (first edition 2007 and reprints), 6+, short fantastic fiction
- *Animal News I – 24 24Hour Hen NetCom* (*Živalske novice I – 24 kur v mreži*), Suhodolčan, 2022 (first edition 1998 and reprints), 9+ short fantastic fiction
- *Primož and Bajk - The Incredible Race: Primož Roglič* (*Primož in bajk neverjetna dirka, Primož Rogljič*), DZS, 2021, 6+, short fantastic fiction, picture book
- *Sprout and Basketball Giants* (*Ranta in košarkatorji*), Karantanija, 2019, 13+, realistic fiction
- *Anže – Ice King* (*Anže – Ledeni kralj, Anže Kopitar*), DZS, 2018, 6+ short fantastic fiction, picture book
- *Sprout – Let Him Cycle!* (*Kolesar naj bo!*), Karantanija, 2018 (first edition 1997 and reprints), 13+, realistic fiction
- *Sprout Strikes Back!* (*Ranta vrača udarec!*), Karantanija, 2018, 13+, realistic fiction
- *Goran – Legend of the Dragon* (*Goran – legenda o zmaju, Goran Dragič*), DZS, 2017, 6+, short fantastic fiction, picture book
- *Tina and Bear Power* (*Tina in medvedja moč, Tina Maze*), DZS, 2016, 6+ short fantastic fiction, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- Serbian: *Neka bude košarkaš*, Mono i Manjana, 2010, Serbia
- English:
  - *Lipko and Basketbilly*, DZS, 2013, Slovenia
  - *Tina and Bear Power*, DZS, 2016, Slovenia
  - *Sprout – From Lanky to Legendary*, Karantanija, 2018, Slovenia
- German: *Wie Tina bärenstark wurde*, Verlag Hermagoras, 2017, Austria and Slovenia



Mean Planet



Peter Nose and the Fear-Beaters

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Peter Svetina



The Lumber Room is an organised chaos of tiny treasures, patiently waiting for the reader to pick them up and blow the dust of them. The writer's skilful navigation between poetry and prose, between the conscious and the subconscious, is merely playful fluctuation, full of rhetorical figures that with a particular dynamics take the reader from the real to the irrational, from the mighty to the nonsensical... A ramble through Svetina's *Lumber Room* leads to a more creative read, full of elusive twists and turns.

(from the award justification by the jury for the 2013 Večernica Award)

poetry and prose

Selected poems

***Prayers From the Steps (Molitvice s stopnic)*,** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2016, illustrated by Ana Zavadlav
(translated by Nada Grošelj)



Prayers from the Steps

A Prayer on the Stairs

They say
that you guard us.
But me, I am guarded by Grandma.
She caught me one day
on the underpass stairs
and saved me a tumble.
But I can't catch her back
because I'm too small.
And that I don't like.
So let's make a deal:
if you promise
to catch her yourself
on the ice,
then I believe you,
then it's all right.

A Prayer for a Hot Pipe

Our Father,
who give us our daily bread
as we give cat kibble
to tommy
to keep away hunger.

But indoors, with us,
there's no room for his cot,
Daddy's allergic.

So find for him, please,
a pipe nice and hot.

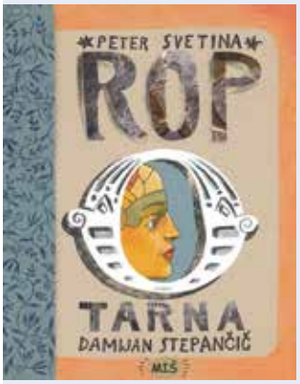
And if he's cold through and through,
would you mind
moving closer to him,
so he can nestle with you?

Prayers from the Steps



Selected piece

***The Lumber Room* (*Ropotarna*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2012, illustrated by Damijan Stepančič



The Lumber Room

background

The Lumber Room is a collection of stories, fairy tales and poems in what appears to be a random disorder. In terms of theme and contents the texts are very diverse, what unites them is a playful, warm-hearted and often nonsensical attitude to the world.

How the Washing Machine, the Coat Hanger and the Bedside Lamp Watered the Plants

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

"Maybe they have wilted?" suggested the washing machine. He was referring to the flowers. There was a bunch of paper flowers on the table in the hallway, looking rather sad.
"Do you think so?" said the coat hanger.
"Yes, that's probably it. We should water them a little."
"But water would just make them wet," said the coat hanger.
"Then perhaps we shouldn't water them with water. What about juice?" the washing machine proposed.
"I think juice would have the same effect as water," the coat hanger was certain.
"What then?"
"Yes, really, what do you water paper flowers with?"
"Doo-doo-dee-dah-dee-dah," the bedside lamp sang. She had come to the hallway for a brief visit. "Why is everything so dark around here?" The lamp briefly stopped singing and plugged itself into the mains.
The whole hallway was illuminated with a yellow light.
"Look at the flowers," said the coat hanger.
"Nice," said the washing machine.
The flowers shone in the yellow light of the bedside lamp. Instantly rejuvenated.
" Doo-doo-dee-dah-dee-dah," the bedside lamp finished her song. "What's up, boys? What about going out somewhere?" the lamp suggested.

Selected piece

***(Timbuktu, Timbuktu)*,** Dob, Miš založba, 2019, illustrated by Igor Šinkovec

The cover of the book explains "Timbuktu is a town in Africa that was once famous as a centre of learning and a beacon of tolerance. Now Timbuktu is also a book that might also have something to do with this. And it is also a word that is fun to pronounce and sounds great." A collection of 40 short nonsense stories that through humour address important questions for the individual and society in general.



Timbuktu, Timbuktu

Timbuktu is where you play. Timbuktu is where you have your father and mother and brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts. Timbuktu is where you keep your socks in a drawer. Timbuktu is where there is someone who loves you. Timbuktu is where you have hidden your most precious treasure. Timbuktu is where bread rolls grow for everyone, where there is always a tomato, ripening just for you. Timbuktu is where, if you get burnt, a hand offers you a cold pack before you have a chance to say ouch! All that is Timbuktu. Timbuktu! Timbuktu!

Selected piece

The Bread Delivery Girl (Raznašalka kruha), Medvode, Malinc, 2021, illustrated by Jokin Michelena



background

Jan Cross and Mary Angels are two children who regularly meet on a pier. One day when Mary Angels doesn't turn up, Jan sets out to find her. He listens out for her and comes across various voices. None are Mary Angels', but he listens to them and keeps them. When Jan and Mary Angels finally meet again, he finds out that Mary is helping her father deliver bread after her mother fell ill. After her mother dies and Mary and her father need help at the bakey, she invites him to come and help. Together they continue the bread baking, the voices Jan found on the way helping the dough rise. Later their children continue baking bread... A story about bread, actual and symbolic.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

"I was looking for you," he said. "Listening out for your voice. But I couldn't hear it. Look, however, how many other voices I have found," he tells her, pointing to the bag filled with tiny boxes and packages where he had stored the voices. "But I couldn't pick up your voice at all."
"You couldn't hear it because I was here," she said. "Once I distributed all the bread I came here."
From then on, whenever Mary Angels didn't come to the pier, Jan Cross knew she was out distributing bread with her father. He would go out and listen.

Jan Cross and Mary Angels grew up. Mary's mother died and her father grew old. Then Mary asked Jan one day on the pier, "Could you help at the bakery?"
When he first stepped inside, he saw shelves full of fresh bread, and shelves filled with tiny boxes and packages.
"What's in them?" he asked.
"Voices that Daddy found," said Mary. "And voices that Grandpa found as well. Both used to say, bread is bread for the body, voices are bread for the soul. Whenever they kneaded the dough, the voices were there in the bakery. I don't know if they make the bread any better, it's the only bread I know.
Jan Cross now placed the voices he had found next to the others on the shelves of the bakery.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2017 for *Prayers from the Steps*, 2016 for *The Ripening of Porcupines*, 2013 for *The Lumber Room*
- The Levstik Award, 2017 for *Prayers From the Steps*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2008 for *Mr Constantine's Hat*
- The Golden Pear Award, 2013 for *The Lumber Room*, 2011 for *The Wisdom of Hippos*
- The IBBY Honour List, 2016 for *The Lumber Room*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

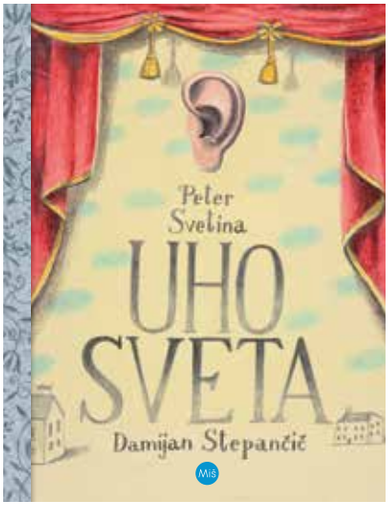
- The Večernica Award, 2020 for *Timbuktu, Timbuktu,* 2017 for *Neighbour Under the Ceiling*, 2015 for *Homework*, 2011 for *The Wisdom of Hippos*, 2004 for *Little Walrus' New Glasses*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2021 for *The Roly Poly Baker,* 2016 for *How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race*; *Amid Happiness and On Thursday Morning*, 2015 for *Homework*, 2012 for *The Magic Ring*, 2011 for *How Jaromir Sought Happiness*, 2004 for *Little Walrus' New Glasses*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *The Blue Portuguese*, *Leora the Light and Shady the Shadow, The Bread Delivery Girl, How Mister Felix Found a Blessing in Disguise*; 2021 for *The Roly Poly Baker*, 2020 *Timbuktu, Timbuktu,* 2018 for *Ear of the World*, 2017 for *How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race*; *Prayers From the Steps*; *Neighbour Under the Ceiling*, 2016 for *The Ripening of Porcupines*, 2015 for *Homework*, 2013 for *The Lumber Room*, 2012 for *The Magic Ring*, 2011 for *How Jaromir Sought Happiness*
- The Hans Christian Andersen Award, 2020 (the shortlist), 2018

Select Bibliography

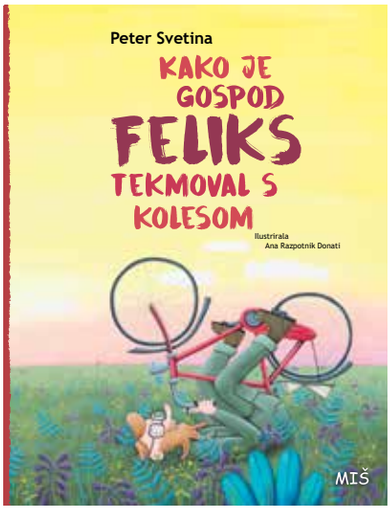
- *Leora the Light and Shady the Shadow* (*Lučka Lučka in senca Senčica*), MKZ, 2022, 6+, pravljica, slikanica
- *The Bread Delivery Girl* (*Raznašalka kruha*), Malinc, 2021, 6+, kratka fantastična proza, slikanica
- *How Mister Felix Found a Blessing in Disguise* (*Kako je gospoda Feliksa doletela sreča v nesreči*), Miš založba, 2021, 6+, kratka realistična proza, slikanica
- *Timbuktu, Timbuktu* (*Timbuktu, Timbuktu*), Miš založba, 2019, 9+, zbirka kratkih nonsensnih zgodb
- *The Ripening of Porcupins* (*Kako zorijo ježevci*), Miš založba, 2017 (prvi natis 2015), 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Prayers from the Steps* (*Molitvice s stopnic*), MKZ, 2016, under 6, poezija, slikanica
- *The Wisdom of Hippos* (*Modrost nilskih konjev*), DZS, 2016 (first edition 2010,), 9+, kratke nonsensne zgodbe
- *Homework* (*Domače naloge*), MKZ, 2014, 6+, poezija
- *The Little Walrus* (*Mrožek, mrožek*), MKZ, 2013 (prvi natis 2003), under 6, fairy tales, picture book
- *The Lumber Room* (*Ropotarna*), Miš založba, 2012, 9+, poetry and short prose

Published in foreign languages:

- Chinese: *How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race,* Oriental Babies & Kids Ltd , 2018, China
- Polish: *Cyrk Antoniego*, Agencja Edytorska Ezop, 2015, Poland; *Magiczny pierscien*, Marlena Gruda, 2018, Poland
- Lithuaninan: *Antano cirkas*, Nieko rimto, 2015, Lithuania
- English: *Anton's Circus*, Vodnikova založba (DSKG), KUD Sodobnost International, 2008, Slovenia
- Estonian: *Volusormus*, Kirjastanud Paike ja Pilv, 2018, Estonia
- Latvian: *Brīnumu gredzens,* Liels un mazs, 2018, Latvia
- Spanish: *El anillo magico,* Malinc, 2017, Slovenia; *Los sabios hipopótamos*, Malinc, 2020, Slovenija
- German: *Aus der Rumpelkammer*, Slowenischer Schriftstellerverband (DSP), 2020, Slovenia; *Der Hut des Herrn Konstantin*, Drava Verlag, 2008, Austria; *Das kleine Walross lasst sich nicht die Nagel schneiden,* Drava Verlag, 2005, Austria; *Das Kleine Walross bekommt eine Brille*, Drava Verlag, 2006, Austria; *Aus der Rumpelkammer*, Slowenischer Schriftstellerverband (DSP), 2020, Slovenia
- Korean: *Bada kokkirineun sontop kkakkiga siltaeyo*, Hangilsa Publishing Co., Ltd., 2005, Južna Koreja; *Pada k' okkiri ka an' gyong ul ssossoyo*, T' omat' o Hausu, 2005, South Korea
- Italian: *Darko Branko, l'allegra orchestra di fiati e altre storie cosà*, Besa muci, 2022, Italy
- Serbian: *Komšija pod plafonom*, Propolis Books, 2022, Serbia
- Croatian: *Pekarica Margot*, Zagreb, Ibis grafika, 2022, Croatia
- Albanian: *Bukëpjekësja trashaluqe*, Dritan, 2022, Albania
- Ukrainian: *Пекарка-пампушечка*, Ljubljana, KUD Sodobnost International, 2022, Slovenia



Ear of the World



How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race



The Ripening of Porcupines

e-mail (author):
peter.svetina@aau.at

9+

Huiqin Wang



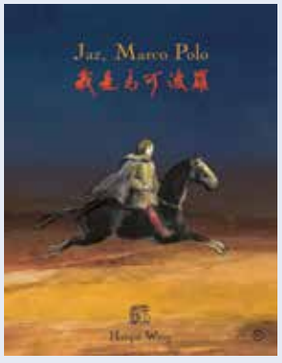
I am Marco Polo (2018) is a first-person narrative about Marco Polo's travel to East Asia, written in a prison in Genoa in 1298. It is a chronological narration following his most interesting episodes of his life (being born in Venice, parents from Korčula, the voyage to the East, events in China, return to Venice, the naval battle to defend Korčula, battle lost, prison). The author subtly imbued the story with emotions. As well as the main text, the author has also included many historical and geographic facts and explanations that help us understand the story (for example, the route of the Silk Road, information on Kublai Khan, etc.)

(Dragica Haramija in the journal *Otrok in knjiga*)

prose

Selected piece

***I, Marco Polo* (*Jaz, Marco Polo*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2018



I, Marco Polo

background

Commercial routes connecting China and Europe have existed since ancient times. Chinese silk, Roman glass, Persian gems, and Arab spices, all moved along this trade corridor. Along with goods, the routes were also a means of exchanging the spiritual products of various nationalities, literature, art, customs, and even religion. In 1877 the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen named this commercial route the "Silk Road". In the 13th century, one of the legends of this route was Marko Polo. Across land he reached the capital of the Yuan Dynasty and spent 17 years in China. He then returned to Europe by sea. For the first time, Marco Polo's adventure story gave Europeans a real sense of China's wealth and civilisation, arousing in them a longing for the East. A glorious page in the history of early cultural exchanges between East and West. It can also be said that Marco Polo and his travels led to the onset of a new era in Europe.

excerpt

(translated by Mitja Saje)

When I woke up one day in the fall of 1298, I found myself locked behind the iron gate of Genoa prison. Fighting boredom, I began telling my fellow inmates the anecdotes I had heard about the countries in the East. People from inside and outside the prison came to listen to my experiences. One of the inmates, Rustichello, turned out to be a writer. He was very interested and begged me to let him record my legendary experience. In reality, my trip to the East was even more exciting than my travel notes. I was born into a family of merchants in Venice. My ancestors were from the island of Korčula in Croatia. My father and uncle went to the East when I was very young. I was 15 by the time they returned. With them they brought a lot of beautiful jewellery and gorgeous silks. They also told me about travelling to a distant and mysterious country where there was gold everywhere and everyone wore satin. This country was called China. From then on I dreamed of one day being able to follow their route to the East. A few years later, when I was 17, my father and uncle agreed that I could join them on their next trip to the East and my dreams became reality.

We set off from Venice and headed to Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, where we waited for a ship to China. On the way we passed Palmyra in Syria, the geographical crossroads between East and West. All Chinese silk passes through it to get to the Mediterranean. It used to be a distribution centre for goods from the East and the West, and was very prosperous.

Horses were also very important throughout our journey. They helped exchanges between people of all nationalities along the way.

When I first saw Kublai Khan, he made a good impression on me. Once he realized how well I could speak Mongolian and that also I knew about Chinese customs, he often took me with him on visits across his empire. After living in China for 17 years, I began missing my hometown of Venice more and more. Then one day, an opportunity arose. The queen of the Persian king Argon had died. Kublai Khan chose the 17-year-old Princess Cocacin to be sent off to Persia to marry the king. He knew that we had experience in sailing and entrusted us with the task of escorting the Princess safely to Persia. This also meant we could continue our journey and return to our hometown of Venice.

9+

When my father, my uncle and I appeared before my family in those Mongolian robes, our relatives at first did not recognise us. Our appearances were too strange for them to recognise us at the three relatives who had left the house 24 years earlier. It wasn't until we produced some of the many gemstones we had brought back from the East that our family finally believed that we had indeed returned alive. I was 41 years old.

We brought back countless treasures from China, and the news of our return spread throughout Venice overnight. In Venice my home is called the Million Mansion and I am called the Millionaire. No one was as lucky as me on the ancient Silk Road, from princes and nobles to moneylenders. Over my four years of detention I completed the story of my great travels. I was the first traveller to describe the land route of the Silk Road, to personally explore the East and return to Europe along the maritime route. The East introduced and described in my travel notes changed European perceptions and fuelled imaginations. The Venetians said that I lied, embellished and vilified. I swear that less than half of what I have experienced is recorded in this travel book. In fact, my millions are hidden in my travel notes.

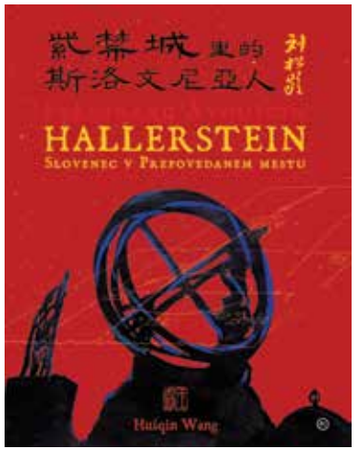
Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2014 (*Hallerstein*)
- Golden Pear Award, 2015 (*Hallerstein*)

Select Bibliography*

*Huiqin Wang's bibliography for children's picture books is extensive in her successful role as illustrator; however, listed here are only works where she is the author as well as the illustrator (e.g. The Golden Pear Quality Badge for her illustrations in the picture book *Little Alma on a Great Journey* (*Mala Alma na veliki poti*) written by Milan Dekleva).

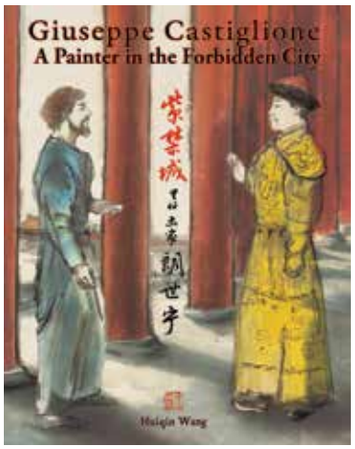
- *I, Marco Polo* (*Jaz, Marco Polo*), MKZ, 2018, 9+, non-fiction, biography, picture book
- *Hallerstein: The Foreign Astronomer in the Forbidden City* (*Ferdinand Avguštin Hallerstein: Slovenec v Prepovedanem mestu*), MKZ, 2017, 9+, non-fiction, biography, picture book
- *Giuseppe Castiglione: A Painter in the Forbidden City* (*Giuseppe Castiglione: slikar v Prepovedanem mestu*), Morfemplus, 2015, 9+, non-fiction, biography, picture book



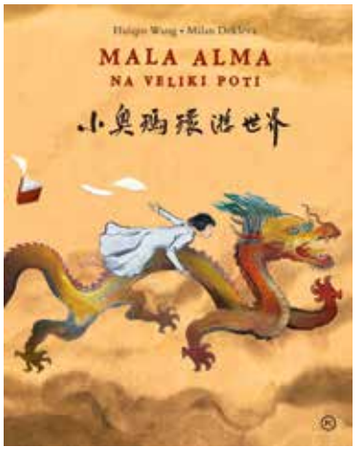
Hallerstein: The Foreign Astronomer in the Forbidden City

Published in foreign languages:

- Chinese - English: *Liúsonglíng: Zijìnchéng li de siluòwénníyǎrén* / *Hallerstein: The Foreign Astronomer in the Forbidden City*, Beijing Language and Culture University Press, 2014, China
- Chinese - Slovene: *Hallerstein Slovenec v prepovedanam mestu* / 紫禁城里的斯洛文尼亚人-刘松龄， MKZ, 2014, 2017, Slovenia
- Chinese - Slovene: *Giuseppe Castiglione: Slikar v prepovedanem mestu* / 紫禁城里的画家郎世，Morfemplus, 2015, Slovenia
- Chinese - Slovene: *Jaz, Marco Polo* / 我是马可波罗，MKZ, 2018, Slovenia
- Croatian - Chinese*: Ja, Marco Polo* / 我是马可波罗，Srednja Europa, Zagreb, 2020, Croatia



Giuseppe Castiglione: A Painter in the Forbidden City



Little Alma on a Great Journey

e-mail (author):
huiqinka@gmail.com
website:
https://www.huiqinwang.net/

Dim Zupan



Hector and a Little Love is the fourth book in the series about Hector the Labrador. Hector, now a very much adult Labrador, is a philosophical dog with a 'high brow, a few wrinkles that are the result of a lot of thinking, and a wise gaze.' In passing he explains to the readers (people) and dogs various dog wisdoms on the greatness of dogs that have to work very hard to at least somewhat train their owners, in fact it is clear that people understand dogs far less than they understand us. [...] A particular feature of the award-winning work are its comic elements, noticeable throughout the story but particularly prominent in Hector's internal monologues.

(from the award justification for the 2010 Desetnica Award)

prose

Selected piece

***Hector and a Little Love* (*Hektor in male ljubezni*),** Mladika, Ljubljana, 2009, illustrated by Andreja Gregorič

background

Dim Zupan created the series of seven books about Hector the Labrador (*Hector and Fish Fate, Hector and Prep School, Hector and the Great Adventure, Hector and a Little Love, Hector and the Scent of Humans, Hector and a Big Tear, Hector and the Ripe Pear*) in which the first person narrator Hector narrates his story from birth to death in a realistic tone of the autobiographical principle of experiential prose, not only describing his own life but also what is happening in his surroundings. From his subjective perspective Hector is putting his reality into sentences. But the pet narrator only establishes an illusion of reality, for there is no actual communication between him and people, at least not at the level of verbal interchange. The human characters talk to the animals, but they do not talk with them. Animals also talk to each other and to people. From the onset, the realistic (human) perception of the world (and with it also the realistic motivation of the literary work) contains a fundamentally fantastic element, an anthropomorphic narrator who, through his tale, conveys an imaginative, humanised version of the world. One of the more apparent qualities of the entire series is the author's consistent appreciation of the narrator's animal viewpoint towards the human world. Hector's criteria are not human criteria, quite the opposite is true – the canine narrator often comments upon human actions as entirely senseless or at least incomprehensible.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

In winter she lived in the garage with the car.
My speed and the slippery ground made me seriously skid round the corner, as if I was in some cartoon.
Then came the cold shower:
In front of the garage door of the extension where Nike lived, I noticed two spots in the snow.
One big and one small.
Evil thoughts filled my soul.
And came true soon after.
In the snow in front of the large oak door sat Rexy the Rottweiler and Fifi the Mongrel, his twice-twisted, long-haired tail sticking up into the air like an aerial or rather a flag.
No need to mention that such tails do little for dog beauty. And if I add his miniscule size, they I am justified in wondering what that mutt was even doing there.
I mean, his tail would barely reach up to the belly of the long-legged Nike.
On the other hand, this is yet more proof that love knows no boundaries.
I slowed my pace so the guys in the snow would not notice my keenness.
I even tried whistling a tune to myself, pretending I was there by chance.
Let me explain that the whole situation was rather complicated.
I don't seem to get on with Rottweilers anyway, but I especially could not stand sleazy Rexy.
A few times we were close to a real fight but were held back by our leads.
And it was always he who started it.
Barking and growling at me, showing his teeth.
I didn't do any of that, after all I am a Labrador.
That does not mean, of course, that I run away from a fight.

Hektor and a Little Love



No, not at all!
I remembered everything and stored all the information into the anger storage part of my brain.
The snow continued to fall and what were previously rather small snowflakes became larger and thicker.
Rexy stood up and, unsuccessfully of course, tried to prop up his ears.
It was the first time we stood opposite each other without our collars and leads around our necks.
For a moment, but really only a brief moment, I even regretted this.
Be what may, I said to myself and determinedly made my way towards the garage door.
I felt like a gladiator in an arena in Ancient Rome, venturing, head high, into a battle for life or death.
Fifi sensed the tension in the air.
He muffled a squeak and pressed himself into the corner under the overhang.
Rexy suddenly raised his paw and said in a raspy voice,
"Make peace, not war."
I knew that I had heard these words somewhere before, they were not his own.
But at that moment it was not important, what was important was their meaning.
I really would be extremely foolish of us to fight outside Niki's door.
In such case we would certainly both loose.
So I lifted my paw and replied,
"Peace be with you."
Fifi happily wagged his tail and returned to his hollow in the snow.
I sat outside the door from behind which that incredible scented message was coming and longingly gazed at the door handle.
What I would do for Dog God to press on that handle so I could see the face of her for whom I was squatting outside in a snow storm.
About twenty minutes later I could hear Janja calling in the distance,
"Hector, Hector!"
From the opposite direction I could hear Mia and Pia calling even louder.
"Twice," Rexy growled.
When I have him a puzzled look, he added,
"Twice they called me. I've been here three hours already."
"So have I, so have I, almost that long too," Fifi added squeakily.
"You mustn't stay too still. Your bottom doesn't freeze to the ground," Rexy advised.
"I've warmed up the snow so much that it's quite pleasant," Fifi joined into the conversation again.
Rexy gave him a condescending look and blew the snowflakes off his nose.
"Watch out, shorty. Why don't you go to the hairdressers instead!"
Fifi, offended, pulled a face and turned away.
After that the only sounds we could hear for a while were longing sighs.
I looked at Rexy who looked as if he had a white ski hat over his head with all the snow that had gathered on the top of his broad head.
And for the first time in my life I didn't find him annoying.
I realised that he too was in love, just like me.
And little Fifi.
We were both victims of the same sickness called love.
You could say comrades in misfortune.
Fellow fighters in a battle without hope of victory.
The realisation that I am not alone brought a warm feeling to my heart.
The street lamp glowed dimly through the curtain of snowflakes.
Fifi and I occasionally shook the snow off our coats, Rexy just stared at the door, sighing sadly.
He soon looked like a stout snowman gone wrong.
He was worst affected. Raising his snout, he howled melancholically in a minor key at the sky littered with white flakes.
He did wonderfully, singing in his notes all the emotions of this world.
It was an awe-inspiring scene with the snow falling away from him as he sang as if Apollo himself was rising out of nothing.
The moment was so heart-breaking that Fifi and I did not even realise when we joined in.
I am certain the world has never heard such harmonious howling!
Fifi with his thin soprano, Rexy with his velvety baritone and me with my heroic tenor merged into a whole that reached the ears and soul.

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There is, however, one great problem with art in general.
Misunderstanding!
The loudest critics are those who do not know anything and want, instead of talking about art and expressing themselves through art, to just constantly talk about themselves.
History is full of unjustly destroyed artists and works of art.
Some are then rediscovered when the critics and the artists have long gone.
They brutally interfere in an area they do not understand and destroy what others have created with great effort.
Why am I telling you all this?
Because I experienced it on my own skin.
Literarily.
A window opened above us and a human head appeared, pouring a bucket of water over us.
He was so skilful that he washed away the three of us in one go.
Fifi and I jumped away, but Rexy did not move. Water ran off his coat like thick tears.
"Shhh, go home, you lovesick mutts. Where are your owners who allow you to roam around like this. How irresponsible of them! Shhh, go home or I will call the dogcatcher."
Then the philistine quickly closes the window because a few snowflakes fluttered into his home.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2012 for *Hector and the Ripe Pear*
- The Desetnica Award, 2010 for *Hector and a Little Love*
- The Levstik Award, 1997 for *Flying Cats*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2015 for *I, Frankie the Ugly*, 2010 for *Hector and a Little Love*, 2008 for *Hector and Prep School*, 2003 for *The Trnovo Mafia*, 1997 for *Flying Cats*
- The Desetnica Award, 2016 for *I, Frankie the Ugly*, 2015 for *Little Tin And The Three Goldfish*, 2012 for *Hector and the Ripe Pear*, 2009 for *Hector and Prep School*, 2008 for *The Little Girl Behind the Mirror*, 2007 for *Hector and Fish Fate*, 2006 for *Fourteen and a Half*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2020 for *Skrivni svet malih zverinic* (co-author Janja Plazar), 2012 for *Hector and a Ripe Pear*

Select Bibliography

- *The Secret World of the Little Beasts* (*Skrivni svet malih zverinic*), co-author Janja Plazar, Miš založba, 9+, znanstvenofantastična pripoved
- *I, Fankie the Ugly* (*Jaz, Franci grdi*), Miš založba, 2014, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Ten Truths* (*Deset resnic*), Mladika, 2014, 13+, realistic fiction
- *Little Tin And The Three Goldfish* (*Tinček in tri zlate ribice*), Miš založba, 2013, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Panthera Carnioli* (*Pantera Karnioli*), Mladika, 2012, 13+ realistic fiction
- *Hector and the Ripe Pear* (*Hektor in zrela hruška*), Mladika, 2011, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Hector and a Big Tear* (*Hektor in velika solza*), Mladika. 2010, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Hector and the Scent of Humans* (*Hektor in duh po človeku*), Mladika, 2010, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Hector and the Great Adventure* (*Hektor in velika avantura*), Mladika, 2009, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Hektor and a Little Love* (*Hektor in male ljubezni*), Mladika, 2009, 9+, fantasy fiction



Hector and the Ripe Pear



Hector and a Big Tear

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Igor Karlovšek



In the first part of *The Tribe of Fire* series titled *The Escape,* the author takes us on an adventurous trip into history, to the period of Slavic migrations. [...] We are in for an exciting read, full of twists and turns.

(from the library portal dobreknjige.si)

prose

Selected piece

***The Tribe of Fire: The Escape* (*Ognjeno pleme: Pobeg*),** Dob, Miš založba, 2019, illustrated by Marina Gabor

background

Defying orders by tribal leaders, Ognyen, the head of the Slavic army, strengthens his forces and decides to strike towards the west. His enemies want to blackmail the disobedient warrior with his children. When his daughters Ayda and Mila only just escape death in a deep chasm, the five children and their grandmother, their main support after the death of their mother during the birth of the triplets Vuk, Vlad and Plamen, set off on a long and dangerous journey to reach their father. They must find shelter in the wilderness, escape those trying to hunt them down, survive a harsh winter. To mislead their pursuers they set off towards the east where the grandmother's sister lives in a community near the river Dnieper. The trackers still find them and a large army sets off for Ilovat Kan, a place of a spectacular battle between good and evil. Ognyen's children are no easy opponent: the shrewd healer Ayda, the beautiful Mila who gets followed by all animals, and the triplets – masters of the sling, the bow and the sword – all intend to stay alive for a long time. The army of Ognyen's enemies is defeated and the children continue their way along the Dnieper to catch up with their father as soon as possible. But the route is still long. Their adventures have only just begun.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

None of the residents lucky enough to see her arrival would ever forget the day Ayda appeared before Ilovat Kan and voluntarily returned to the settlement.
It seemed she was alone and when she was already very close to the settlement, all of a sudden, two, almost entirely black wolves came rushing from the direction of Dnieper Ozera. The inhabitants shouted out in fear but they were too far away to help her. The shouting however warned the girl that something was going on. She began to look around and then noticed the fast-approaching beasts.
Instead of running away, she turned towards them, kneeled on one knee and opened her arms, almost as if wanting to embrace them.
The spectators cried out as they imagined the wolves leaping at their victim's throat.
At the last minute though, the wolves stopped, lowered their heads and crawled up to her, placing their heads against her hands, as if they were a pair of tamed puppies, eagerly awaiting their master's pats and strokes. Ayda played lovingly with the wolves, then raised her hand and pointed towards the direction they had come from.
The wolves stuck their tails between their legs and slowly and obediently took a few steps in the direction they had been shown. They then both simultaneously turned round, hoping that Ayda might have changed her mind.
She had not. She sternly pointed towards the south once again and the wolves obediently ran away.
It all lasted perhaps a few beats of the heart but the scene forever caught the imagination of all onlookers.
Ayda's abilities shocked them deeply.
They knew of nobody who could command wolves.
She knew how to open up a human leg and close it up again.
When she stepped into the settlement nobody moved, nobody dared speak.
Total silence was a sign of respect towards Ayda, a respect towards the divine.
Ayda, also deep in thought and silent, made her way straight for Rasul's underground hut. She did not even notice the people staring at her, all she was concerned about was the wounded Gnierat. Sitting by him was Mother, ready to finally remove the foreign object from his wound. Puss was still oozing through the straw and

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Ayda was certain that this was not right. The wound should have been closed, the juices should have stayed inside the wounded son, not fruitlessly seep towards the ground.
"Don't!" Ayda cried out and the woman froze, her hand only inches away from her son.
Ayda reached her in three steps, grabbed her hand and pulled it away.
"If you want Gnierat to die, then cut his throat! He will suffer less and it will all end much faster. If you close up the wound with the evil spirit still inside, he will die a long and torturous death. To save him we will need to cut off his leg and burn the wound with hot iron. But the poison will still spread through his body. He will start rotting alive. Should I go on? Let Gnierat hear about it, after all it will all happen to him."
With Ayda's every word the woman winced, tears appeared on her cheeks and she looked at her son with such fear in her eyes that Ayda felt sorry for her.
"His life is still hanging by a thread. We will both have to struggle for a long time to grab him from Veles. Whether we will succeed or not, only the Gods can tell, not mortals like me, a young and still very much ignorant girl. Will you help me?"

Awards in the field of children's literature

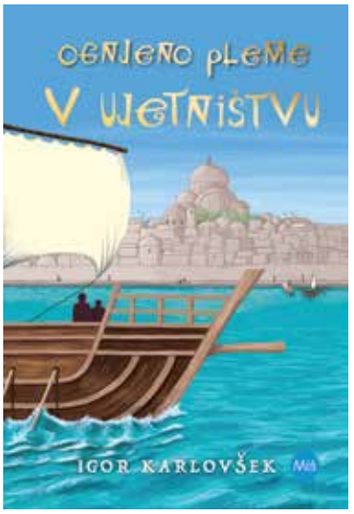
- The Večernica Award, 2005 for *The Pupil*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2020 for *The Tribe of Fire 1: The Escape*; 2019 for *Survival,* 2019 for *Survival*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *The Tribe of Fire 4: The Great Battle*; 2021 for *The Tribe of Fire 3: Victories and Defeats*; 2020 for *The Tribe of Fire 2: In Captivity, The Tribe of Fire 1: The Escape*

Select Bibliography

- *The Fiery Three: Expulsion* (*Ognjeni trije 1: Izgon*), Miš založba, 2022, 13+, realistic novel
- *The Fifth Foul* (*Peta osebna*), Miš založba, 2022, 13+, realistic novel
- *The Tribe of Fire 5: The Confluence* (*Ognjeno pleme 5: Sotočje*), Miš založba, 2022, 13+, realistic novel
- *The Tribe of Fire 4: The Great Battle* (*Ognjeno pleme 4: Velika bitka*), Miš založba, 2021, 13+, realistic novel
- *The Tribe of Fire 3: Victories and Defeats* (*Ognjeno pleme 3: Zmage in porazi*), Miš založba, 2021, 13+, realistic novel
- *The Tribe of Fire 2: In Captivity* (*Ognjeno pleme 2: V ujetništvu*), Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2019), 13+, realistic novel
- *The Tribe of Fire 1: The Escape* (*Ognjeno pleme 1: Pobeg*), Miš založba, 2020 (first edition 2019 and reprinst), 13+, realistic novel
- *Goodbye, Lara* (*Nasvidenje, Lara*), Miš založba, 2020, 13+, realistic novel
- *Survival* (*Preživetje*), Miš založba 2020 (first edition 2018), 13+, realistic novel
- *The Pupil* (*Gimnazijec*), MKZ, 2004, 16+, realistic novel



The Tribe of Fire: In Captivity



Survival

e-mail (author):
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Feri Lainšček



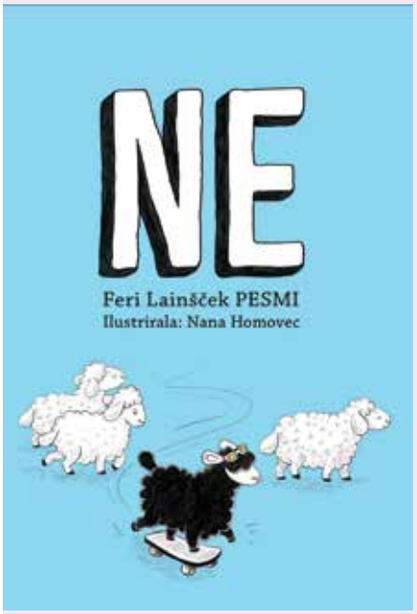
Even thought not all his stories are set in Prekmurje, in his opus intended for children and young readers, Feri Lainšček has certainly suceeded in preserving the beauty of the landscape between the rivers Mura and Raba, the generosity of the people, their hard life and especially the magic of the Prekmurje Plains.

(Dragica Haramija, *Nagrajene pisave /Award-winning Writing*)

poetry and prose

Selected poems

No (Ne), Maribor, Litera, 2018, illustrated by Nina Homovec
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



No

My House

It's not true that I just dream and wait.
With an invisible house I'm blessed.
Here all is as I've always wanted,
with a niche for each and every guest.

I'll be happy, whenever you come,
offer kindness as is my duty,
sing you a song about happiness
and fill up your soul with beauty.

You'll stay with me as long as it takes
for you to at least try and believe,
that the world is not hopeless and lame,
that with love you will have to perceive.

It's not true that I'm funny and strange,
I just planted my garden anew.
The flowers I now grow there are words,
and here I offer this fresh bunch to you.

I Do Not Like

I do not like the hands on a clock
I don't like the alarm or the bell,
nor do I like songs without rhyme,
or ends of novels - ends of a spell.

I do not like really good pupils,
I don't like lessons during the break,
nor do I like it when people flock,
just the thought of a choir makes me shake.

I do not like carrots on a stick,
I don't like victories or defeats,
nor do I like those court proceedings,
even if they are full of receipts.

I do not like going to meetings
where we all listen to lots of shit,
and I don't like hearts drawn on the wall
or the arrows by which they are hit.

I do not like that I do not like,
it is often myself I annoy,
yet I need to add one final thing,
I do not like Annabelle and Roy.

I do not like, I don't like at all.
At all I say, yet that's a slight lie.
I like Anabelle when Roy's not there
so I give the finger to the guy.

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Selected piece

***Tiny Thoughts* (*Mislice*),** Murska Sobota, Franc-Franc, 2011, illustrated by Jolanda Jereb



background

Tiny Thoughts is a collection of fairy tales that does not hide its enchantment with traditional folk stories. For this very special inspiration I can thank all of the narrators of my childhood. These narrators conveyed countless imaginary kingdoms and showed me worlds unseen by many eyes. I listened to these messages from the past with an open heart and learned from the wisdom of our ancestors.

But that is only one part of the story of the collective creative enchantment that captivated me and guided me toward *Tiny Thoughts*. Throughout this magical process, I realised that the contemporary young reader lives in a time of great plenty but that time itself, rushing forward so fast, has become ever more scarce. That is indeed what is fascinating about fairy tales: their ability to condense characters and events and to dramatically stylise great truths. For *Tiny Thoughts*, I sought out stories and heroes who, because of the force of fate and character, speak directly to our highest value – that of Love.

I sincerely hope, dear readers, that I have succeeded in bringing these heroes to life and making you see these worlds with your own eyes. I hope that *Tales of the Heart* are filled with compelling and exciting characters. Even more, I hope that the thoughts and ideas these stories awaken in you, your own thoughts and ideas, will help you in life.

Rebecca and the Gipsy

(translated by Erike Johnson Debeljak)

It all happened a long time ago when the roads between the Raba and Mura Rivers were dusty in the summer, muddy in the autumn and barely passable in the winter. Feudal lords traveled along these roads on horses, peasants covered them with teams of oxen and beggars made their way on foot. But no matter how they traveled along these roads, all who did so used to encounter Gusti, the Gypsy fiddler, and Rebecca, the dancer. For the two, having no other home, were always on the roads. Rebecca and the Gypsy traveled from crossroad to crossroad, from village to village, from town to town and wherever they went, they brought happiness. They stopped in market squares or anywhere at all where people would pause and watch them. But even when they danced and played in the middle of nowhere, even when they were watched only by the animals in the fields, they danced and played with all their hearts. Anyone who had once seen and heard them just longed to repeat that pleasure again and again. People loved the sound of Gusti's fiddle but they were even more enchanted by Rebecca's light-footed dance. When she gave herself to the music, she was no longer of this world. Her bare feet hopped about like a rabbit in the dewy grass, her body undulated like a willow in a spring breeze and her face shone like the morning sun on the low plains. She was young and beautiful as no other and her heartfelt laughter was contagious. When workers in the fields heard the sound of her laughter, they lay down their hoes. In the taverns, even the hungriest patrons forgot where to put their spoons. When they heard that lovely sound, it seemed that time stood still for an instant, that something beautiful stole into their hearts and spread comfort and warmth.

And so it happened one spring day that the young king of Blatograd traveled to the Raba River to fish for trout. His luxurious coach stopped at a corner where a crowd of people had gathered. They stood in a great circle watching a fiddler and a dancer who entertained them with great skill. The king's retinue were pulled in by their curiosity and when the king himself heard the tinkling sound of Rebecca's laughter, he himself tarried for awhile among the people. Enchanted, he gazed at her slender body and the sparks that flew from her dark eyes kindled a fire in his heart. Without realising what he was doing, he drew in closer and closer until he was touching the spinning fabric of her dress and then he grabbed her by the hand.

"I have never seen anything more beautiful than your dance," said the young king when Gusti put down his fiddle. "I have never heard anything more delightful than your laughter," he held Rebecca's hand who stood still in surprise. "First, I promise before all these good people,

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that I am a man who never goes back on his word and then, my lady, I offer you my royal hand in marriage."

"Your majesty," answered Rebecca and she kissed his royal hand, "I have never been so honored or so moved. But, sadly, I cannot except your hand because my heart belongs to another: to Gusti, the Gypsy fiddler. And it is only because of our great love that we are able to give so much happiness and joy to others."

"You are far too beautiful and precious to belong to a traveling fiddler," the young king smiled. "I am the only one in all the land who is able to offer you a home worthy of your beauty and charm," he said with conviction. "You shall have everything you ever desired in my court. All of my servants will be at your beck and call."

"But your majesty, I want nothing more than the wind from the plains blowing though my hair and Gusti's hand safely guiding me on these rutted and overgrown paths," Rebecca explained to the young king. "Whenever you desire it, we shall come to your court and cheer you and yours but now I beg of you to leave me with he who I love the most of all," she pleaded.

But it was the king's command that must be respected in the land. His servants carried Rebecca into the gilt carriage and left Gusti alone on the dusty road. The Gypsy fiddler went from crossroad to crossroad, from village to village, from town to town. He went to all the places he had traveled over the years but his song was now sad. He sang of his bottomless pain and it entered the hearts of his listeners and caused tears to come to their eyes. But they could not help him.

The years passed.

Rebecca was rubbed with aromatic oils, dressed in silks and crowned queen. Seven maidservants cared for her day and night and seven footmen were always at her service. Each morning, the young king gave her the best food and drink from distant lands. The best musicians in the land played reveilles in the morning and the best dancers tried to lighten her evenings. But Rebecca only closed her eyes. During all the long years she lived in the royal court, she never once laughed. The king, who loved her with all his heart and had tried in every way he knew to cheer her, also grew sad. A great sadness took up residence in Blatograd. Old people who were one hundred years old could not remember such a time of sadness and their long-dead ancestors had never told them of such a time.

Then one Sunday, the king and queen went to a cow fair. By coincidence, the fiddler Gusti, who trod the whole country with his sadness, was traveling on the same road. When Rebecca heard from afar the sound of his violin, she immediately recognised its voice. She stepped out of her golden shoes, ran among the people and began to dance in the middle of the square as if she were being carried by a whirling wind. Her happy laughter floated through the air and merchants forgot about their customers and let the money fall from their pockets. The king, who saw and heard all of this, felt a pain in his heart and an idea came into his mind. He whispered to his servant, telling him to take care that the traveling musician did not leave the town. Then he returned with the queen to his court.

That night, the king secretly made his way to Gusti who was sleeping in the barn behind the coachman's tavern. He begged him to exchange clothes with him for one day. He wanted to dress up as the traveling fiddler in hopes of cheering his queen, of luring on to her lips the smile he so desired. Despite the weight of his sadness, Gusti had a good heart and he pitied the unhappy king. He accepted his proposition. He took off his shabby worn-out rags and was soon dressed in the king's splendid clothes. The king put on Gusti's rags and hung Gusti's fiddle over his shoulder.

The guards at the castle allowed Gusti, who looked good in royal garments, to enter the court and after so many years of loneliness, he spent the night at his beloved Rebecca's side. The next morning, a traveling fiddler appeared at the castle gates, but he was not recognised as the king and so was driven away. In this way, Gusti became the king. The smile returned to Rebecca's face and nobody could tear their eyes away from its splendor. The king wandered for the rest of his days from crossroad to crossroad, from village to village, from town to town. He told of his strange fate but nobody believed him.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Prešeren Lifetime Achievement Awards, 2021
- The Večernica Award, 2001 for *Tales of the Heart*
- The Desetnica Award, 2012 for *Mousey the Mouse and Whitemouse*
- Golden Pearl Award, 2019 for *Origins: A Poem About Love*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2019 for *No*, 2011 for *Colouring Pencils*, 2000 for *Slians*
- The Desetnica Award, 2013 for *Colouring Pencils*, 2010 for *Summer Hit*, 2006 for *Dandelion*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2020 for *Love Me Like the Sun Shines* 2013 for *Ciciland*

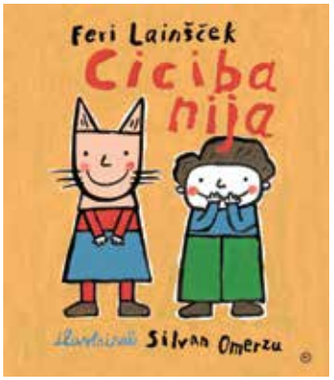
Select Bibliography

- *No* (*Ne*), Miš založba, 2022 (first edition 2018), 13+, poetry
- *Love Me Like the Sun Shines* (*Ljubi me, kot sonce sije*), MKZ, 2020, 16+, poetry
- *Tiny Thoughts: Ten Fairytales* (*Mislice: desejt pravlic*), Beletrina, 2020 (first edition 2000 and reprints), 13+, fairy tales
- *My Favourite Poems About Animals* (*Moje najljubše pesmi o živalih*), Miš založba, 2019, under 6, poetry, picture book
- *Circus Argo* (*Velecirkus Argo*), Beletrina, 2017 (first edition 1996 and reprints), 13+, fantastic fiction
- *Poems for Little Babblers* (*Pesmi za majhna čebljala*), Franc-Franc, 2015, 6+, poetry
- *Ciciland* (*Cicibanija*), MKZ, 2012, 6+, poetry
- *When We Grow Up* (*Ko bova velika*), Franc-Franc, 2012, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Songs About Mousey and Whitemouse:* picturebook with a CD (*Pesmi o Mišku in Belamiški*), MKZ, 2010, 6+, poetry, picture book
- *Mousey the Mouse and Whitemouse* (*Mišek Miško in Belamiška*), MKZ, 2010 (first edition 2009), 6+, fairy tale, picture book

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *Origins: A Poem About Love*, 2019, Slovenia
- Croatian: *Mislice: deset bajki*, Algoritam, 2007, Croatia
- Porabian dialect:
  - *Mislice: pravljice/pripovjesti,* Franc-Franc, 2007, Slovenia
  - *Pojep na dejdekovom biciklini,* Franc-Franc, 2001, Slovenia
- Hungarian: *Argo nagycirkusz*, Studio Artis, 1999, Slovenia

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Ciciland



Mousey the Mouse and Whitemouse



Songs About Mousey and Whitemouse



Origins: A Poem About Love

Vinko Möderndorfer



Möderndorfer cleverly uses various literary means and processes, two of which are particularly worth noting: a sensible use of humorous elements through which some of Nika's character traits are revealed and at the same time comedy softens the most serious points in the novel, and a linguistic subtlety most prominently shown with Igor where Möderndorfer manages, with the use of simple childish language, to show his sincerity, authenticity and ability to empathise. The author unobtrusively warns of the current theme of inclusion that will only be achievable in full when society will comprehend that people have the same needs and desires and that people with special needs present no kind of threat. And also that we are all slow in some things. And that maturity means knowing how to say sorry at the right moment.

(from the award justification for the 2017 Desetnica Award)

poetry and prose

Selected piece

***Whale on a Beach* (*Kit na plaži*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2017

background

Whale on the Beach is a realistic social-psychological novel about being different, growing up, and relationships. It is presented through the story of the fourteen-year-old narrator Nika who, besides growing up, first love, trying to get included in a new class after moving from Paris and then from the countryside, also has to deal in her own way with her younger brother Igor who has Down syndrome. The reader sees how being different is often treated. Nika also has to realise that she loves her brother a lot, for only then can she free herself from the secret about her family. The connecting thread of this multi-layered story is the sperm whale, itself an anomaly of its kind.

Whale on a Beach



excerpt

(translated by David Limon)

Recess, then Van Gogh and Finally Something Else

During every break, Alex hung around my desk. That day he asked if I could help him with maths if I had any time after school. I said yes, but an hour at the most because I had a fencing class.

"Don't you go to karate?" he said, surprised.

"Not anymore. It didn't work out. Training sessions were twice a week, I'd have had to drop other things, so I stopped going. I'll take it up again in high school."

"Fencing," he said with respect, "samurai and all that."

"No, fencing is something else. A nice sport. You wear a special white outfit and a face mask..." I corrected him.

"Oh, I know! Boring. No action. You just walk up and down and nothing ever happens. Kickboxing! Now there's a sport where something happens all the time. Action, action, action! Not fencing!"

I just smiled. I'd explain to him what a nice sport fencing was another time. It's all in the head. The concentration, elegance, nothing rough, reflexes ... Or maybe I wouldn't. It seemed Alex was more suited to other sports. Even on

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his t-shirts there were symbols and slogans from various martial arts: kickboxing, kung fu, kobudō, kendo, koryū, tekwando ... And the faces of stupid action stars.
Barbie was sitting at the desk behind us. She was holding her smartphone and listening to us with her mouth open. Milan stood next to her. Recently he had been hanging around Barbie all the time. Milan, who did judo, would have been able to comment on Alex bragging about martial arts. But he didn't. He said nothing. He was afraid that the older boy, who adored kung fu, would flatten him.
Just before the end of break, Petra came to my desk. She didn't look at me. Or rather she pretended not to.
"Alex, shall we walk home together after school?" she said it as if the others weren't there.
"Nika is going to help me with maths after school," said Alex. But because he sensed Petra's cheeks turning to ice for a moment, making her look like Snow White's stepmother, he added, "I asked her," and then, as if apologising, "because I got a fail today."
How pathetic, apologising to her. If Milan had said anything about judo practice, Alex would immediately have put him down, come on, you and your judo freaks, all you do is touch each other. But to Petra he was apologising.
Finally, Petra turned to me. She missed Alex's apology and looked me in the eye, "Nika, isn't it your birthday soon?" she said with a fake smile.
"No," I shook my head.
"What do you mean?" said Petra, surprised. "Isn't it in March? That's now isn't it?"
"It is," I said. "It is in March, but not right now," I replied, even though I knew that the irony would be lost. Petra wouldn't understand.
Her mobile beeped. She looked at the text. At that moment, my phone beeped, too, and Alex's and Milan's. We all looked almost at the same time. It was obvious! Barbie had sent us all a text saying, "21 March."
"My birthday is on the twenty first," I admitted.
Another beep from our phones.
I remember because it's spring then, wrote Barbie.
"Well, that's great," Petra said slightly maliciously. "That's next week. Are you going to invite us to your house? It's big enough, isn't it?"
I nodded. "Obviously I'm going to invite you to my birthday party!"
Milan became all enthusiastic, "I know how to cook. I can make something so we don't have to eat junk ..." He stopped, realising he had put his foot in it, as usual. He wanted to correct his mistake, "Well, we have never actually eaten junk because, erm, we've never been to your house ... I didn't mean it like that, honestly, it just came out like that ..." We all waited patiently for him to stop trying to eat his words. Then he finally said,"Well ... Nika, if we're at your place, Matt can be the DJ! Matt!" he shouted to the other end of the classroom. "You'll DJ at Nika's birthday party, won't you?"
Matt lifted his hand and made a V sign, obviously I will!
"We'll go to McDonald's," I said quickly. "It'll be a cool party. I've already reserved the top floor, I've got some savings and I'll pay for everything; we won't have to prepare anything, cook anything, clear up anything, we'll just have fun."
Matt sighed in disappointment.
Alex nodded automatically. He probably didn't care. But Petra pouted and said, "Why not at your house? We went to mine, even though we live in a one-bedroom flat, and we went to Milan's too..."
"Because I'm inviting the whole class," I managed to come up with an excuse at the last minute.
Petra was about to say something, she had already taken a breath for another irritating question, I could almost hear her squeaky voice, when the biology teacher saved me by walking into the classroom.

The biology lesson was cool. Sometimes I feel as if the teacher is talking to me and no one else. The others yawn or stare into space leaning on their elbows. Only Barbie is interested in animals. Fish, obviously. Barbie speaks most often in biology, although usually just one word or a sentence with three words, max.
The last lesson was art. I was the only one who had done the assignment. No one else had drawn an imaginary portrait. At first, I didn't want to admit that I had done so. When the art teacher asked if we'd done what he had told us to, the classroom was totally silent, everyone stared at their desks. Me included, of course. Out of solidarity. But then the teacher walked past my desk and just pulled the drawing from my folder.
"Let's have a look!" he said. "I'm glad that at least someone in this class takes me seriously." And he examined my work. I turned round. Petra was looking at me. This time not with a fixed look, like Reptilia serpents, but mockingly.
"Well!" said the art teacher, "Interesting! I wasn't really thinking of a realistic portrait, I expected more unusual faces, truly imaginary, colourful, wild, Cubist ... We talked about Cubism last time. Can anyone remember?"
Everyone was looking down again. Me included. Out of solidarity.
We called the art teacher Van Gogh. He had red hair and freckles. He was incredibly thin. Like an insect. Actually, he wasn't our teacher. He was standing in for our teacher who was sick. This guy was still at the arts academy. I nicknamed him Van Gogh because in France I had seen an exhibition of Vincent van Gogh's paintings. Including his self-portrait, the one with the severed, bandaged ear. Our substitute teacher looked very much like him.
"Right, then!" he said, examining my imaginary portrait, "Clearly you're not interested in Cubism, you prefer

Realism." Then he looked at me and said, "Not bad. Considering this is the only drawing in the whole class I can't compare it to anything else and all I can say is that it's good."

I glanced at Petra, but she looked away. I looked at the backmost desk, where Alex sat. He was staring into space. He wasn't interested. Then I looked at Matt. He smiled and nodded. Well done! he said silently, shaping his lips into Congratulations! He was happy for me.

"However..." Van Gogh went on, "that means nothing. This drawing is the best because it is the only one. Besides, it is trying very hard to look like someone." And he frowned at me once more. "It expresses the artist's effort and desire for us to like the picture. And that's not the right motive for an artist. We draw, paint and create for ourselves, because we want to express something. True artists never paint in order to prove that they can, that they're the best. Creation is not a competition. Am I right?" He was looking at me.

"What?" I asked. Why are you gawping at me like that? You're trying to trick me in some way. What are you up to?

The carrot head observed me for a while, as if deep in thought, as if any moment he would say something clever. And then he finally said, "Did you try very hard for us to like the picture?"

I had no idea what he was attempting to say. I began to dislike him.

"Or that someone would like it?" He emphasised the word someone, and then looked around the classroom. "I wonder who?"

I started regretting having done the assignment. Instead of evaluating my work, he was playing a game. It felt like harassment. I got up, took the drawing from him and put it back in the folder. Van Gogh was a little surprised, but then went on calmly:

"All I wanted to say is that we create in order to express something, not because we want to make our work likeable."

The moron! I hadn't drawn that picture so that he would like it. Especially not him, the red-haired old fart, let him go back to the academy and learn something! I regretted giving him such a noble nickname. He didn't deserve it. He should have been grateful that I was taking him seriously, because no one else was, and I had done what he had told us to. The only one in the class! And he didn't know how to value that!

"He looks a bit like Alex," Van Gogh said suddenly. "He's got the same hair. In fact, exactly the same hair. And eyes. But the chin and mouth are different."

The class laughed.

"Can you give me the picture back so that I can show it to the others?" said Van Gogh.

"No," I said, putting both hands on the folder, "I didn't draw it to show it off." I frowned.

The class laughed.

"Won't you show it even to Alex?" he just couldn't let it drop.

The class was enjoying it. Everyone looked at Alex, and then back to me and Van Gogh.

Alex was embarrassed. He muttered something incomprehensible and turned to the window.

"Well, that's enough," the teacher said, trying to calm the class down. "I'll definitely give Nika's portrait top grade..."

"No," I interrupted him, "I didn't do it for a grade. You can keep your grade and I'll keep my drawing."

Van Gogh – I'd never call him that again, not even in my head – smiled in embarrassment. He had gone a little too far. And he knew it. He spent the rest of the lesson trying to clear up his mess. He went on about Cubism and other styles. He showed us some paintings. I didn't think anyone was listening. Not even me. I thought of a new nickname for him. Frog. Yes, he was a frog. Small, freckly, with red hair. Bulging blue eyes. A freckly frog. A red freckly frog. Anura in Latin. I'd just call him Anus. Not very nice, but he deserved it. An art teacher with the nickname Anus. Good one!

Awards in the field of children's literature

- Golden Pearl Award, 2022 for *Romeo and Juliet from a Neighbouring Street*
- The Desetnica Award, 2017 for *Whale on a Beach*, 2014 for *Just Like a Film*
- The IBBY Honour List, 2018 for *Whale on a Beach*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

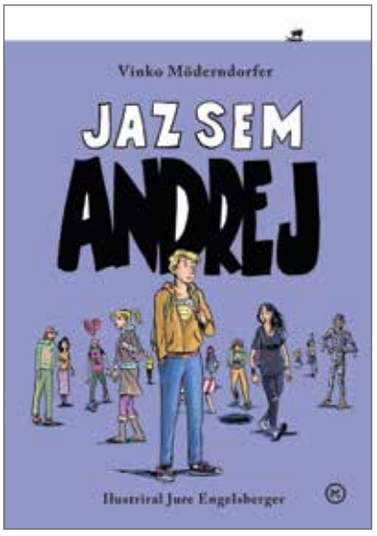
- The Večernica Award, 2022 for *Sunflower*; 2020 for *A Goodnight Grandma,* 2019 for *I Am Andrej*, 2016 for *Poems and Poemettes*, 2003 for *Langus the Cat and Gajka the Little Witch*
- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *Sunflower*; 2021 for *A Goodnight Grandma,* 2019 for *I Am Andrej*, 2016 for *Poems and Poemettes*, 2013 for *The Big Wash*, 2012 for *Puddle, Shoe, Snot and Sleeve*
- The Levstik Award, 2107 for *Poems and Poemettes*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2016 for *Whale on a Beach*; *Poems and Poemettes*, 2014 for *Just Like a Film*

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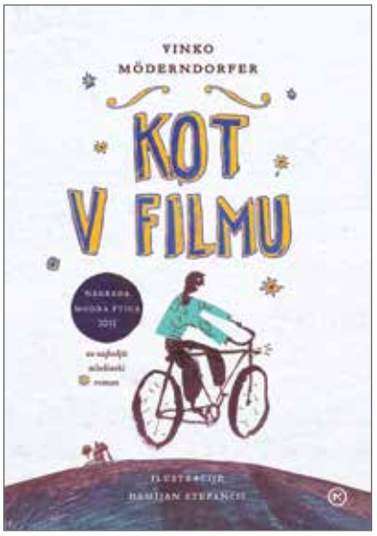
- *Romeo and Juliet from a Neighbouring Street: songs and a tragedy with a Hollywood ending (Romeo in Julija iz sosednje ulice: pesmi in ena tragedija s hollywoodskim koncem),* Miš založba, 2022, 13+, poetry
- *Sunflower (Sončnica),* MKZ, 2021, 13+, realistic novel
- *I Am Andrej (Jaz sem Andrej),* MKZ, 2021 (first edition 2018), 13+, novel
- *Just Like a Film* (*Kot v filmu*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 2013 and reprints), 9+, novel
- *A Goodnight Grandma* (*Babica za lahko noč*), Miš založba, 2019, 9+, poetry
- *Whale on a Beach* (*Kit na plaži*), MKZ, 2015, 13+, novel
- *Poems and Poemettes* (*Pesmi in pesmičice*), MKZ, 2015, 9+, poetry
- *Just Like a Film* (*Kot v filmu*), MKZ, 2020 (first edition 2013 and reprints), 9+, novel
- *The Big Wash* (*Velika žehta*), MKZ, 2011, under 6, fantasy fiction, picture book
- *Puddle, Shoe, Snot and Sleeve* (*Luža, čevelj, smrkelj in rokav*), Mladika, 2009, 9+, poetry

Published in foreign languages:

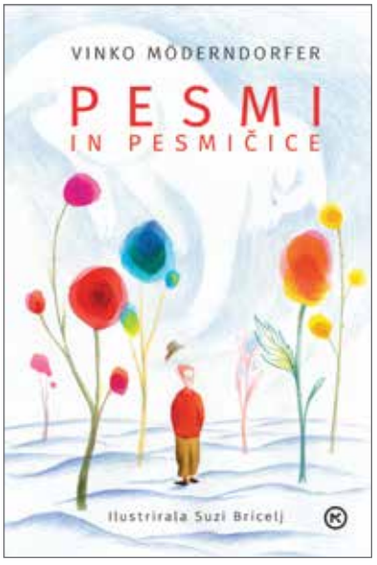
- *Just Like a Film*
  - German: *Wie im Film,* Slovene Writers' Association, 2015, Slovenia
  - Bulgarian: *Kato na film,* Sofia, Ergon, 2017, Bulgaria
  - Macedonian: *Kako vo film,* Skopje, 2018, Macedonia



I Am Andrej



Just Like a Film



Poems and Poemettes

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Boris A. Novak



One of Slovenia's best literary creators in general, Boris A. Novak has also produced a particularly strong opus that places him right at the peak of literature for children and young adults in Slovenia. He and his creativity have left their mark on the Slovene literary scene.

(from the award justification for the 2019 The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award)

poetry

Selected poems

Forms of the Spirit: The Treasure of Poetic Forms (Oblike duha: zakladnica pesniških oblik), Ljubljana, MKZ, 2016, illustrated by Marjan Manček
(translated by Nada Grošelj)



Forms of the Spirit

A Modern Balad

Why did you wet yourself, my son?
A big boy like yourself?
Because I hate this hide-and-seek
game in the flower-bed.

Where have you got your sister, son?
Her song has gone all quiet.
She went downstairs alone to pick
a bunch of scarlet flowers.

I said that you must never leave
the child play by herself!
But that was what she wanted, Mum,
she really did, I swear!

Why don't you read her in your room
a fairy-tale aloud?
Because she wants to stay and count
the ants down on the ground.

Why are you carrying her shoes?
Imagine such a thing!
Because she likes to skip barefoot
where grass is soft and green.

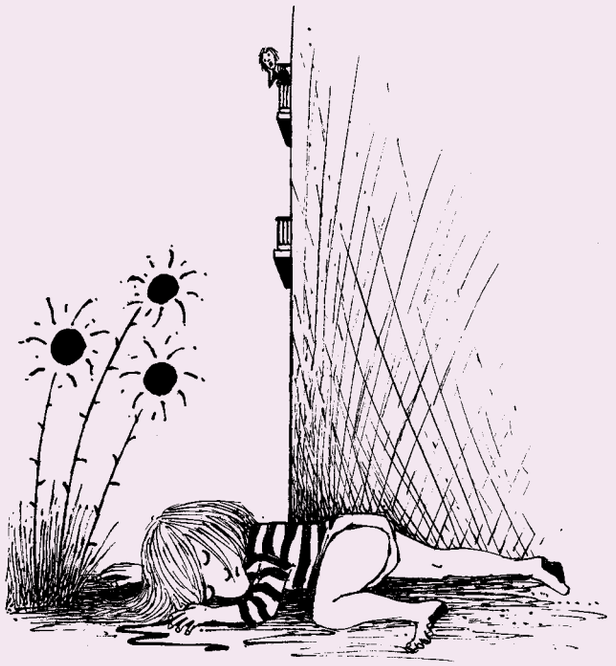
Why are you hiding there her skirt?
Where'd you get hold of that?
It came off in my hands as I
reached out and tried to grab.

She's running outside with no clothes?!
She'll catch a dreadful cold!
She couldn't fly because she had
no skirt to make her float.

How do you, bigger brother, mind
your little sister, hey?!
She'll do no longer what I want.
You make her go and play!

Have you been quarreling again?!
You love her not at all?
We played out on the balcony
and she fell into the void.

Oh, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mum,
I love her awfully!
Go tell her she should get up now
and come and play with me!



Forms of the Spirit

13+

Definitions

Tide
as a rhyme
of the moonlight.

Dawn is a light
shipwrecked
on the reefs
of the night.

A storm is
a football game
played by clouds
in the sky stadium.

A poem is a room
in a hotel of words
with five stars –
with a view of phantasy,
a bathroom for metaphors,
and a double bed
for masculine and feminine rhymes.

The Sweetest Post

A kiss
is a love letter
enveloped in lips.

It is delivered sweetest
personally.

A monument
is a memory
which had been
freezing
so long
until it petrified.

An echo is a sound
which wants to defeat
its own death.

A touch
is the shepherd
of the skin.

A poet
is the gardener
of silence.

Selected poem

Childhood Is Poetry of Life, Poety Is Childhood of the World
The 1997 International Children's Book Day Message
(translated by Alan McConnell-Duff)



1

Who is a poet? – A poet is the gardener of words.
He plants words into the field of miracles.
That is how words grow to poems.

⁂

Adults hear words, yet do not listen to them.
Adults read words, yet do not feel them.
Adults speak words, yet do not taste them.

Adults write words, yet do not smell them.
Adults in their speaking do not notice the words at all,
so the words have a sad and lonely ring.

Adults use words,
yet do not love them.
So the words become twisted and outworn.

Children are different.
Children play with words.
Their play straightens the twisted words.

Playing with old words
rubs off the rust
and restores to them their youthful shine.

Play brings to life
new words unheard,
fresh in their beauty.

Children listen to words. Words are the music of human voices.
Children feel words: are they soft? hard? round? spiky?
Children taste words: are they sweet? salty? sour? bitter?

Children smell words.
Words are polen
on the flowers of things.

Children are fond of words.
That is why words are also fond of children.

⁂

Every poet is a big child.
And every child is a little poet.

2

Who is a painter? – A painter is the shepherd of colors.
He takes the colors to the pasture of light.
That is how colors grow to pictures.

⁂

Adults look at colors, yet do not see them.
Adults perceive shapes, yet do not understand their speech.
Adults live in light and from light, yet do not notice it at all.

Adults cast long shadows, yet do not play with them.
Adults take up much (indeed too much) space,
yet never just for once marvel at its spaciousness.

Adults look at te world with closed eyes.
This is why space shrinks, shadows die,
light darkens, colors fade, and shapes fall silent.

Children are different.
Children with eyes wide open gaze out
at the world and marvel at things.

Children play with colors ans with shapes.
Their play blows away the dust from the faded colors
and returns to them the sheen with whih they were born.

Play brings to life new shapes,
unseen and unheard before,
fresh in their beauty.

Children see colors. Colors are the childhood of light.
Children understand the speech of shapes:
are they gentle? sharp? lively? sad?

Children feel, children breathe
children see the invisible light.
Light is the mother of the world.

Children marvel at space and its immense openness.
Children, of course, last short shadows,
but they play with them.

Shadows are blind,
that is why light takes them by the hand –
like children.

Children are fond of pictures.
That is why pictures are also fond of children.

⁂

Every painter is a big child.
And every child is a small painter.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Prešeren Lifetime Achievement Award, 2018
- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2019
- Golden Pear Award, 2017 for *Forms of the Spirit: The Treasure of Poetic Forms*
- White Ravens, 2005 for *How Things Grow*
- IBBY Honour List, 1998 for *The Small and the Big Moon*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

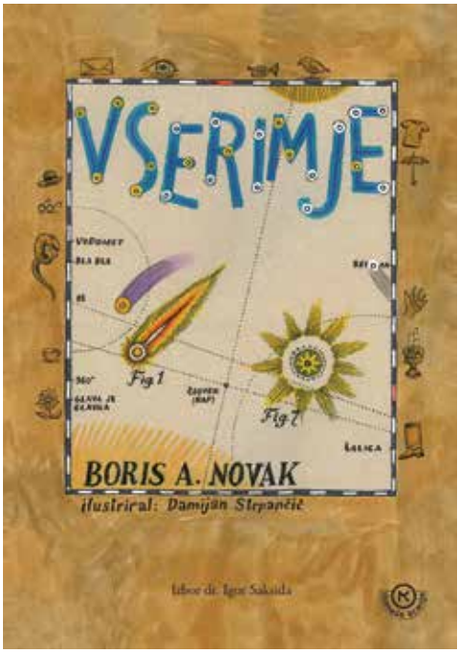
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2017 for *Forms of the Spirit*

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- *Forms of the Spirit: The Treasure of Poetic Forms* (*Oblike duha: zakladnica pesniških oblik*), MKZ, 2017 (first edition *Forms of the World: A Textbook of Poetic Forms* 1991; and reprints) , 16+, poetry
- *Heavenly Theatre* (*Nebesno gledališče*), MKZ, 2016 (first edition 1994 and reprints), 6+, fairy tales, picture book
- *Uni-verse: A Poetic Map for the Happy Journey into the Magic World of Words* (*Vserimje: pesniški zemljevid za srečno pot v čarobni svet besed*), MKZ, 2012, 9+, poetry
- *How Things Grow* (*Kako rastejo stvari*), Prešernova družba, 2004, 9+, poetry
- *Magic of the World* (*Čarovnije sveta*), MKZ, 1999, 6+, poetry
- *Forms of the Heart: A Textbook of Poetic Forms* (*Oblike srca: pesmarica pesniških oblik*), Modrijan, 1997, 16+, poetry
- *The Small and the Big Moon* (*Mala in velika luna*), MKZ, 1994, 6+, poetry
- *Periscope* (*Periskop*), Partizanska knjiga, 1989, 9+, poetry
- *Imagination Lives Everywhere* (*Domišljija je povsod doma*), Partizanska knjiga, 1984, 9+, poetry,
- *Outwording Words* (*Prebesedimo besede*), Partizanska knjiga, 1981, 13+ poetry

Published in foreign languages:

- bilingiual Slovene-English edition: *Vrtnar tišine – Gardener of Silence*, Mladinska knjiga International & Slovene Writers' Association (Festival Vilenica), 1990, Slovenia
- Croatian: *Svijet djetinjstva - djetinjstvo svijeta: izbor pesmi za otroke*, Vodnikova domačija (Biblioteka »Egzil-abc«), 1994, Slovenia
- French: *Poèmes choisis,* Maison de la Poésie, 1996, France
- Bosnian: *Bajka putuje u svijet: izbor pesmi za otroke*, Bosanska riječ = Bosnisches Wort, 2002, Germany & Bosnia and Herzegovina
- English: *The Master of Insomnia: selected poems – Le Maître de l'insomnie: poèmes choisis*, Ljubljana, Slovene Writers Association, Slovene P.E.N. in Association of the Slovene Literary Association (Litterae slovenicae), 2003, Slovenia
- Italian: *La poesia di Boris A. Novak*, Fili d'Aquilone, 2006, Italy
- Croatian: Serbian, Bosnian: *Dlaneno platno: izabrane pjesme*, selected and foreword by Josip Osti, Sarajevo: Association of Writers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo Poetry Days, 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian: *Zastavština: izabrane pjesme*, selected and foreword by Josip Osti, OKF, 2015, Montenegro
- English: *The Master of Insomnia: Selected Poems.* Champaign, Dalkey Archive Press, 2012, United States
- Spanish: *El jardinero del silencio y otros poemas*, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2018, Spain



Uni-verse: A Poetic Map for the Happy Journey into the Magic World of Words

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Slavko Pregl



"The group of heroes in Slavko Pregl's novel is looking for a treasure and finds one. A story with adventure, a holiday, children /…/ differing from others in its genre with precise and rich writing that does not distract from the narrative but 'throws' the reader out of the self-evident automated perception of the world, allowing them to see it in a new way. The precisely articulated writing comes with a precisely constructed story. All its threads interweave and lead to an ending that is not the classical happy end. The story of quests remains open-ended at all levels."

(from the award justification for the 2004 Večernica Award)

prose

Selected poems

The Silver of Blue Grotto (Srebro iz modre špilje), Ljubljana, MKZ, 2022



The Silver of Blue Grotto

background

The summer story combines adventure, finding a treasure and a love story between Andrej and Zarja. Andrej, Zarja, Klemen, Gal and his dog Karo become friends when they happen to meet on the same island during the summer holidays. All of them are initially bored on their holiday. An archaeological find gets them excited, however, and they change their mind about the island in the Adriatic and on how to spent a summer break.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Telling stories is great. You can pass the parts where you were desperately scared. Jump over the moments when your soft heart wept. Avoid the occasions where your panic got out of hand. You embellish the other moments, serve heroics and mix those with triumph. That is how modest boyhood memories of adventure are born.
/…/
The engine hummed. They sailed off. Šime was standing in the middle of the boat. Klemen sat next to Gal. Zarja and Andrej were at the back, next to the rudder.
"Unusual holidays," Zarja shouted into Andrej's ear.
She had to shout over the noise from the engine.
"Three weeks flew by. So many things happened: Gal disappeared and found himself, Klemen almost drowned, Ilija lost it, and the archaeologists in that church pit and the crooks... I can't believe it's all real!"
"Well it sure is!" Andrej shouted back. "Things happen all the time. It's just that we aren't there. This time we were and we were lucky. There are millions of cases where things don't work out like this. It's all philosophy."
"Incredible!" Zarja yelled. "You really know your stuff, from Aristotle to Slavoj Žižek!"
"Yes," said Andrej proudly.
The boat slid along the coast. The sea was calm. The rocks from the shore mirrored in it. A few seagulls soared through the sky, some of them were floating on the water a little further away. Not a single cloud dared come out into the sun. With its few knots of speed, the boat created a slight breeze that made it easier to breathe. Despite the heat, it was a beautiful sunny day that the four of them would attach to their memory walls with golden pins. Šime navigated the boat around a tall cliff. The opening at the bottom of the cliff was waiting for them. They reached it and Šime cut the engine. Using their hands, they kept the boat from the walls and pushed it further inside.
"Eeeeh," Šime suddenly seemed more alert. "Here we are."
It was Karo's first time in the cave. He was numbed with fear, blinking into the blue light. The underground chamber with its rocky ceiling and watery floor was as magnificent as ever. Zarja placed her hand in Andrej's. Klemen noticed but didn't say anything. He began stroking Karo.
"Now each of you take a handful of luck with you. When you travel the world and things get tough, look at your

13+

hand. Remember this tranquillity and this stillness. And all this silver!" said Šime.
He hit the surface of the water with his open palm. Sliver droplets scattered in all directions. Then he scooped up the water with his hand, watching the silver pearls dropping onto the surface.
"Is this really silver?" Gal asked, running his hand through the water.
"Yes, of course," Klemen huffed. "Idiot."
"Would anyone like to jump in?" Šime asked.
"Certainly," said Klemen and jumped. The boat rocked heavily.
Hitting the water, Klemen created waves on the surface, triggering a series of semi-circular reflections on the rocky ceiling.
Zarja scooped up some water in her hand and splashed it over Andrej.
"That's overdoing it," Andrej laughed and put his hands into the water. Gal was scooping the water and letting it trickle from his hand. He was still not entirely sure whether he was playing with water or silver.
"Tomorrow," Andrej whispered, "tomorrow when you leave, I won't be coming to the pier."
Wide-eyed, Zarja looked straight at him, silver droplets reflecting in her gaze.
"Will you be asleep?" she asked.
"Probably not," Andrej shook his head. "Just so you know."
Klemen finished splashing around and diving, so he climbed back into the boat. Šime helped him with the oar.
"So?" Šime asked. "Are we going back?"
"Yes," said Klemen.
"Right," said Gal.
"Mhmmm," said Andrej.
Zarja stayed silent.
Šime began rowing. Silver circles appeared around the ores, a silver trail behind the boat. Silver reflected in the eyes of the crew on the boat.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2004 for *The Silver of Blue Grotto*
- The Desetnica Award, 2005 for *The Fatal Telephone*
- The IBBY Honour List, 2014 for *Curious Fairytales*
- The Župančič Award, 2010 for his youth literature 2008-2010
- The Levstik Award, 1978 for *Geniuses in Shorts*
- The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award, 2017

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2012 for *Curious Fairytales,* 2006 for *The School Report*
- The Desetnica Award, 2015 for *About the Dragon Who Wanted to Be King*, 2013 for *Strange Times: Fable*, 2012 for *Curious Fairytaless,* 2011 *Geniuses Without Trousers*, 2009 for *Two Little Large Fishermen,* 2008 for *The School Report,* 2004 for *The Silver of Blue Grotto*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2020 for *The Boy Who Liked to Say Hello*, 2004 for *The Star With a Cap*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2021 for *The Boy Who Liked to Say Hello,* 2012 for *Curious Fairytales*
- Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, 2021, 2020, 2019

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- *The Silver of Blue Grotto* (*Srebro iz modre špilje*), MKZ, 2022 (first edition 2003), 13+, novel
- *About a Boy Who Liked Birds* (*O fantu, ki je imel rad ptičke*), MKZ, 2022, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book

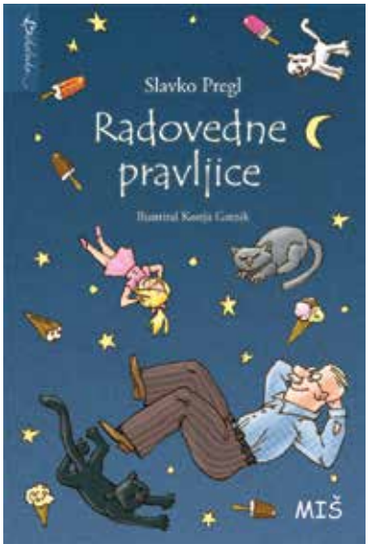


Merry Ella's Cake Shop

- *The Green Dragon Expedition* (*Odprava zelenega zmaja*), MKZ, 2019 (first edition 1976 and reprints)
- *The Boy Who Liked to Say Hello* (*O fantu, ki je lepo pozdravljal*), MKZ, 2020, under 6, short realistic fiction, picture book
- *Merry Ella's Cake Shop* (*Slaščičarna pri veseli Eli*), Miš založba, 2014, under 6, realistic fiction
- *Curious Fairytales* (*Radovedne pravljice*), Miš založba, 2011, 6+, realistic fiction
- *Geniuses Without Trousers* (*Geniji brez hlač*), Didakta, 2010 (first edition 2009), 16+, novel
- *King Without a Treasure* (*Car brez zaklada*), Goga, 2009, 13+, novel
- *The School Report* (*Spričevalo*), MKZ, 2007 (first edition 2005), 13+, novel
- *The Star with a Cap* (*Zvezda s čepico*), Mladika, 2003, 6+, realistic fiction
- *Geniuses in Shorts* (*Geniji v kratkih hlačah*), MKZ, 2000 (first edition 1978 and reprints), 13+, realistic fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- *The Green Dragon Expedition*
  - Croatian: *Pohod zelenog zmaja*, Mladost, 1978, Croatia
  - Czech: *Vyprava zeleneho draka*, Albatros, 1982, Czech Republic
- *Geniuses in Shorts*
  - Macedonian: *Genite*, Mlado pokolenje, 1978, Macedonia
  - Serbian: *Genije i genijalci*, Jež, 1981, Serbia
  - Slovak: *Genovia v kratkych nohaviciach*, Slovart, 1982, Slovakia
  - Polish: *Geniusze w krotkich spodenkach*, Iskry, 1987, Poland
- *Stories and Tales*
  - Serbian: *Priručnik za skitnju,* Zamazana priča, Strašni bratanci, Priče sa dvora, ZTT, 1981, Serbia
  - Russian: *Skazki i rasskazi,* Meždunarodna kniga, 1985, Russia
  - Uzbek and Russian edition: *Kungilsiz hodisa,* Skvernaja istorija, Gafura Guljama, 1985, Uzbekistan
  - Uzbek: '*Daidi' kar ucun dastur,* Eš Gvardija, 1985, Uzbekistan
- *The Silver of Blue Grotto*
  - Croatian: *Srebro iz modre špilje*, Mozaik knjiga, 2005, Croatia
  - Serbian: *Srebro iz plave pećine*, Mono i Manjana, 2010, Serbia
  - Bulgarian: *Srebro ot sinjata peščera*, Emas, 2015, Bulgaria
  - Slovak: *Stříbro z modre jeskyne*, Albert, 2015, Slovakia
- *Geniuses Without Trousers*
  - Albanian: *Gjenitë pa brekë*, Uegen, 2012, Albania
  - English: *Geniuses Without Pants*, Sampark, 2013, India
  - Russian: *Genii bez štanov*, Centr knigi, 2014, Russia
  - Bulgarian: *Genii na pokaz*, Emas, 2016, Burgaria
  - Bosnian: *Genijalci bez gaća*, Rabic, 2016, Bosnia
  - Italian: *Medicina per bimbi indocili*, web journal Filli d'Aquilone, 2008, Italy
  - Serbian: *Basne*, Agora, 2018, Serbia



Curious Fairytales



Summer Under the Swallow Belfry



The Boy Who Liked to Say Hello

13+

Bina Štampe Žmavc



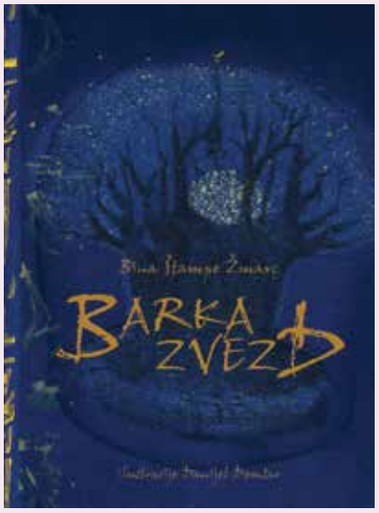
The thematic poetic world of Bina Štampe Žmavc is multi-layered. From walking towards herself and into herself. To loneliness and love. To transience and the unrepeatability of life. To the poet and silent wanderer and her reflections on how things are in the poet's heart when a poem stays out of reach. One of her books is *Princess of the Heart* – with her poetic strength and wit, with her characteristically clever neologisms that enrich the Slovene language, Bina Štampe Žmavc is undoubtedly the princess of Slovene poetic language.

(from the award justification for the 2018 Poetry Gold Medal for her life's opus)

poetry and prose

Selected poems

***A Boat of Stars* (*Barka zvezd*),** Obzorja, Maribor, 2014, illustrated by Daniel Demšar
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)



A Boat of Stars



Can My

Can my thought that is saddened and glum,
visit yours as a butterfly one day,
sit upon the tip of your thumb,
so you can stroke the sadness away?

Can my day that is smiley and fun,
warm up your heart and smile,
shine on you like a ray of the sun
and hug you gently for a while?

Can my day full of anger and rage,
crash across you like the ocean blue,
wash it all away and turn the page,
with a bright seashell just for you?

Can my gaze, so loving and kind,
reach you even from afar,
with all the joy of the world combined,
warm your heart like the brightest star?

Can my breath of angst and fear,
cover you like the freezing frost,
making your heart shed an icy tear,
feeling desolate and lost?

Can my day of joy and bliss,
reach you like a flower in bloom,
caress you warmly with a kiss
and chase away all gloom and doom.

Bird of Song

A song comes fluttering by
silent as a bird, swift as a dart,
no one knows whence, how or why
something flickers in the heart.

Perhaps the day is grey and dull,
all ruffled up, dishevelled,
as it stares and starts to mull
things over as if bedevilled.

Perhaps the day is warm and nice,
like the early sun in spring,
that rids the peaks of snow and ice,
takes the homeless under its wing.

Perhaps it's just a plain old day,
passing almost unseen,
without excitement, fun or play,
feeling itself empty, serene.

Although I'm sure you won't deny,
that no day is dull or low,
when the Bird of Song flies by,
and a tulip blossoms in the snow.

Selected poem

***Magimathics*, Maribor, Založba Pivec, 2016, illustrated by Andreja Peklar**
(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Magimathics



Two

I'm not single or alone, I'm – two,
as in one plus one, as in me and you.

Because two is a pair, two of a thing,
like mummy and daddy, queen and king.

It comes in pairs, like dark and then light,
rowing across the sky, day follows night.

Kneeling with both knees on the ground
before his princess a prince is crowned.

His queen of hearts with a pair of plaits,
twice strung in pearls as she awaits.

As two for two is love's dispensation,
giving birth to the next generation.

Enchanted life as a pair is hurled
as new duet into this dual world.

Selected piece

***The Emperor and the Rose* (*Cesar in roža*), Dob, Miš založba, 2009, illustrated by Alenka Sottler**



The Emperor and the Rose

Of the Prince Who Was Created by Dreams
(translation copyright Miš založba)

Once upon a time there lived a princess who had very unusual dreams. Every night a hawk flew into her dreams. It dipped down low above her head and stared at her with a strangely tame gaze that made the princess's heart tremble. At times she felt that looking upon her through the hawk's gaze were the eyes of an unknown young man. "Who are you?" she whispered into her dreams and would spent the whole day recalling in her mind the face that she had sensed during the night. She could hardly wait for the night. In her dreams she would often hold onto the hawk's wings and fly with it above the uninhabited, undulating landscapes of her dreams. At such times she wished never to return. As the first light stroked her eyelids, she woke up, disappointed that her dreams were over and longed for the night so that she could once more see the hawk of her dreams.
One night, as she once again held onto the hawk's wings and flew with it through her dreams, the bright landscape of the moon above which they flew suddenly darkened under a thick shadow, and the cold made the princess shiver.

In her dreams she saw how a dark evil shadow shot an arrow that mercilessly pierced the hawk's heart. Drops of red blood fell onto her hands. With a terrifying scream of pain, the princess let go of the hawk's wings and fell, fell into the abyss until she woke up in tears. Even awake she could still feel the pain of the hawk's heart wound in her own chest. All shaken up, she pressed her hands against her chest, trying to suppress the pain squeezing her heart. Then she trembled as she awaited the night to find out what had happened to the hawk of her dreams.
Finally the night came and to the princess's great relief the hawk came into her dreams as always. Again it gazed at her with the heart-piercing look of a sorrowful young man, as if trying to tell her something unfathomable, something she could not understand.
"What are you trying to tell me?" whispered the princess in her dreams. But the hawk's gaze remained as mysterious as her dreams and the morning returned her to the day, pensive and unfulfilled.
The princess could not forget the dream in which the dark shadow pierced the hawk's breast and she ordered all the captured hawks in the entire kingdom to be released, forbidding their hunting under harsh penalty.
Now the days seemed long, too long and she could hardly

13+

wait for the night and the hawk of her dreams. Soon she only lived for the night and her days became an eternal, uninhabited prelude to the night she so longed for, when she could once again fly with the hawk of her dreams over unfathomable magical dream landscapes and sense the unknown young man's deep sorrowful gaze upon her. "Who are you?" she kept whispering in her dreams. But all the hawk did was gaze at her persistently and she never heard its voice in reply. Without realising how or when, the princess fell so deeply in love with the hawk of her dreams that her soul would have withered from longing were she not able to see it again.

As if sensing the princess's secret, the hawk faithfully returned into her dreams every night.

One night they were flying over a landscape of dark dreamy forests, bathed in silver light of the full moon. The hawk flew low above a clearing shimmering with dew that reflected the moonlight. It circled above the meadow a few times, so low that the princess was able to suddenly notice the drops of blood, suspended above the grass like tiny, bright red blossoms. The hawk silently followed the trail in the grass and the princess was overcome by an unusual unease that squeezed her heart like a dark ring.

"Do you want to tell me something?" she asked the hawk. At that moment the hawk sighed a heart-wrenching sigh and climbed sharply, flying back over the deep forests of dreams. The morning separated them, and the princess was unable to decipher the secret of the glen with the drops of red blood in her dreams.

Far away in the land of dreams, the Lord of Souls and Dreams watched over the dreamers and the souls that sailed with their dreams as though they were boats, sailing through mysterious expanses of Timelessness. Every now and then an angel flew to him, an angel that guarded the souls on their long voyage through the vastness of Eternity. The angel told the Lord about the dreamers and the souls that sailed with their dreams.

"Tell me, Angel, who among the dreamers is the one who most often offers their dreams as a boat for the travelling souls?"

The angel sat down to the right side of the Lord of Souls and Dreams and lowered his head in thought. Then he said, "As far as I know, Lord of Dreams, it is the princess who gave up all her daily life for her dreams and lives only for the night and the hawk of her dreams. And she is herself quite unaware of just how much in love she is with his soul."

"And who is this soul, hidden in the hawk, so faithfully visiting her in her dreams?" asked the Lord of Souls.

"It is the soul of a prince, trapped in the body of the hawk. A long time ago the prince was turned into a hawk by an evil sorcerer. Then a hunter shot an arrow through his heart that killed him. Now his soul travels through space as a grey hawk. The soul of the prince, trapped in the hawk, has also fallen in love with the princess. They love each other beyond life and death, even though the princess knows nothing of the prince's soul trapped in the hawk."



The Emperor and the Rose

"Tonight I shall fly with you, Angel," said the Lord of Dreams, moved and pensive. "I want to see the princess and the hawk of her dreams."

That night the Lord of Souls and Dreams flew with the angel through endless plains of Timelessness. The souls on their long voyage of quest and salvation sailed by as if on sailing boats with the dreams of their dreamers. They shimmered mysteriously in a myriad of reflexions of dreamy landscapes. Some had been on a journey for a very long time and some had just started their voyage, but all shone in the vastness of the night sky like thousands upon thousands of colourful fireflies. Among them, the Lord of Dreams and the angel noticed the princess, flying in her dreams with the hawk of her dreams. The soul of the hawk pulsed with a bright glow and the princess's soul glowed like a firefly. And the Lord of Dreams and the angel saw the heart-wrenching sight of the two souls, pulsing in the same rhythm of the light as if they were one. The Lord of Dreams quietly stared for a very long time into the hawk's living soul. He felt pity for the soul, just as he felt pity for the soul of his dreamer.

"You were right, Angel, they do love each other beyond life and death," said the Lord of Dreams. "I will return his body to the young man, so he will be able to return to the time of living."

And the Lord of Souls and Dreams did as he said he would and the soul of the hawk returned to the body of the prince. When the princess saw him, she immediately recognised the hawk of her dreams.

With the prince returning to the time of the living, he retained the gaze of the hawk forever as a reminder of the long voyages of his soul as a hawk.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2010 for *The Emperor and the Rose*
- IBBY Honour List, 2012 for *The Emperor and the Rose*
- The Desetnica Award, 2011 for *The Emperor and the Rose*, 2007 for *Living House*
- Janusz Korczak Award, Poland, 2000 for *Pusspaw the Cat*
- Parole senza Frontiere, Italy, 2004 for *The Sprite with Ears Too*
- Poetry Gold Medal, 2018 for lifetime achievement

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2017 for *Magimathics*, 2011 for *Flower in the Heart*, 2009 for *Questions of the Heart*, 2004 for *The Extinguished Dragon*, 2002 for *Stolen Dreams*, 1999 for *Pusspaw the Cat*, 1997 for *The Clocks of King Min*
- The Desetnica Award, 2020 for *The Princess Beyond the Mirror,* 2017 for *Magimathicse*, 2015 for *A Boat of Stars*, 2014 for *A Tulip in Lov*, 2010 for *Questions of the Heart*, 2004 for *The Extinguished Dragon*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2014 for *Princess of the Heart*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2022 for *A Princess of Stony Words, Tiny Poems,* 2015 for *A Boat of Stars*, 2012 for *Rhymes of Silk*, 2011 for *Flower in the Heart*

Select Bibliography

- *Box of Blue Poppies* (*Skrinjica sinjega mleka*), Založba Pivec, 2022, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *Tiny Poems* (*Drobne pesmi*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2021, 13+, poetry
- *A Princess of Stony Words* (*Princesa kamnitih besed*), Miš založba, 2021, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *Poem in a Cloud* (*Pesem v oblačku*), Založba Pivec, 2020, 6+, poetry
- *The Princess Beyond the Mirror* (*Kraljična onkraj ogledala*), Založba Pivec, 2019, 6+, fairy tales
- *Magimathics* (*Čarimatika*), Založba Pivec, 2016, 6+, poetry
- *A Boat of Stars* (*Barka zvezd*), Obzorja, 2014, 13+, poetry
- *Rhymes of Silk* (*Svilnate rime*), MKZ, 2011, 9+, poetry
- *The Emperor and the Rose* (*Cesar in roža*), Miš založba, 2009, 13+, fairy tales
- *Pusspaw the Cat* (*Muc Mehkošapek*), Epta, 1998, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *The Clocks of King Min* (*Ure kralja Mina*), MKZ, 1996, 9+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

- English: *Kittysnippets*, Morfemplus, 2015, Slovenia
- Chinese: *Guowang yu meigui*, Xiaoduo Culture, 2014, China
- Croatian:
  - *Mačak Mucko*, Epta, 1998, Slovenia
  - *Bajka o svijetlosti,* Epta, 1998, Slovenia
- Italian: *Canto per una lira*, Bibliotheca Edizioni, 2018, Italy



A Fairy Tale about a Little Bear and a Girl



Rhymes of Silk



The Princess Beyond the Mirror

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Cvetka Bevc



This book is only seemingly about ethnic belonging. Such belonging is not in the forefront in this book. It is more a subtext that links in well with the common denominator of a variety of issues addressed in various ways, the personal freedom of a young woman in her relationship towards others.

(Ivana Zajc, review in the journal *Sodobnost*)

prose

Selected piece

***The Santa in My Ear* (*Božiček v ušesu*),** Maribor, Založba Pivec, 2018



The Santa in My Ear

background

The Santa in My Ear is a novel for young adults. It follows the story of fourteen-year-old Oya, who has recently broken her hand. Her life is quite vibrant anyway. Her mother is Slovene and her father is from Africa. She herself is white. Her story begins around Christmas in 1999 as a collage of the present and of reminiscences of past events that affected Oya in a particular way. She has been through a lot, military unrest in Nigeria, living as an émigré in London, arriving in Slovenia. Added to all this are the usual teenage troubles, searching for identity, along with family problems, first love and new friends.

Oya is excellent on the flute but her real passion are colours and painting. Is this also what the Santa that persistently seems to appear in her ear ever since her accident is trying to tell her?

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

Chapter 2

Sandcastle

Place: *Tarkwa Bay, Nigeria*
Date: *21 June 1993*
Narrator: *Oya, age 7*

"Three, two, one, now!" I shout. *Bàbá bàbá*, Grandpa Kalu turns the next bucket of sand upside down. The tower on the right side of the sandcastle is now even taller. Behind it I drew a whole line of animals with a stick in the sand. Hurrah, they look great! I stick the spade into the sand and am already filling the next bucket. Before *abiyamo*, my mummy, returns, we must build the most beautiful house. The largest house on the beach. Just as well there is this much sand on the beach and so many pebbles with which I can decorate it.

"*Bàbá bàbá*, what about also making a stable for the dinosaurs?" I ask, stroking my toy Stegosaurus.

Bàbá bàbá, who was about to run to the sea to get some water, stops. He nods. He immediately understands. You don't need to explain things to him twice. Or five times, like Daddy. Perhaps that's why Daddy is just plain *bàbá*.

"Do you know why the dinosaurs became extinct? Nobody built them a stable so they could keep warm. And it was really cold," I explain loudly even though Grandpa has already rushed off towards the large sea. The large sea is sometimes also called an ocean. *Òkun*. It is huge, so I have to be careful that my Stegosaurus doesn't drown in it. If it was wooden it would float. *Bàbá* told me that. He is friendly with wood. That is why he cuts various things out of wood. No, but my dinosaur will not die. I'll place him at the top of the tower. He'll have a nice view from there. But when he lived he was a huge dinosaur.

"His brain was the side of a hazelnut. He was stupid," Linan told me. Linan can sometimes be wicked. Even if he is my brother. And it was wicked to say that my Stegosaurus was stupid. He sometimes also tells me I'm stupid. He probably says that just because I'm *Oyibo*. White. White people used to lock up black people on boats. They were very wicked. My mother is also *Oyibo*, but like me, she too isn't wicked, apart from when she forces me to eat vegetable soup.

Grandpa Kalu brings the water. It's salty. It will make the walls even stronger. Nothing will demolish them. Not even the greatest storm. And the Stegosaurus will have a place where he can be safe.

"*Abiyamo* Vida is riding past on a jet ski. Wave to her!" Grandpa reminds me.

16+

"I will, Grandpa Kalu," I say and wave. I am not sure that the jet ski really is the one Mummy is using. She is too far away for me to see her light hair. And white skin that smells of honey. My mummy is beautiful.
It's funny. Grandpa calls her *abiyamo* Vida. He always calls her that. He uses a mix of a whole load of other words when he talks. Funny-sounding words. Such as *bàbá bàbá*. I like them. That's also why I also use them. They are Yoruba words. Not English. Even though some English words are just as funny. As if you are having the hiccups when you pronounce them. Linan does not get the hiccups when he talks to us the way he is taught in school. *Bàbá* says that that's the right way. That that is how we should talk. But the right way is also how I speak with Mummy. In Slovene. *Bàbá* is annoyed when Mummy and I talk Slovene in front of him. He only knows a few words. He never learnt it. He does not understand us then. And he says we are plotting against him. I don't really know what that means. Probably something bad. Because Daddy disapproves. A straight frown appears on his face. And then Mummy starts talking like Linan. English. I think she is afraid of that frown on Daddy's forehead.
Mummy came from another land. "My home is in a land far, far away," she says and as she stares across the ocean, she probably misses it. She showed me pictures of that far away land, Slovenia. Everything is green there. They call it 'Green Land'.

Nominations in the field of children's literature

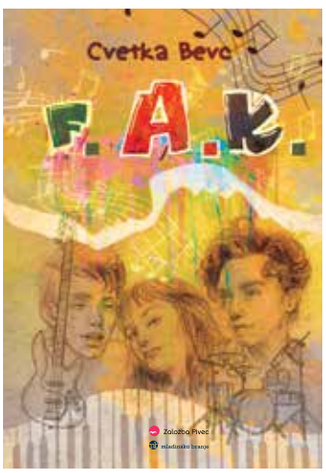
- The Večernica Award, 2012 for *The Mighty Ten*
- The Desetnica Award, 2020 for *The Santa in My Ear,* 2014 for *Chirped From Start to Finish*, 2012 for *The Mighty Ten*, 2011 for *Song for a Fairy*

Select Bibliography

- *O.M.G.* (*F.A.K.*), Založba Pivec, 2021, 16+, realistic novel
- *Glass Flames* (*Stekleni plameni*), Založba Pivec, 2020, 13+, realistic novel
- *Blue Honey* (*Modri med*), Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 2020, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *The Santa in My Ear (Božiček v ušesu*), Založba Pivec, 2018, 16+, realistic novel
- *Chirped From Start to Finish* (*Čivknjeno od začetka do konca*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2013, 9+, fantasy fiction
- *Deliberation* (*Razmislek*), Morfem, 2013, under 6, realistic fiction, picture book
- *Slavica the Chicken/Vladimir the Cockerel* (*Kokoška Slavica/Petelin Vladimir*), KUD Sodobnost International, 2012, 6+, fairy tale, picture book
- *The Mighty Ten* (*Desetka*), Arsem, 2010, 16+, realistic fiction
- *Song for a Fairy* (*Pesem za vilo*), Vodnikova založba, 2009, 6+, fantasy fiction
- *Mica the Squirrel and Other Fairy Tales From the Green Forest* (*Veverica Mica in druge pravljice iz Zelenega gozda*), Didakta, 2009, under 6, fantasy fiction



Deliberation



O.M.G.



Glass Flames

Published in foreign languages:

- Portuguese: *O Cantinho da Reflexão*, Editora Rideeli, 2013, Brazil
- bilingual Slovene-English edition: *Song for a Fairy / Pesem za vilo*, Vodnikova založba (DSKG), 2009, Slovenia
- English, German, Italian: *Zaki the Swan Finds His Parents, Zaki der Schwan findet seine Eltern, Il cigno Zaki ritrova i genitori*, Sava, 2008, Slovenia

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cvetka.bevc@gmail.com

16+

Mateja Gomboc



The social-psychological YA novel *A Ballad for the Tree* is a poignant tale of love and death, drawing the reader into a whirlwind of dark but also beautiful moments. /…/ Music holds a special place in the story, music that Ada interprets, thinks about, feels.

(from the award justification for the 2022 Desetnica Award)

prose

Selected piece

***A Ballad for the Tree (Balada o drevesu)*, Dob, Miš založba, 2021**



A Ballad for the Tree

background

The novel is written in the form of a first-person confession of a high school girl Ada, who is one Tuesday hit by a tragedy - her boyfriend Mike commits suicide. /…/ The Ballad of the Tree is a shocking, exceptionally powerful book about dealing with a loss, trying to accept the unacceptable, and understand the incomprehensible. (Miš založba)

excerpt

(translated by Tom Smith)

When I got off the bus, Mike was standing at the bus stop. My legs went soft, like they were holding up something extremely heavy. He approached me. The sky was leaking humungous snowflakes and my trembling hands fiddled to get the umbrella open. He snatched it from me as nonchalantly as if it were the easiest manoeuvre on earth, saying that he was there now to shelter us both under my polka dot umbrella.

"I've been waiting for you," he said, one hand already holding the umbrella above our heads. A simple task, since he was a good head taller. His other hand then slid across my shoulders and casually flipped us in the direction of the school.

"You've been waiting? For me?" I squeaked. My heart was pounding so hard it felt like it could easily burst out of my chest. It was all happening so fast, that for a second, I wished I was back in my room, behind closed doors, reading those letters I kept hidden behind my pullovers at the back of the wardrobe, in the tranquil silence of my girlish dreams.

"Yes, waiting for you. I figured out which bus you take to school. If you'd gotten off any previous bus, you'd see me waiting right here. In other words, I was going to wait as long as it took for you to arrive."

"And why exactly are you waiting for me?" I suddenly felt exceptionally weak. It was as if I hadn't eaten breakfast and then went on a ten-mile run. Or as if I had instantaneously come down with a strong fever. His hand, which was now dangling across my back and resting comfortably on my right shoulder, felt heavy yet suspiciously light at the same time. It felt like it was pulling on my mind, preventing me from focusing on anything else. He was so close I could smell him. His scent was a blend of washing detergent and toothpaste. Nothing more, nothing less. It was as if only he could smell like that.

"Because I wanted to see you," he replied. Calmy, as if it was the most logical reply in the history of calm, logical replies.

"Yeah, we haven't seen each other in a while," was my attempt at a casual response.

"The last time I saw you was that time at the lockers, just before the holidays." He paused for a moment and looked at me. "I was consoling Jasmine. She'd just found out her older sister had bone marrow cancer. You walked by. It was the first time I'd seen you in forever. Perfect timing, ay? I couldn't leave Jasmine there alone, and I didn't have your number, so I couldn't call you to explain the situation, and I felt that texting you on Messenger would have been kind of lame.

"Jasmine. Cancer. And me, an idiot of unfathomable proportions.

My next thought was: Maybe he was lying. Maybe he had a thing for making girls cry just to comfort them, and I was his next victim. I didn't care. Mike was there now, his

16+

hand resting on my shoulder, and he was walking me to school under my umbrella.
Nah, he couldn't have made up that bit about Jasmine. Bone marrow cancer is no joke. If it were an excuse, it would have been a remarkably morbid one.
My legs returned to normal. I could now focus my efforts on covering up the relief his words had triggered, as well as the shame I felt for my lack of empathy towards the poor girl receiving such tragic news.
"Anyway, I was beginning to wonder if you were still going to our school at all. I was so glad to see you. That's why I was waiting at the bus stop. I wanted to tell you that," he added.

Awards in the field of children's literature

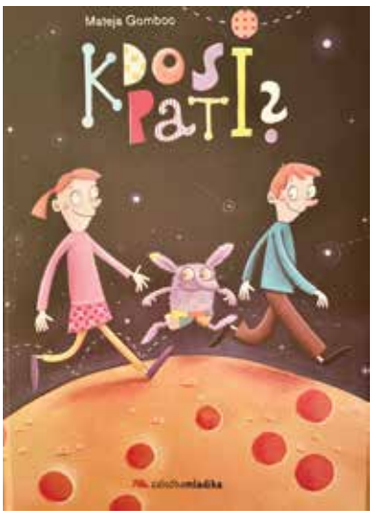
- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *A Ballad for the Tree*

Select Bibliography

- *Borrowed Grandma Stefi* (*Sposojena babica Štefi*), Miš založba, 2022, 13+, realistic novel
- *A Ballad for the Tree* (*Balada o drevesu*), Miš založba, 2022 (first edition 2021), 16+, realistic novel
- *And Who Are You?* (*Kdo si pa ti?*), Mladika, 2014, short realistic stories, picture book
- *My Name is Jon* (*Ime mi je Jon*), Mladika, 2013, 16+, realistic novel



My Name is Jon



And Who Are You?



Borrowed Grandma Stefi

16+

Neli Kodrič Filipić



Through a disarray of events we discover the life stories and interpersonal relationships of a group of teenagers. The author concentrates on the girls in the group, especially their experiences of sexuality and sexual identity. A novel about young people in contemporary society without values, about wandering and searching for meaning where a lack of spiritual support and love leads to listlessness and wrong decisions.

(from the literary portal dobre knjige.si)

prose

Selected piece

Front (Fronta), Ljubljana, Cankarjeva založba, 2021



Front

background

A novel about five high school friends during the summer holidays, their interpersonal relationships, daily socialising, a wild party, and also about embarrassments, lies, things they don't speak about openly, their competitiveness and search for strength. Beyond the superficial story that revolves around a smart phone radio app called Front through which the friends are connected, this is a story about sexual identities, social relationships, the vulnerability of young people online and seeking their place in society. The story, mostly pinned to the Front application and the youths following an interesting stranger, takes place in a town but a series of coincidences brings the friends to a remote hut where they are left without the use of their smart phones. When they are due to return home, it turns out that Front was more than a fun app, and that it had also been covertly recording them all the time. Their illusions are shattered but, hurt and affected by what happened, it gives them an opportunity to truly mature.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

The reflections in the window panes of the town houses are like squinting glimpses of the setting sun. The scorching asphalt and the burnt grass under their feet both smell of earthly resin. Hands sweating, droplets gathering above the upper lip, abstract wet patches on their T-shirts above their sweating backs, unuttered words, all of this is part of the same thing – a kind of wayward necessity without a purpose. At times they talk to each other, at times just silently as they walk alongside each other. They have no plan, don't have to get to anywhere specific. All this restlessness, the tattered thoughts that form their words, and the supressed feelings that occasionally affect a gesture, draw an expression on their faces – there are so many things to experience. Adventures are a prey that likes to hide, you need to find it, claim it as your own; it doesn't matter if in doing so you occasionally get wounded, not to badly, just enough so you can still lick the wound clean, get over it, and proudly show the scars as proof of your strength. This strength is unpredictable – when you most need it, it lies low, only to burst out later, when you have already forgotten about it, with unwarranted arrogance. Life is hard, but it is even harder to control all the forces that shape you, sit at the helm of a *no-ocean liner*, sailing through nothing, not knowing anything, understanding even less – and at the same time pretend that everything is under control, that you are actually going somewhere.

"Hey, hey, what do we have here?" Beno points at a wooden jetty constructed above the surface of the river. They stop to check out the scene.

"I know the guy over there by sight. He isn't from our school. What a company," Karlo whistles.

"Is that girl over there in blue not…" Soška tries to recall her name.

"Monika," Luka helps her.

"Terrible, and this is supposed to be a party?" Soška sneers.

"Selected disaster," Beno mocks.

"The music is fine, though," Vanja carefully mentions. He is never sure how Soška will react to anything, whether she will belittle or praise something.

"Like listening to my list from Front," she seems to approve this time.

16+

"Perhaps they are,"
"These dorks? Don't think so."
"There also have some kind of barbeque going. Can't you *hear* the smell?" Beno boxes Karlo's shoulder.
"I hear it. It's wafting all the way here, mate!"
"Come on," Luna decides, "let's check this out. You're just jealous."
"Yes, we're bored to death anyway. Can't be worse than nothing down there,"
Soška agrees.
They slowly descend the concrete embankment, waiting with a little uncertainty for someone to turn towards them, wave at them and invite them down to the jetty. But it doesn't happen. Soška knows how to handle such situations. She wiggles her hips, raises her hand in the air, throws back her head, "So, let's jive!" She takes Luna's hand. Luna can't be bothered, looks awkward. The group down on the jetty are dancing rather sluggishly, swaying to the music, making sure they don't spill their drinks in plastic cups. Beno puts down the old tape recorder he has been patiently carrying along for Soška. He grabs Soška, twists and turns her, swings and catches her, making her shriek. Her T-shirt inflates like an umbrella in the wind. And the kid's down on the jetty notice them. Someone turns up the volume, the energy increases.
Soška drags Beno down to where the other kids are dancing. They make some space on the jetty. Nobody objects, a kind of leisurely tenderness seems to prevail among them, and openness that is not merely due to the gin and plastic bottles of tonic that are cooling submerged in the water. "Soška!" someone calls her. When she turns round she sees a smiley face and a hand offering her a shot. "Want some? It's all free today." Soška takes the drink, of course she does, who would say no to free drinks.
"Hey, what about me!" Beno demands, not wanting to miss an opportunity, especially not one that was free. He waves at Karlo, "Come on, mate, we've come across a kind of mini Communism here, all good stuff, all for everyone!" Karlo joins them and also gets offered a shot.
"What's going on, folk? Whose party is this?" Soška looks around. At first nobody answers, as if they are not interested. She insists, always wanting to know everything, and one of the kids points to someone on the dance floor. 'Daddy said he could have a coming of age party,' he explains. Soška waves her hand dismissively, all that matters is that it's a party.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- Kiklop Award (Croatia) for picture book of the year, 2009 for *The Little Girl and the Giant*
- Lice Knjige Award (Croatia), 2009 for *The Little Girl and the Giant*
- The Levstik Award, 1995 for *Star Hunting*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2014 for *Tears are For Losers*, 2012 for *Can I Give You a Big Hug?*, 2004 for *On the Other Side*
- The Desetnica Award, 2022 for *Front,* 2018 for *Tell Me the Truth*, 2017 *Fire*
- The Levstik Award, 2017 for *Tell Me the Truth*
- The Modra Ptica Award, 2016 for *Tell Me the Truth*
- The Kristina Brenkova Original Slovene Picture Book Award, 2010 for *The Little Girl and the Giant*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2017 for *The Fire*, 2016 for *Sneaker*, 2010 for *The Little Girl and the Giant*



Can I Give You a Big Hug?

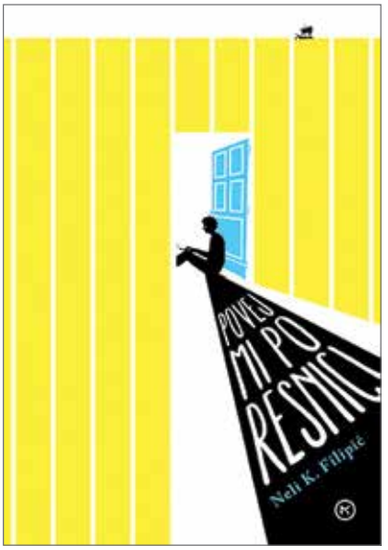
16+

Select Bibliography

- *Who's to Blame the Winter Being White and Other Stories (Kdo je kriv, da je zima bela in druge zgodbe),* Založba Pivec, 2022, 6+, short realistic fiction
- *Front* (*Fronta*), Cankarjeva založba, 2021, 16+, realistic novel
- *Tell Me the Truth* (*Povej mi po resnici*), MKZ, 2017, 16+, realistic novel
- *Fire* (*Požar*), MKZ, 2016, 6+, realistic fiction, picture book
- *Tears Are for Losers* (*Solze so za luzerje*), MKZ, 2013, 13+, novel
- *Can I Give You a Big Hug?* (*Ali te lahko objamem močno*), MKZ, 2010, 6+, realistic fiction, picture book
- *The Little Girl and the Giant* (*Punčka in velikan*), MKZ, 2009, 6+, realistic fiction, picture book
- *What's Love Got to Do with It* (*Kaj ima ljubezen s tem*), MKZ, 2009, 13+, realistic novel
- *49:03:39* (*49:03:39*), MKZ, 2008, 13+, fantastic novel
- *On the Other Side* (*Na drugi strani*), MKZ, 2004, 13+, fantastic novel
- *Star Hunting* (*Lov na zvezde*), MKZ, 1995, 13+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

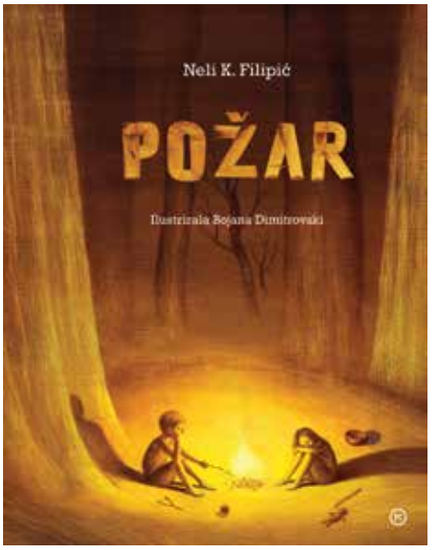
- Croatian: *Djevojčica i div*, Mozaik knjiga, 2009, Croatia
- Korean: *Can I Give You a Big Hug?,* The Choice Maker, 2012, Korea



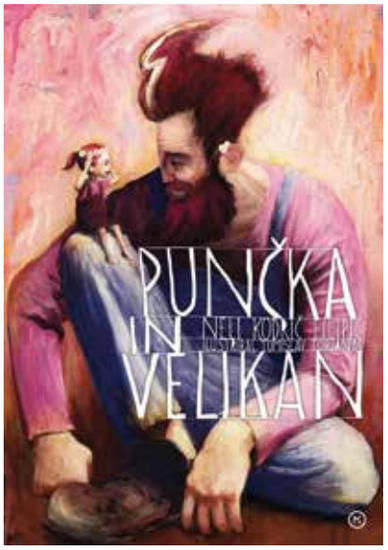
Tell Me the Truth



Tears Are for Losers



Fire



The Little Girl and the Giant



Who's to Blame the Winter Being White and Other Stories

e-mail (author):
neli.filipic@guest.arnes.si

Marjana Moškrič



prose

Marjana Moškrič's novel about three teenagers is essentially a love story – a story of coming closer and moving apart, of emotional maturing, finding a path into adulthood, justifiably expanding into the time before – to the stories of their parents, in which lie the roots of their traumas. [...] It links very well into the protest movement that places the novel into our time.

(from the award justification for the 2016 Desetnica Award)

Among all the symbolic improvers of the world that human minds have come up with throughout history, mythological, religious, philosophical and artistic, redemptive, cyclical, enlightened or fairy tale, we do not often hear about the White Štrped. The furry body of a dormouse, wings of a falcon and the eyes of a bird of prey with leaves of the ash tree sticking out of its ears – with these attributes is appears unusual, somewhat melded and even its name is not the among the softest sounding soteriological appellations of its kind. *Štrped*. Yet it is precisely this (externally) eclectic being, found in tales from Karst around Podgorje and Čičarija, that contemporary society might need, that can still bring is some relatively good news. [...] With its described complexity the novel convinced this year's jury for the Desetinca Award, and within the scope of the project 'Growing With Books' (*Rastem s knjigo*) every first-year student at secondary schools will receive a copy. Let us hope that, among the other topical themes they might find in book, they might also recognise in the tiny white creature a cosmopolitan message so relevant to today's world: "Do you know what I wish? To look at a piece of sky. Not my sky, or yours or theirs. It's *our* sky I wish for."

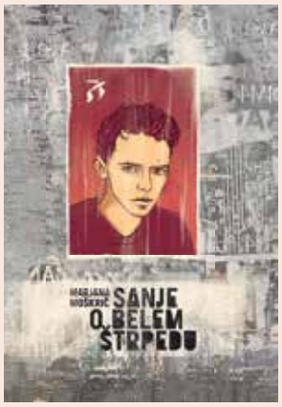
(Alenka Urh, review in the journal *Sodobnost*)

Selected piece

***Dreams of the White Štrped* (Sanje o belem štrpedu)*, Murska Sobota, Franc-Franc, 2015; and Maribor, Litera, 2016**

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

* translator's note: a *štrped* is a mythical creature from the Karst area. It is said to look a little like a dormouse but has wings in place of its front limbs. It is shy, sleeps through the day and flies around at night. In traditional folk tales the White Štrped brought good to people; its opposite, the Black Štrped brought misery and misfortune.



Dreams of the White Štrped

background

Interwoven into the compact, realistic story of the novel *Dreams of the White Štrped* is the tale alluded to in the title about the white and the black Štrped, about hope and fairness as well as injustice and evil, conveyed to the reader by three first-person narrators, Šona (Sonja), Olmo in Sine (Siniša). The novel addresses the topical, socially critical theme of social exclusion and a young teenage girl's intimate paths of growing up. The three narrators also represent three viewpoints of telling the story or three truths: the reader soon realises that their stories are true even if they are not identical. Once more it becomes clear that there is more than one truth about the same thing, depending on the amount of information available to the narrator. This is also a cause of disagreements, misunderstandings and the silence between the two main protagonists, Šona and Olmo. Their love has difficulties overcoming the artificially created border and the differences this border brings to their lives. The literary space is not given a geographical name, making it even more universal. The same town is being split into two parts: the Zone (poverty) and Green Grove (abundance). The two spaces become entirely separate, as if they had not had a common past. Similarly separated are the people. Is money really the only measure? The novel opens up numerous questions, their answers hide in each one of us and our attitude towards the world.

16+

excerpt

Black Caps

The caps were something Great-Nona had knitted for us. They were head-hugging hats without a pompom. Every year she would knit them for us and they would await us under her Christmas tree.

The first three were like little wonders, knitted from wool of various colours. Rainbow hats as if from a fairy tale. No wonder we believed the Štrped would recognise us in them.

Then, year after year, new ones would appear, always different colours, and we impatiently expected them, wondering, *What would they be like this year?*

They were of all colours. They became something of a phenomenon at school, perhaps even of the Zone. We didn't go anywhere without them. In our fight with the Dragons we wore the red ones. Mine disappeared. I looked for it outside school later but it was not there. I suspected Mother of throwing it away.

When Sine and I were in ninth grade and Olmo at secondary school we were no longer interested in surprises and in any case, we had been through so many colours that there was only one we had not had. Black.

"These will be for my funeral," Great-Nona told us when we told her what we wanted.

She was already all frail and dried up. She talked less and less. When she did, it was mostly to herself, grunting and mumbling.

Gran called this Great-Nona's babble. Her knitting needles clanked quietly as she mumbled, "Black darkness, terrible climb, terrible snow falls, black as grime. Squat and squell and squoll and squill, who is it who dares climb up the hill," as she sat, tiny, ancient as the Earth itself on the chair in the corner.

"This won't be good, not good at all, my children," she would say like some witch, a creature from some other time and space. "Black times, black shadows, black forces are all over, the Earth is sinking into them, black times all over, lighting point the finger to evil, hocus-pocus, evil's gone!" she kept repeating as she knitted the black caps.

She would say it over and over again. I sat there close to her, listening.

At the time a lot of work was being done around the Institute. Even at night. The bright spotlights that lit up the Institute and its surroundings gave off so much light that at night it looked like some kind of illuminated dome and Great-Nona's room looked out towards it. It made her restless.

"That's Evil awakening, my children, wickedness is getting wings," she kept repeating.

"Poor Great-Nona," we were all worried about her.

She died that spring and the black caps she had knitted really were for her funeral.

Sleeping Recipe

I somehow coped during the day. But at night… I just couldn't sleep. I had not been able to sleep ever since we moved. I was like a zombie. Mother took me to see a doctor. Sleeping pills and a referral to the psychologist.

"There's no way I'm going," I protested and promised her I would take the pills.

"Did you take the pills? Did you sleep last night?" she kept asking me.

My Mum! Making me take pills and threatening me with a shrink. She should know. Did she think I would just take them all and forget? At night it all resurfaced and choked me.

"I did!" I would say and to begin with I did but felt dizzy and had a headache all day. It made it all worse. Then I started throwing them in the toilet. I'd rather not sleep, I decided.

Things were as they were before but I still felt a little better. All those nights… Silence… And then the morning coming so slowly. Silence. Loneliness. What is Olmo doing now? Where is Sine? Is Nona asleep or does she too suffer from sleeplessness? Occasionally I slept a little, most of the time I didn't.

That October night I could not take it any longer. It was two o'clock. I decided I would go out. I got dressed, put my cap on my head and my hood, and sneaked out barefoot holding my sneakers. Outside I put them on and ran off.

I did not think at all, just ran. Silence. Peace. A true autumn idyll. Leaves, half-barren trees. I just ran… Wherever my legs took me. Indulged as I ran, and ran… Black darkness, terrible climb, terrible snow falls, black as grime. Squat and squell and squoll and squill, who is it who dares climb up the hill, as so often, Great-Nona's poem helped me switch off. As I ran, and ran… I suddenly found myself in the middle of the Zone. My legs and heart knew where I belonged. I ran along the abandoned and silent Zone, then I turned around and ran back. I fell asleep like a log.

That was my first night run.

The following night I slept. What a relief. Then I ran again. Every second night.

Sometimes I would see someone. Sometimes hear someone. I was faster and faster… Like the breeze, like the wind, like lightning. I avoided the Ring and its surroundings. Clearly it was the only lively place in these late nightly hours.

The Zone was desolate, wrapped in silence, as if it were dying out. Is this really its end? All those rumours…

Here and there I would come across the raging or screaming of madmen.

I was a shadow, as spirit… A little more and I will fly. With the Štrped if it appears.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2003 for *Ice Magnolias*
- The Desetnica Award, 2016 for *Dreams of the White Štrped*, 2009 for *The Thing*
- Best Debut Novel Award, 1998 for *Smoky Quartz*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2005 for *Ice Magnolias*

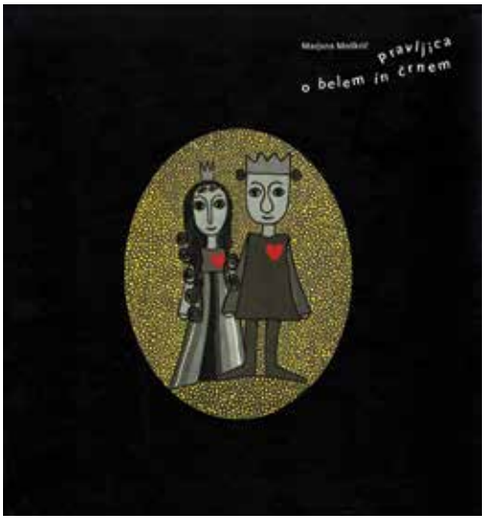
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- *Dreams of the White Štrped** (*Sanje o belem štrpedu*), Litera, 2016 (first edition 2015), 16+, realistic novel
- *About the Grey City and the Black Flower* (*O sivem mestu in črni roži*), Genija 2008, 9+ fantasy fiction, picture book
- *The Thing* (*Stvar*), Družba Piano, 2009 (first edition 2007), 13+ fantastic fiction
- *Ice Magnolias* (*Ledene magnolije*), Cankarjeva založba, 2007 (first edition 2002 and reprints), 16+, realistic novel
- *A Fairy Tale About Black and White* (*Pravljica o belem in črnem*), Franc-Franc, 2004, 9+ fantasy fiction, picture book
- *A Journey Into the Past* (*Potovanje v nekoč*), Karantanija, 2001, 9+ fantasy fiction
- *Smoky Quartz* (*Čadavec*), Franc-Franc, 1998, 16+, realistic novel

* see selected piece above for an explanation of the word *Štrped*

Published in foreign languages:

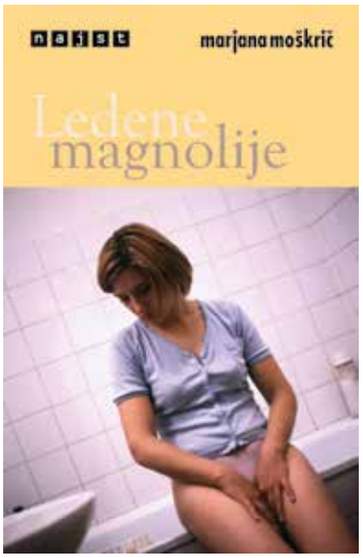
- Croatian: *Ledene magnolije*, Mozaik knjiga, 2005, Croatia



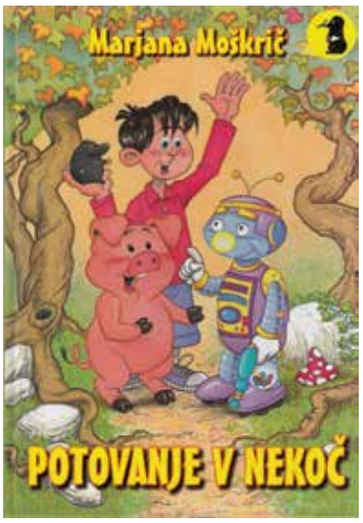
A Fairy Tale About Black and White



The Thing



Ice Magnolias



A Journey Into the Past



About the Grey City and the Black Flower

e-mail (author):
marjana.moskric@gmail.com

16+

Damijan Šinigoj



Among teenagers the theme of proving one's worth is probably as old as humanity itself, as is testing the boundaries, trying things that are forbidden. The novel, set in contemporary society, looks at these through an adventure story. /…/ A set of circumstances and assumptions links the stories of three missing people with the author in an unobtrusive way also highlighting the problems of pollution and the selfless voluntary work of rescuers.

(from the award justification for the 2021 Desetnica Award)

prose

Selected piece

Where the Wind Sleeps (Kjer veter spi), Dob: Miš založba, 2020



Where the Wind Sleeps

background

If this story that takes place in one of the hundreds of Slovene caves would have been written by someone who was just a cave explorer, they would have possibly have offered readers a text that was accurate from a speleological point of view but lacked any notable literary charge. In his YA novel, Damijan Šinigoj, an experienced writer as well as an experienced speleologist, set about the task rather differently, creating out of a simple idea a story about a young girl taken into a cave by a novice speleologist that turns into a true adventure. The unexpected and potentially dangerous turn of events brings the two protagonists closer. To the playful story about a challenge that the two face, the author has also added a story describing the work of the cave rescue service as they search for a missing forest warden. The gripping story offers at least two happy ends.

excerpt

(translated by Gregor Timothy Čeh)

"In fact it is a very beautiful cave," Irena admitted after they had been walking for a while.
Blaž, who was walking in front of her stopped and his face momentarily glowed with pride. "Yes, it is, that's why I chose it. There's a little action at the beginning that gets your blood rushing, then you need to make a little effort to get through the narrow part before it opens up and gradually becomes more impressive…"
"Just like a woman," said Irena, laughing. "You won't get one straight away and easily, we always pretend to be *hard to get*, and when things begin getting serious, we make ourselves prettier, raising expectations…"
"I wouldn't know," he said cheerfully as they continued walking. "I only ever get as far as the *hard to get* part, to *talk to my hand because I'm not listening*…"
"That I absolutely don't agree with," she rejected him in all seriousness. "Just look, with me you've already reached the part where I am making an effort to be prettier just for you!"

Blaž turned towards her and was about to protest but burst into laughter instead. Irena had mud all over her face, the lock of hair that normally very artfully hung across her right eyebrow was now annoyingly flapping right in front of her eye, untamed, muddy and hard, sticking out from under the helmet at a strange angle. And she coquettishly tilted her head, blinking flirtatiously.
"Can't you see I made an effort just for you?" she asked him, still serious, then burst into laughter herself and tucked the muddy lock back under her helmet.
"Quite acceptable for a first date," Blaž laughed. "Hang on, let me make myself pretty for your too…"
He used his muddy glove to draw a moustache under his nose. He too tilted his head, pouted, pulled a face and fluttered his eyelashes as he gazed at Irena.
"Will that do?"
For a while they laughed uncontrollably, then their laughter slowly died down. In silence they walked onwards through the ever-wider shaft, opening after a while into a vast cave decorated with limestone formations. The light from their lamps did not reach as far as the end of the cave.

16+

Irena looked left, right, up and down in awe. She was ecstatic.
"Wow," she sighed. "Now I understand speleologists…"
They stood at the edge of the cavern, admiring it in silence.
"Well, this is what I wanted to show you," he said proudly. "This was where we would have our snack lunch, take a few selfies…"
He fell silent.
"Blaž," she said quietly after a while. "Thank you. Really, I mean it!"
"For lunch?" he smiled bitterly to himself.
"For this," she replied and pointed to the cavern. "We can have our snack when we get back outside…"
*
"Irena," he called her, unable to hide his excitement. "I think that I can feel a stronger draught from this meander…"
She quickly crawled closer to him on her knees.
"Where?" she asked excitedly.
He pointed to a crack.
"Oh," her excitement immediately faded. "I can't even get my hand through that…"
She lay back down on her side.
"I think there are some muddy traces on the wall," said Blaž. "That means someone was in there!"
Irena lay there and didn't react. Blaž licked his finger and held it up to the narrow meander. He could feel the cold on it. There was definitely a draught. He went down on his knees and calmly crawled past Irena a few metres further back the shaft. He once again licked his finger and held it in front of him. He could still feel the slight movement of air on his face but the finger wasn't as cold as it had been in the crack. He hurried back to the crack and once again held his wet finger up to check the draught. He could no longer hide his enthusiasm.
"There's a draught," he said excitedly. "There really is! And I even noticed a bat before, flying into the gap!"
Irena pushed her way along on her knees and looked into the meander. She did not share his excitement.
"Blaž, even if there is a draught, we can't go in here!"
Blaž was not put off.
"Irena, look, those are definitely boot prints!"
"Right, and?" she was sceptical.
"It means it's possible," Blaž cried out. "I will go and try."
/…/
He yelled out.
"Irena, right after the bend, about a metre further, this thing widens up! And the draught is stronger, it feels quite cold!"
"Should I come in after you?" she asked worriedly.
"Yes, come along, I think this is it," he sounded convinced. "I don't think that anyone with their head screwed on would push through such a narrow gap if they didn't know it lead somewhere…"
He laughed. When you push into such a narrow gap you can't know if it leads somewhere, he thought to himself, you only find out once you get through it. With his foot he felt for another protrusion in the rock and pushed a little further, his head now right at the bend.

Awards in the filed of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2021 for *Where the Wind Sleeps*

Nomination in the filed of children's literature

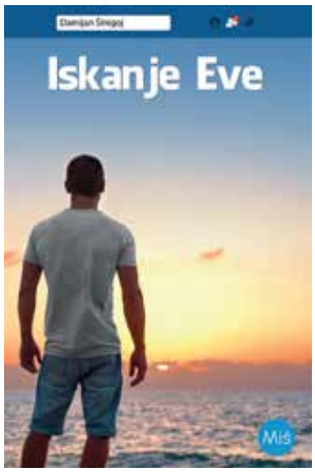
- The Večernica Award, 2021 for *Where the Wind Sleeps*, 2015 *Looking for Eve*
- The Desetnica Award, 2016 for *Looking for Eve*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2021 for *Where the Wind Sleeps*, 2015 *Looking for Eve*

Bibliografija

- *Where the Wind Sleeps* (*Kjer veter spi*), Miš založba, 2021 (first edition 2020 and reprints), 16+, realistic novel
- *Looking for Eve* (*Iskanje Eve*), Miš založba, 2016 (first edition 2014), 13+, realistic novel

Objave v tujih jezikih

- Lithuanian: *Evos beieškant*, Gelmes, 2019, Litva



Looking for Eve

e-mail (author):
damijan@sinigoj.si

16+

Suzana Tratnik



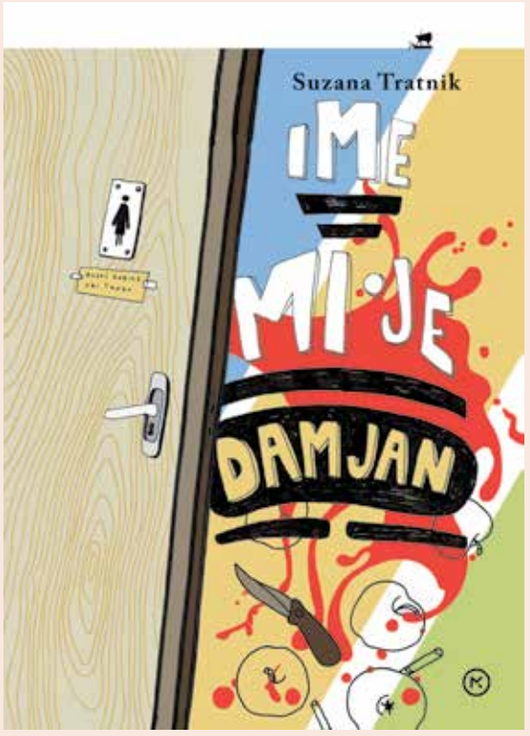
prose

It is not only in disintegrating families that problems appear. They can just as easily surface in quite ordinary, traditional families. The two-parent family with classical repressive upbringing in Suzana Tratnik's novel *My Name Is Damian* is a place of violence and dissatisfaction of all family members - the father, the mother and the three children. Damian, the main character, lives in a patriarchal family where the mother does not have the right to make decisions, and at the same time her husband's aggression serves her as an excuse for her own apathy and silent consent to her husband's wrong decisions. We find out about the difficulties in Damian's life through his humorous disclosure at a self-help group that he has joined at the insistence of his parents. As a child Damien was pleasant and calm but as he grew up he became more and more like his brother, the rebellious troublemaker and loafer. When the brother leaves the family where he never felt comfortable, Damian is lost, finding that he has lost his only support in the family. The reader gradually finds out that behind Damian's nonchalance, aggression and humour lie complicated secrets that the narrator cannot or does not want to reveal, mentioning them only as a lump in the throat or a strange feeling in the stomach. [...]Throughout the novel this communication blockade is described and discussed in various ways but is not commented upon, so the reader is able, with the reconstruction of the story, to also imagine the family alienation.

(Alojzija Zupan Sosič, *Družina v sodobnem slovenskem romanu / The Family in Contemporary Slovene Fiction*)

Selected piece

***My Name Is Damian* (*Ime mi je Damjan*)**, Ljubljana, ŠKUC, 2001; and Ljubljana, MKZ, 2014



My Name Is Damian

Terra Rossa

excerpt

(translated by Špela Bibič)

But that rarely happens to me, seeing everything red, I'm no junkie. Well, except for the things that are actually red and that everybody sees as red. That earth looks red to anyone. The soil at the seaside is red. It's red in July and August, and probably in winter too, it's red even when it's covered in snow. I often think about that red soil.

Anyway, I've gone completely off topic. One of the reasons I got drunk that night at the club was because I was on my own, without Nela. It was after that huge fight with Sine, Brine and Joc when I first ran into her at the fag club. I was really surprised to see her there, I thought she was normal. She told me she'd had several girlfriends and so she went there. At first, I was so jealous at all the lesbians at the club I didn't know what to do. But after three or four beers, I finally got up the courage to ask her if she meant what she'd said that time at Sine's party about liking me best. She said that she meant it. Every word of it. After that, I was a regular at the club, I was there every single Sunday, not giving a damn what people thought or what the Moste crowd would say if they saw me with her. Sometimes, I was even proud to have her by

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my side. And she never pried and, unlike everybody else, didn't try to brainwash me and maybe that's why I told her a lot myself. I even told her my real name and, every now and then, I let her call me by it. She was the first person I ever met for coffee in broad daylight without having had anything to drink and without Roki to lean on. No one was there to watch out for me when I met up with her, stone-cold sober. At the beginning, I stared down at the table rather than her, and did more listening than talking. But it was nice, I don't know, completely different than usual. She told me she was no longer just a hairdresser, she was going to college and might become a social worker someday. Not that I get why anyone would want to be a social worker. Still, it's a living. She told me everything: about her sisters, her parents, the great loves of her life. I told her all about my large extended family and how we didn't really get along at home. I even told her I was seeing a shrink, although I'm usually very secretive about it, not even Roki knows all the details. And so, on Sundays, I lived only for Nela and completely forgot about everybody else. If she couldn't make it, I just got hammered with Roki.

But I still think a lot about that red soil.

"Look," said Nela, stooping. More and more often, she'd discover and observe things that no one else paid attention to – she must've gotten that from school. Her delicate hand sifted through the dirt, picking out the needles. She scooped up a handful of the red Mediterranean soil, stood up and held out her hand. She was rarely that cheerful. But for me, she was sometimes happy for me. She spread her palm and the red soil ran through her slender fingers. "*Terra rossa*," she said. I loved to fantasise that she sometimes glowed in my presence like that red soil in the sun. Well, when I have enough sleep and no one's pissing me off, I can be kind of romantic, too.

"What?" I asked for no particular reason, not knowing what to say.

"*Terra rossa*. When you take your geography exam, think of the sea and *terra rossa*. Then you know almost everything there is to know about geography. Really!"

"*Terra rossa*," I said.

It sounded so nice. Red and nice. She laughed and took my hand, as if she was going to kiss it. I immediately looked over my shoulder a little nervous – you never know when you might run into a friend or someone from work. After all, the beach is not that far from Ljubljana. I'm already the talk of the town; I don't need this on top of everything else. People won't leave me alone as it is. I don't like stuff going round about me that isn't true. I have no idea what people think when they look at me or when they hear me talk, but I feel normal. I'm not pretending to be something and I'm not playing dress-up, I've been like this practically all my life. I'm not trying to hide who I am either, but I don't feel the need to tell people anything about me. If I say I'm Damian, everyone's happy, including me. And even if they find out later I'm actually a woman, it's too late for them to have second thoughts or change their minds, so they tend to accept me as I am. I usually don't have any problems with the way I look, as I've said plenty of times. (Even when Sine, Brine and Joc got on my case for 'pretending' to be a man, I didn't take them all that seriously. They were only teasing me because they were high and pissed off. Once they blew off some steam, they went back to accepting me for who I was. Anyway, we're not close anymore.) When I open my mouth, people soften up. I can be funny, that is, when I'm in a good mood. And I'm in a good mood most of the time. I can't stand boring people and I can't stand pouters. Nela used to pout sometimes, though not right at the beginning – you learn way too much about people if you get to know them too well. That's why I don't let anyone learn too much about me. So that they don't get fed up with me too fast.

But I gave her that ring because she wrote to me so many times. I'd had people write to me before, but never that kind of stuff. I don't know, I would get an occasional postcard from my brother in Germany, but that was for the whole family, not just me. Or, in the mornings, I would sometimes find a note from my dad that read something like, "Buy bread and keep hands off." That simply meant that I wasn't supposed to touch their bread, that I had to look after myself if I was going to do things my way. So naturally, I'd eat it. But they knew I'd always do what I wasn't supposed to. I've always been like that, I don't know why, or why my parents never got that. If my dad was smart, he would write, "Just take the bread." And then I wouldn't touch it. But we never had the kind of conversations that would lead me to tell him about myself – not that I'd want to.

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Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Desetnica Award, 2018 for *Bingo or Life!*
- The Prešeren Fund Award, 2007 for the collection of short stories *Parallels*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

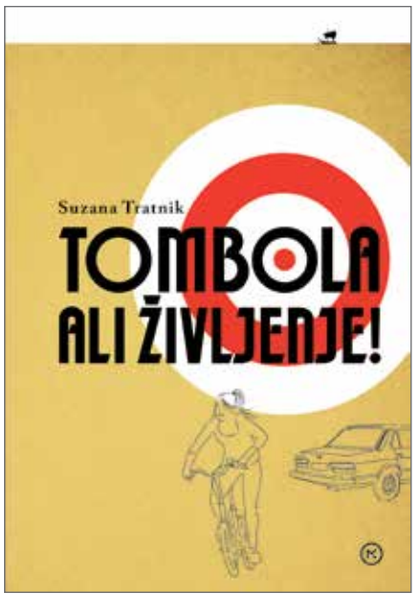
- Golden Pear Quality Badge: 2022 for *Ava*
- The Večernica Award, 2018 for *Bingo or Life!*
- The Desetnica Award, 2011 for *Hanny Rattie*

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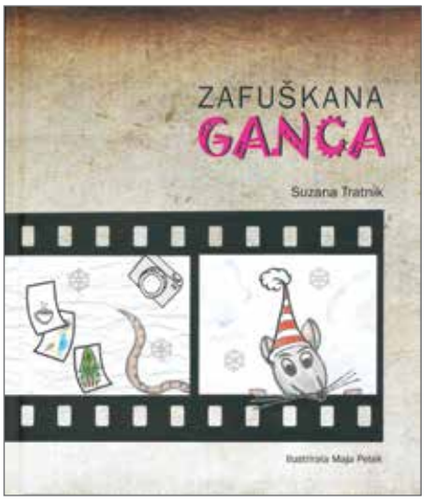
- *Ava* (*Ava*), MKZ, 2021, 16+, realistic novel
- *Bingo or Life!* (*Tombola ali življenje!*), MKZ, 2017, 16+, realistic novel
- *No Voice* (*Noben glas*), Beletrina, 2016, 16+, short realistic prose
- *My Name Is Damian (Ime mi je Damjan)*, MKZ 2014 (first edition ŠKUC, 2001), 16+, realistic novel
- *Hanny Rattie* (*Zafuškana Ganca*), Litera, 2010, 6+, fantasy fiction

Published in foreign languages:

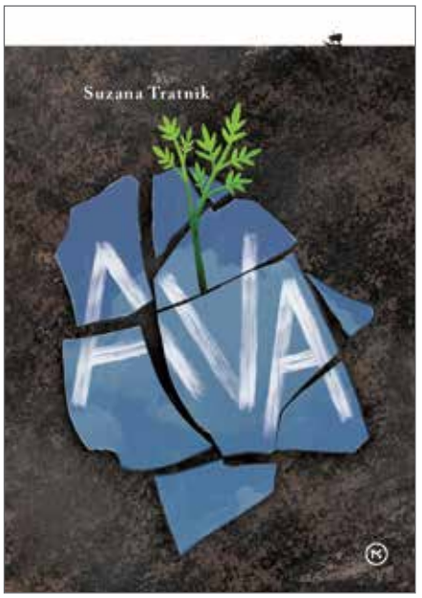
- Czech: *Jmenuju se Damián*, One Woman Press, 2005, Czech Republic
- German: *Mein Name ist Damian*, Milena Verlag, 2005, Austria
- Serbian: *Ime mi je Damjan*, Deve, 2005, Serbia; *Ime mi je Damjan*, Arhipelag, 2014, Serbia
- Slovak: *Volám sa Damián*, Literárne informačné centrum, 2008, Slovakia
- Spanish: *Ninguna voz*, Arlequin, 2018, Spain
- Macedonian: *Se vikam Damjan*, Blesok, 2018, Macedonia
- Serbian: *Се викам Дамјан* Arete, 2018, Serbia



Bingo or Life!



Hanny Rattie



Ava

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Janja Vidmar



The novel *Black Crow* is one of those books that do not allow the reader to take a breath, drawing their attention like a whirlpool, and cutting ever deeper marks upon the heart. Stories of young (teenage) exiles, deportees, refugees and all other whose lives have been heavily marked by war, masterfully intertwine and unforgivingly describe the world in which we are (no thanks to us) on a more or less safe side, but peace is so fragile that it is quite possible that tomorrow (thanks to us) we might find ourselves on the other side. The divisions between 'here' and 'there', between 'us' and 'them' that appear sharp and clear at first sight are masterfully erased by the author.

(from the award justification for the 2019 Desetnica Award)

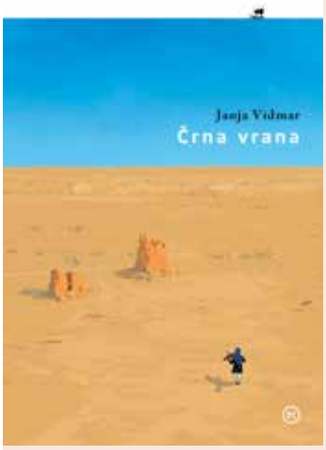
…From this narrative range comes a complexity of sorts, a multitude of views and stories that do not combine into a narrative linearity and thus avoid the mould of some kind of success story…

(Žiga Rus, review in the journal *Literatura*)

prose

Selected piece

***Black Crow* (*Črna vrana*),** Ljubljana, MKZ, 2018



Black Crow

background

Getting used to school life in London, Jan comes across Hiba, a Syrian refugee who escaped the claws of the so-called Islamic State that trains children into war machines and child brides into black crows, considered in various parts of the world as a dark symbol of backwardness. After a terrorist attack on the London Underground where his father is also a victim, Jan's hatred and a whirlwind of events create a bundle of stories, from London hooligans to youths in IS training grounds and wars in crisis areas in various parts of the world.
"This is a book that should be compulsory reading for everyone, and at the same time a weapon and tool in the fight against the horror of dehumanisation. Against the awakening terror of fascism."
Boštjan Videmšek, reporter from crisis zones for the national broadsheet *Delo*.

excerpt

(translated by David Limon)

Savid

He wasn't naughty, but however much he squeezed his knees together, he couldn't hold his pee in. He pulled off the blanket and in two jumps reached the wooden bucket in the corner. In the deafening silence the stream of pee noisily splashed against the bottom of the bucket and then murmured like a stream. He bit his lips and decided to give in. Let Jidu win for once.
Then he placed a chair in the middle of the cellar and stood on tiptoe to reach the trapdoor. He reached the handle with his fingertips. Jumping up, he pushed the door so that it made a hollow sound against the floorboards. Blinded by the sudden bright light, he swayed and nearly fell off the chair.
"Jidu! Tayta!" he shouted. "I give in!"
Silence was the only reply.
"Tayta, I want to eat!"
He hopped up and down on the chair to see over the edge of the hatch. The chair was wobbling and he found it difficult to balance. No, he wouldn't manage to get out like that.
He looked around the cellar and among the junk noticed an old chest of drawers. After climbing off the chair he pulled the chest of drawers to beneath the hatch. He climbed onto it and with great effort lifted the chair up. He really was a sissy. Ibrahim was right, he should exercise to develop some muscles.
He carefully climbed onto the chair.
"Jidu … Tayta, I'm coming out … I don't want to play anymore!"
Leaning against the frame of the hatch with his elbows, he managed to pull himself up. He liked climbing trees and rocks and was no less nimble at climbing down. All he needed now were muscles to beat up anyone who gave him a hard time.
"Jidu!" he shouted and rushed from the room to the kitchen.
He saw the open door to the bedroom and stopped in surprise. There was a buzzing of flies. They were flying

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into the corridor and then back again to the bedroom. Tayta never left the door open because of the sand and dust. She kept waving a broom around the house.
"Tayta?" he called and stopped on the threshold.
The room was filled with the slightly sweetish smell of decay. On the bed, Jidu lay on bloodied sheets. His head was at a strange angle. The side of the bed was scratched and the wall above it full of stains.
On the floor behind the bed, he saw Tayta's legs. He would recognise her blue plastic flip-flops anywhere. Apprehensively he approached and his throat constricted with fear so that he could barely swallow.
"Tayta?" he whispered, even though he already knew she had been taken by death. She would never rest on the floor like that. She always used to joke about how because of her old bones she would never be able to get up again and Jidu would have to put her in a wheelbarrow.
She lay with her head in the narrow strip between the bedside cabinet and the bed. Next to her stood a plastic washing basket. In the middle of her forehead was a bloody hole and she was staring at him with her eyes open. He couldn't tear his eyes from her. Death and Tayta were inseparable now, just like he and Ibrahim were.
"Why did you choose death over me?" he sobbed, wiping his eyes with his elbow. "I promised mum that I'd look after you two. You betrayed me … Mum will be cross with me for breaking my promise … Everyone knows that if you break a promise you gave to God, you die … This was the worst game of hide and seek!" He withdrew to the hallway and slid down the wall to the floor.

[…]

Together with other boys, he was put in a children's camp for the future Islamic State fighters, not far from the town of Sarin. They slept in concrete huts without electricity and water. He didn't know how to count how many of them were there all together. Maybe fifty. They hadn't learnt how to count up to a hundred in school yet. Some boys were white, with light coloured eyes and freckles, the sons of foreign fighters. Weren't all foreigners infidels? Clearly, they'd lied to him.
They didn't chat to one another. From morning till night, they studied and did various exercises. After dinner they fell into their beds, exhausted, and sank into a dreamless sleep.
He was afraid of dreams. And he wasn't the only one. Images from the times when others used to embrace them and play with them and love them crept into their dreams. Sometimes he had a nightmare that black crows and ravens kidnapped him and forced him to do terrible things. He would wake up screaming, covered in sweat. No one stirred on these occasions. It was easier to feign dreamless sleep.
"Who wants to become a martyr?" asked their new teachers.
Those who raised their hands were given chocolate, money or new trainers. The most daring ones even boasted new bicycles. When they disappeared, their bikes were given to other martyrs, almost unused, shining like new in the sun. No martyr had one for long enough to be able to scratch it.
How many martyrs are there, he wondered, would there be enough room for them all in paradise? What happens if there are too many? Do they send some away? Where? Sometimes he felt tempted to volunteer himself. So that he could ride a new bike. But he never raised his hand. He didn't make any friends. It wasn't that kind of a camp. He kept himself to himself, carrying out the orders given by the teachers.
For hours they stood stalwartly in the blazing sunshine, wearing their new combat uniforms, with their arms stretched out. The teacher would walk between the straight lines, prodding with a stick those that did not persist in the right stance. He checked that their arms were stretched out at shoulder-high.
Meanwhile, he would talk to them about attacking foreigners and local infidels. About the principles of the *jihad*, the holy war. He promised them that the best of them would join the older fighters on the front in a month or two.
After a meagre lunch, with their weapons on their backs, they crawled along the ground and in the bushes in order to learn warfare. Wearing black exercise uniforms, they trained martial arts. The chosen ones, accompanied by adults, went on special missions. Once one of them hinted that he had practiced intimidation on a prisoner. He didn't say any more, because divulging information was strictly forbidden. But his eyes said more than enough. There were rumours that they would cut off your right arm in the name of God for trying to escape or disobeying. But no one tried. In any case, there was nowhere to escape to.
During the day, they would keep exclaiming "Allah is great!" until they were hoarse from all the shouting.
He liked shouting. While shouting, he found it easier to imagine that he was playing soldiers with Ibrahim. He remembered his friend, because they used to tussle and play soldiers. And if you played with enough determination, the game that was no longer a game became a game again. But he missed his comrade. With time that stopped, too.
At night, when he woke up screaming from a nightmare, he would still debate in his head about God's commandment that prohibited killing. He must have understood it wrong. It turned out that man is stronger than God, for he kills and remains unpunished. So, God is helpless against man.
He tried to banish such thought from his head. Teachers could immediately recognise doubt in their eyes. They told them that their eyes must remain empty. Only then would they fill infidels with terror.

Awards in the field of children's literature

- The Večernica Award, 2008 for *Pink*, 1998 for *A Princess With a Flaw*
- The Desetnica Award, 2013 for *Kebarie*, 2006 for *Zoo*
- Zlata Paličica, 2010 for *Without*
- Ibby Honour List, 2010 for *Angie*
- The Glazer Diploma, 2007
- Medaglia d' oro at the Parole senza Frontiere, Trento, Italy, 1999 for *Princess With a Flaw*

Nominations in the field of children's literature

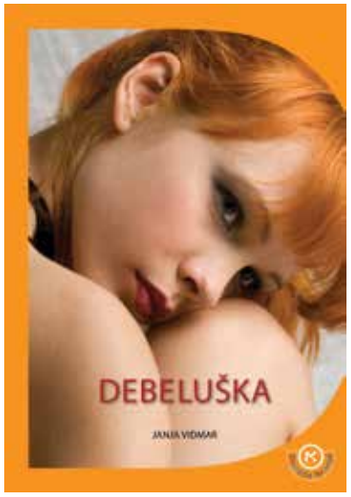
- The Večernica Award, 2019 for *Black Crow*, 2013 for *Children of the World*, 2010 for *Kebarie*, 2006 for *Lullaby for a Young Daddy,* 2005 for *Boys of Clay*, 2003 for *Friends*, 1998 for *Acneater*, 1997 for *My Friend Arnold*
- The Desetnica Award, 2019 for *Black Crow,* 2017 for *Friends, In the Desert*, 2009 for *Angie*, 2007 for *You Ain't Got a Clue*, 2005 for *Friends*, 2004 for *The Bastard*
- The Levstik Award, 2019 for *Black Crow*
- Golden Pear Quality Badge, 2019 for *Black Crow; Elvis Stork, a Genius Klutz*, 2017 for *White Cloud Land*, 2015 for *Frends, In the Desert*, 2011 for *Kebarie*
- The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2015, 2014, 2013

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- *A Princess With a Flaw* (*Princeska z napako*), DZS, 2004 (first edition 1998 and reprints), 16+, realistic novel

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- Croatian:
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  - *Kebarie*, Algoritam, 2014, Croatia
  - *Bucka,* Mozaik knjiga, 2006, Croatia
  - *Moja Nina,* Nova knjiga Rast, 2005, Croatia
- English: *Kekec from 2b*, Vodnikova založba, KUD Sodobnost International, 2011, Slovenia
- Srbian: *Debeljuca*, Mono i Manjana, 2010, Serbia
- German:
  - *ZOO,* Hermagoras Verlag, 2009, Austria
  - *Freunde,* Hermagoras Verlag, 2007, Austria
  - *Der Bastard,* Hermagoras Verlag, 2004, Austria
- Italian: *La mia Nina*, Falzea Editore, 2007, Italy



Miss Chubby



Kebarie



Elvis Stork, a Genius Klutz

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Igor Saksida

The Diverse Experiences of the World in Contemporary Slovene Children's Poetry

In the period immediately after the Second World War, poetry for the young in Slovenia is defined by ideological moralism – in it the child is modelled as an example of behaviour, embodying values such as diligence, respect for the national-liberation struggle, fitness and spiritedness. It is only the generation of poets born around 1930 that are the first to move away from this distinctly ideological poetry especially dominant in the first decade after the war. The two most notable representatives of the first post-war wave of innovative poetry are Tone Pavček (1928–2011) and Kajetan Kovič (1931–2014). Like most of their contemporaries, they return to the playfulness of neo-romantic pre-war poetry, particularly the poetics of the playful child as the central figure in poetry and partly also to the theme of lyrically experiencing nature, as expressed especially in the poetry of Oton Župančič (1878–1949) and Srečko Kosovel (1904–1926).

In this current selection, the representative of the traditional restoration of pre-war poetic sensitivity for the vivacity of the world of children is **Neža Maurer** (1930); in her first collection *Kam pa teče voda* (And Where Does the Water Flow To), 1972, she included bright, light-hearted poems about spring, a bumble bee, a rabbit, a happy child, a mother, and traditional childish attributes, though not depicted in an educationally single-layered manner, for example, having a sweet tooth. Her childish world is foremost idyllic, void of conflict; the reader senses a friendly family connection between nature and the child; with this Maurer is obviously returning to the tradition of a conflictless childhood expressed through play, experiencing nature and coexistence with adults, subjects previously defined especially in the poems for children by Oton Župančič. Her collection *Sloni v spačku* (Elephants in a 2CV), 1997, is set in a contemporary urban setting with love, friendship and imaginative play (the motif of elephants as imaginary friends), and, like her other collections, also the animal world as its central themes. The distinctly poetic writing of Neža Maurer connects the world of children, nature and motifs of vivid poetic images, pivotal in which are various moods stirred by these notions, including youthful attributes such as high spirits and effervescence but also fear and melancholy.

Among the poets of the older generation traditional patterns can also be recognised in the work of **Miroslav Košuta** (1936), though the poet also clearly surpasses them by introducing modernist elements both in contents and style. His *Abecerime* (ABC Rhymes), 1979, are playful four-line alliterations on each letter of the alphabet that, with their innovative 'combinations of words' into nonsense and their communicatively ambiguous poetic riddle offer the reader an evasive and in its stylistic foundations not merely informative presentation of sounds or letters, characteristic of older forms of this kind of poetry. Together with lyrical snippets and poems about animals, his more extensive *Zaseda za medveda* (Lying in Wait with Bear Bait), 1979, also includes poems about childhood as a game and poems that play on words. With his collection *Galeb nad žitom* (The Gull Above the Wheat Fields), 1995, he returns to the lyricism of the landscape, of colours. In his collection *Minimalčice* (Miniverses), 2004, he once again uses intertextual wordplay – in his notes to the poems he refers to Fran Levstik (1831–1887), the pioneer of Slovene poetry for children. The collection as a whole is also a tribute to the creative potential of the Slovene language, to which the author who lives and creates in a multilingual environment (Trieste and its surroundings), has a particularly respectful attitude. Another link to the rich tradition is his collection of partially humorous, partially poetic riddles *Ponikalnice* (Swallets), 2017. Beside playfulness, a constant in all of Košuta's collections is the landscape of his native Karst, be it as a basis for wordplay or a short lyrical thought.

In his opus **Milan Dekleva** (1946) is the poet who advances the poetics of nonsensical word combinations most; his collection *Pesmi za lačne sanjavce* (Poems for Hungry Dreamers), 1981, represents the height of Slovene modernist nonsense poetry for children, an entirely illogical collage of words that serves merely its own game, a mosaic of unusual motifs that fill the reader with astonishment and based on surprising connections create an ambiguous, illogical poetic 'enigma'. Even the titles of each section (*Hors d'oeuvres, Main Course, Dessert*) express the author's basic stance: poetry is a "feast" intended for the delight of experiencing imagery and wordplay – it is therefore pointless to try and find in this collection any sort of more obvious themes beyond representing pure play in poetic form. Nonsense and fiction, but simultaneously also an expression of *timelessness* and a sense of the continuance of images of everyday life. All this is also expressed in the communicative dimensions of his collection *Alica v računalniku* (Alice Inside the Computer), 2000, with its distinct intertextual references to Lewis Carroll's tale of Alice. A selection of individual words and texts from the original Alice that the computer carries out for the poet (making chance the trigger of his poetic play) are the basis for a poetical nonsensical puzzle of words that is not at all accidental or random as a record of a liberating game. The collection is thus a unique amalgamation of comical and spooky images, lofty and vulgar words, free form and strict verse – a world fragmented into a collage of imagination and truths to which not even rich, joyous and playful imagination can add solidity. The collection *Pesmarica prvih besed* (First Words Book of Poetry), 2009, returns to wordplay, typical of Dekleva's early work, yet with an entirely new poetic perspective. At the centre of the collection is the playful child observed by the poet as it creates its own language and through it a world constructed of unusual childish creations and vocal play. A novelty in the collection is a family theme, expressed as a coexistence of children and adults in the imaginary world of linguistic creativity that, despite minor misunderstandings, remains bright throughout.

Among the post-war generation of poets, a prominent place even to this day goes to **Niko Grafenauer** (1940), both in the range of his poetic work as well as importance of his essays on children's literature. Grafenauer's poetic opus for the young can be divided into three main parts: traditionalist poetry, transition poetry and innovative poetry. The key work in the first part is the poetry collection *Pedenjped* (Tinyspan), 1966, with a supplemented edition in 1969, that continues the traditional pattern of poems about children and play, seen in the works of Levstik and Župančič. The collection is thus mostly still linked with the themes of every-day life of children, depicting the external characteristics and habits of the title hero: his size, having a sweet tooth, playful creativity, apparent independence. At the same time Tinyspan is also committed to family life: interfering into his game is an authority, Daddy, who, as the poet wrote "returns him to the limits of childish naiveté." Among his transitional collections, those forecasting innovative, modernist poetry but still pledged to traditional expression is *Kaj je na koncu sveta* (What's At the End of the World), 1973. His first obvious use of contemporary poetic bases into poetry for children and with it the development of modernist poetry comes with his collection *Nebotičniki, sedite* (Skyscrapers, Sit Down!), 1980, for which he received the Levstik Award. Its basis is noted in the poet's foreword: poetry is a '*thought-up thing*', a journey into a world of impossible notions, the poetification of the lives of objects, causing surprise. The last part of the collection is titled *Skrivnosti* (Secrets) – the same as his book of poetry published in 1983; *Skrivnosti* is a collection that from a repertoire of basic existential concepts forms reflexive poems aimed at the more experienced reader. Central to this collection, taking into account its various interrelations, is the contrast between life and nothing, while still displaying motifs of the subject's discontent, longing, play, death and freedom.

Boris A. Novak (1953) bases his first modernist collection *Prebesedimo besede* (Re-Wording Words), 1981, entirely on the idea of an easy-going childish play with words, especially in making up new words; he adds to this, though in this collection still at the level of a humorous poetic ingenuity, the theme of the omniscience of the world. Essential in understanding this and his later poetic basis is the address to *teachers children, creators of new words* – poetic creation is thus once more discovering childish playfulness in the adult, surpassing established linguistic patterns and through this creating a liberating humour. In *Love of Words,* his introductory address the collection *Domišljija je povsod doma* (Imagination Is at Home Everywhere), 1984, the poet once again touches upon the connectedness of the concepts poetry-childhood-words but the poetic expression changes; the central concept of this collection is amazement, and the symbolic 'eye' its source. Novak has compiled a very important book of poetic forms *Oblike sveta* (Shapes of the World), 1991, complemented by a second volume O*blike srca* (Shapes of the Heart), 1997, and a third, *Oblike duha* (Shapes of the Sprit), 2016, that presents to the young and adult reader a few typical literary elements (metaphor, rhyme, rhythm) and poetic form. In these collections poetry is regarded as a special game, substantiated by its own dimensions in terms of form and content, which, depending on their type (eclogue, punk, rap) also works critically or satirically towards reality beyond literature.

Feri Lainšček (1959) formed his unique poetic expression, normally linked to depicting the child in a real, to them incomprehensible world, in his initial poetry

collection *Cicibanija* (Ciciland), 1987, which does not hide its intertextual reference to Oton Župančič's famous poetic hero Ciciban. But this book of poems is entirely different to Župančič's depiction of the boisterous Ciciban – interlacing in these poems are a whole variety of hues of childhood – from playfulness, infinite imagination and fascination with nature to disappointment, conflict and rebellion against adults. Directly approaching the wold of the child is a key move in Lainšček's work – there is nothing childish, fake or idealised in it – even the images of nature speak for themselves, directly and without embellishment. The author won the Desetnica Award for *Pesmi o Mišku in Belamiški* (Songs About Mousey and Whitemouse), 2010; the collection is made up of longer narrative poetic units that mainly depict how the two title heroes are different to other mice – they rebel against the rules and run away from the world of mice that is segregated into town and country. The dialogue between poet and the world of the young is expressed even more clearly in his collection *Ne* (No), 2018, its basic thematic purpose indicated by its title – a lyric teenage subject's rebellious experiences of the world expressed in short poems, with frequent repeats of the words *no* and *I don't*, and rebelliousness expressed also in the individual titles of the poems. The adolescent is resisting the rules and also has difficulties with falling in love and self-image; their rebelliousness is communicated through the choice of motifs (school, teachers, peers) and especially through language, with the poet emphasising the negation through the use of slang. The core theme of the collection is distinguishing and at the same time reconciling the poet and the teenager in a unique gesture of refuting the world, but it avoids any kind of moralising, as the given advice does not afford the teenager any solution.

Lila Prap (1955) publishes poetry that is not her usual literary form in picture books that she also illustrates and where the communicativeness of the verse is clearly enhanced by the illustrations. Both her verbal and artistic language create Prap's typical theme of intertwining the human and animal worlds expressed by playing with words and sounds. More experimentation in form can be found in the picture book *Kraca* (Animals Conundrums), 2015, where the reader creates their own text, thus freely co-creating unusual words and imaginative figures by combining two two-verse texts, for example, *Elephant* and *Butterfly*, creating a new imaginative animal and nonsensical conundrum of verse called *Ellefly*.

Andrej Rozman Roza (1955) writes a unique kind poetry for young readers; even his first collection *Rimanice za predgospodiče* (Rhymes for Pre-gentlemen), 1993, conveyed images of fear, greed, grime and laziness. The poet also refutes the established patterns of poetic expression in his later collections by introducing elements of colloquial language in combination with the intertextual actualisation of older textual sources. The narrative poem *Urška*, 2010, a modern version of France Prešeren's ballad *Povodni mož* (The Water Man), 1830, is also included in the collection *Izbrane rozine v akciji* (Rozman Raisins in Action), 2010, a collection of poems for teenagers with a rebellious attitude to the world. Rozman returns to the framework of playful poetry for young readers with his collection *Pesmi iz rimogojnice* (Poems from the Rhyme Farm), 2017 where wordplay is once again in the forefront. Also worth noting in Roza's opus is the book *Pesmi iz galerije* (Poems from the Gallery), 2018, linking his poems with expert explanations about the details of well-known paintings (painter, features, etc.) in a way accessible to young readers.

The form and particular ability to communicate, characteristic of the work of **Peter Svetina** (1970), was already expressed in his 2001 collection *Mimosvet* (World Goes By), 2001. After modernism, poetry alongside the aesthetics of ugly also invents the poetics of the communicative minimum: poems no longer contain hermetic linguistic play or great themes such as freedom, death or the soul, but are merely tiny flashes of the simple though in no way naive or idealised world of children. Even in Svetina's mixed-genre collection of poems and short stories *Ropotarna* (The Lumber Room), 2012, nonsense can be sensed as the common creative basis. His collection *Domače naloge* (Homework), 2014, clearly moves away from poetic play, although it retains some features of a nonsensical playing with language (e.g. with letters, creating unusual words), and the majority of its motifs are related to the real world of children today that is not merely playful and aware of the beauty of nature but also lonely, restless and aware of our transience. A similar theme can also be seen in one of the most important contemporary poetry collections *Molitvice s stopnic* (Prayers from the Steps), 2016, for which the author received the Večernica and Levstik Awards. Notable is the rarely-touched-upon theme of a child's contemplation about God, gratitude but also fear, ageing and inter-generational dialogue – a message that could easily slip into moralisation or idealisation but which the poet successfully avoids. His deliberations are not pre-abstract and allow the young reader various possibilities of dialogue with often ambiguous playfully-serious poems.

Bina Štampe Žmavc (1951) achieved a high level of innovation and communication in her poetry early on with her collection *Čaroznanke* (Magiknowns), 1990. Everyday life, the central theme of the collection, is the basis for texts which display a textual reality that, though connected to images from the world of children and nature. Demanding in terms of its thought and expression is the collection *Nebeške kočije* (Heavenly Carriages), 1994, with the range of its message already determined in its foreword, to be understood as an address to childhood

and the mysteries of nature. *Snežroža* (Snowflower), 2007, looks at the secrets of the world, space and nature, especially surprising are the poems about death and pain – almost all the poems mark bitter, dark moods. With the collection *Vprašanja srca* (Questions of the Heart), 2008, the poet continues creating poems as a kind of (self)questioning about key concepts of existence; the infinity of space is also a game of mystery involving the planets, the stars, all of existence, and includes colours, the seasons and emotions, poems and stories. Connecting poetic creativity, thinking about life, experiencing nature and drams is typical of the collection *Roža v srcu* (Flower in the Heart), 2010, melancholically tinged by poems about war and loneliness. The collection *Barka zvezd* (A Boat of Stars), 2014, touches upon particularly reflexive themes in a variety of moods; in it we can find poems about the meanings of dreams, imagination and the beauty of nature, but also about pain and transience. The bilingual edition *Mucarije* (Kittysnippets), 2015, depicts a mostly humorous world of cats and children absorbed in play.

For her poems, **Barbara Gregorič Gorenc** (1964) uses motifs and themes from the real world of children and young adults but does not present the boys, girls and teenagers in a stereotypical way, describing the multi-layered world of emotions, desires and ordeals of young people in a surprising and innovative way. In her first collection, *Nebomske pesmi* (The I Won't Poems), 1994, she created the image of the '*girl that bites'*, a conveyer of brisk and rebellious poetic speech. Still rebellious are the main characters in her collections *Zaklenjeni volk* (Locked Wolf), 1997 and *Lena luna* (Lazy Moon), 1998. A novelty in her poetry are the collections for teenagers *Tri pike...* (Three Dots...), 2005, and *Navodila za randi* (Date Tips), 2006; both explore the boy as well as the girl points of view and their common theme of falling in love is intertwined with various mood – teenage love can be joyful bit also brings anger and disappointment. With her collection *Iskanke* (Searchling Poems), 2008, the poet turns to the world of children. The main theme of the collection *Z roko v roki* (Hand in Hand), 2009, is motherhood, family and the coexistence of generations. The collection *Razigranke* (Playful Poems), 2010, stems from everyday motifs of childhood, a collection in which various styles, especially nonsense, realism and lyricism, are combined in a very convincing way. *Skriti grafiti* (Hidden Graffiti), 2011, is a collection of teenage poetry that highlights teenage uncertainties but also persistence and self-confidence. *Strašne pesmi* (Terrible Poems), 2011, do not draw from the real world but are full of fairy-tale beings, (a child vampire, a werewolf, a fairy, etc.), experiencing similar emotions to children. Even with its title, the collection *Trenutki občutki* (Notions Emotions), 2012, points at the contents of its poems: in exploring the world the child comes across various notions that also stir their emotions, and beside the theme of love and creativity also touches upon death. The collection *Kolibri in tigri* (Hummingbirds and Tigers), 2022, in its first part continues the child's multi-layered experience of the world, split between the imagination (the hummingbird) and fear (tigers), and in its second part gives us the 'first love' poems.

Fairy tale motifs of travel, quests and miracles that stem from the author's interest in literary folklore and is comparable with her storytelling determines the poetic world of **Anja Štefan** (1969). Already in her collection *Iščemo hišico* (Looking for a Little House), 2005, her theme is an imaginary journey into a fairy-tale world but also into nature, which is depicted as soft, light, sunny and playful. The poet includes animal characters into her collection *Lonček na pike* (A Pot with Spots), 2008, in which, together with her often-expressed motif of a fairy-tale journey, hints at a new message – the world of fairy tales is opposite to contemporary *greed*, demonstrating that in their sincere attitude dedicated to play, individual animal protagonists and children can also be perceived as a chance of achieving more than simply rational acquisition of all there is. Outstanding for its quality and innovation is the author's collection *Drobtine iz mišje doline* (Tunes from Mousedale Dunes), 2017, awarded with the Večernica and Levstik Awards. It focuses on the life of mice as the protagonists of the poems, tiny but in fact big in their creativity – rapt in the beauty of the world, the play on words, and also in the less pleasant truths of our time.

Andreja Peklar (1962) is primarily an illustrator, but she has also published four picture books of her own, including a picture book of poem *Luna in jaz* (The Moon and Me), 2019. It speaks of how the moon miraculously changes, of the interlacing of the childish and animal worlds, of fear and curiosity. Its message conveyed in minimalistic verse /…/ is effectively enhanced with very special, poetic illustrations that include numerous references to the shape and colour of the moon and other artistic details: signs, colours of the forest, reflections on the water surface.

Contemporary Slovene poetry for young readers includes numerous recognisable and unique expressions: it reaches from traditional child play to bold, almost hermetic modernist linguistic experiments, from fragile impressionist images of nature to a deep reflexivity, from linguistic explicitness and comprehension to a destruction of the rules of language and intertextual parodies and revivals. All this points to a unique kaleidoscope of poetic experiences of the world, which, when truly artistically persuasive, are without doubt, compelling for all readers, young and adult.

Dragica Haramija

Contemporary Slovene Children's and Young Adult Fiction

Modern children's and young adult literature in Slovenia began developing in the 1970s and 1980s when authors such as Svetlana Makarovič, Slavko Pregl and Polonca Kovač began their creative course. All three are also recipients of The Levstik Lifetime Achievement Award (the national award for children's and young adult literature) and are still productive creators of literature for children and youth. Their initial works of contemporary literature that has moved beyond purely educational and instructive purposes, include two kinds of texts: the animal fairy tale and the realistic tale from the modern society of the time. Examples of animal fairy tales that no longer have an educational function, but in which the animal characters are generally kind, with a rather humorous edge to them, often representing what is going on in society, can be seen in most stories by Svetlana Makarovič (around one hundred of her stories have been published so far) and Polonca Kovač. Polonca Kovač and Slavko Pregl also began publishing longer realistic tales at this time. Such work by Kovač includes (*Andrejev ni nikoli preveč* (There Are Never Too Many Andrews), 1977, *Urške so brez napake* (Ursulas Are Flawless), 1980, Špelce (Betties), 1983; the author also created a number of important fantasy tales at the time, e.g. *Jakec in stric hladilnik* (Little Jack and Uncle Refrigerator), 1976. Slavko Pregl is one of those Slovene writers for young readers whose popularity has continuously increased ever since his first published book *Odprava zelenega zmaja* (The Green Dragon Expedition), 1976. He has published around forty books for children and young adults. Pregl's subject matter of carefree childhood, full of adventures, strongly enhanced with humour, is one of the greatest attractions of his work for young readers. In the late 1980s other authors began creating quality literature for children and young adults, namely Bina Štampe Žmavc with her first published book *Slike in zgodbe iz tisoč in enega pasjega dne* (Pictures and Stories From A Thousand and One Dog Days), 1985, Mate Dolenc with his novel *Golo morje* (The Baren Sea), 1988, and Feri Lainšček with the novel *Ajša Najša*, 1989.

Adventure literature became hugely popular in the 1990s. Writers beginning to write at the time are Primož Suhodolčan (the series on the basketball player Sprout, the first book of which was published in 1994), Dim Zupan (his series of five books about Drekec Pekec and Pukec Smukec, published between 1991 and 1995), Desa Muck (with her adventure novel *Pod milim nebom* (Under the Open Skies), 1993, and her series *Blazno resno…* (Dead Serious About…), 1993-1998, Janja Vidmar (with her first published work the adventure tale *Junaki petega razreda* (Heroes From Fifth Grade), 1995, Neli Kodrič Filipić *Lov na zvezde* (Hunting Stars), 1995, Andrej Rozman Roza (with his first literary work the science fictional text *Skrivnost Špurkov* (The Secret of Sporks), 1997, and Majda Koren (with the fantasy tale *Mala pošast Mici* (Mitzy the Little Monster), 1994). A special place among realistic socio-psychological novels is taken by Marjana Moškrič's work *Čadavec* (Smoky Quartz), 1998. Also worth noting is the work by Aksinja Kermauner, who from the onset concerns herself with the vulnerable group of the blind and visually impaired; her first book is tiled *Kakšne barve je tema*? (What Colour Is Darkness?), 1996. The latter part of the 1990s was marked with important picture book issues by Anja Štefan (first with her adaptations of folk tales, e.g. *Čez griček v gozdiček* (Across the Hill Into the Forest), 1995, and then with original fiction in her first collection of stories *Melje, melje mlinček* (Grind, Grind, Little Mill), 1999, Peter Svetina with his picture book *O mrožku, ki si ni hotel striči nohtov* (About Little Walrus Who Didn't Want to Cut His Claws), 1999, and Lila Prap, who initially published two collections of nonsense short stories, *Zgodbe in nezgodbe* (Stories and Not-Stories), 1993, and *Resnične pravljice in pripovedke* (True Fairy Tales and Stories), 1999, and then the first picture book she wrote and illustrated, *Male živali* (Little Creatures), 1999.

The first decade of this century brought different themes into youth literature, teenage troubles, violence among peers, warnings about the problem of drugs and social

stratification. Socio-psychological genre authors worth noting are Slavko Pregl (*Srebro iz modre špilje* (The Silver of Blue Grotto), 2003, *Usodni telefon* (The Fatal Telephone), 2004, and *Car brez zaklada* (King Without a Treasure), 2009), Janja Vidmar (her novels on domestic violence *Baraba* (Bastard), 2001, on homosexuality *Fantje iz gline* (Boys of Clay), 2005, on illness *Angie*, 2007, on growing up under Socialism *Pink*, 2008), Igor Karlovšek (*Gimnazijec* (The Pupil), 2004) and Andrej Predin (*Na zeleno vejo* (Catching Up), 2007). A special place among fairy tales is taken by Feri Lainšček's book *Mislice* (Tales of the Heart), 2001, in which the author refers to a very rich folk heritage. In the field of children's literature, some of the important works were produced by Desa Muck (the series of ten realistic tales *Anica* (Annie), published between 2001 and 2007), Matjaž Pikalo (his trilogy *Luža* (Puddle), 2001, *Samsara*, 2005, and *Genija* (Genius), 2009), and Žiga X Gombač (*Jastrebov let* (Flight of the Hawk), 2008). Jana Bauer published her first work in 2002, *Izginjevalec čarovnic* (The Witch Vanisher). This decade also brought quality picture books by Ida Mlakar (the series on the piglets Bibi and Gusti, the series on the little girls/witches Kuštri and Štumfi), Vesna Radovanovič (a series of picture books on means of transport, from 2007, the first *Puffer-train* book), Nina Mav Hrovat (*O kralju, ki ni maral pospravljati* (The King Who Hated Tidying), 2008), Nataša Konc Lorenzutti (*Ravno prav velik* (Just Big Enough), 2006) and Lila Prap as the author/illustrator of her famous series of animal fictional-informative picture books (*Zakaj?* (Why?), 2002, *Dinozavri!?* (Dinosaurs!?), 2009, *Pasji zakaji?* (Doggy Whys?), 2010 [...] *Zmaji!?* (Dragons!?), 2018, and *Ptiči!?* (Birds!?), 2019).

Among the most notable novels over the last decade are the works of Vinko Möderndorfer with his three novels (*Kot v filmu* (Just Like a Film), 2013, *Kit na plaži* (Whale on the Beach), 2015, and *Jaz sem Andrej* (I Am Andrej), 2018) and Janja Vidmar. Also publishing their first novels for young adults are authors such as Cvetka Bevc (*Desetka* (The Mighty Ten), 2011, and *Božiček v ušesu* (The Santa in My Ear), 2018) and Suzana Tratnik (with the novel *Ime mi je Damjan* (My Names Is Damian) about searching for (sexual) identity, 2014 (first published for adults in 2001), and *Tombola ali življenje!* (Bingo or Life!), 2017). Among fantasy literature, prominent works include Barbara Simoniti's *Močvirniki* (Marshlanders), 2012, and *Andrej Nespanec* (Sleepless Andrew), 2014, Gaja Kos's *Grdavši* (The Yuckies), Jana Bauer's *Groznovilca* (Scary Fairy), and most works by Maša Ogrizek (e.g. *Gospa s klobukom* (The Lady With the Hat), *Krasna zgodba* (A Wonderful Tale), both 2017). Recent longer realistic fiction includes the family stories by Nataša Konc Lorenzutti (e.g. *Kakšno drevo zraste iz mačka* (What Kind of Tree Grows From a Cat), 2012, and the novel *Avtobus ob treh* (The Three O'Clock Bus), 2016) and the historical tales by Sebastijan Preglj (the series *Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe* (Tales from the End of the Stone Age), began in 2014).

Fairy Tales

The literary works for children by **Svetlana Makarovič** (1939) are mostly animal tales (e.g. the picture books *Pekarna Mišmaš* (Mishmash Bakery), 1974, *Sapramiška* (Skipmouse), 1976, *Veveriček posebne sorte* (A Special Kind of Squirrel), 1994, her collections of stores *Take živalske* (Ones About Animals), 1973, *Mačja preja* (Catyarn), 1992) as well as stories with an essentially mythological protagonist (e.g. *Škrat Kuzma dobi nagrado* (Kuzma the Gremlin Wins a Prize), 1974, *Coprnica Zofka* (Zofka the Witch), 1989), that at their core all address issues of not understanding difference. We could say that at a deeper level her stories touch the good in people. With their multiple meanings, Svetlana Makarovič's stories are also interesting to teenagers and young adults who have moved well beyond the fairy tale phase of their reading development. Long before the story about Zofka the Witch in which the fantasy creatures, two cosies called Glili and Glal, appear as secondary characters, the author wrote the fantasy tale *Kosovirja na leteči žlici* (Cosies on the Flying Spoon), 1974, and later the sequels *Kam pa kam kosovirja?* (Where to, Cosies?), 1975, and *Mi, kosovirji* (We, the Cosies), 2009.

Nina Mav Hrovat (1975) writes mostly animal stories for pre-school children (e.g. *O miški, ki je zbirala pogum* (On Mouse Gathering Up Courage), 2012 and *Miška želi prijatelja* (Mouse Finds New Friends), 2016. In her picture book *O kralju, ki ni maral pospravljati* (The King Who Hated Tidying), 2008, the main theme is a spoilt child presented through a realistic story. *Ne misli na slona* (Don't Think About the Elephant), 2019, is an entertaining picture book about the power of human thought. In her works the author often addresses tolerance, friendship and equality, something especially expressed through the multi-lingual editions of some of her picture books, for example, *Miška želi prijatelja* (Little Mouse Wants a Friend), 2016, and the presented picture book *Posluh, jazbec gre!* (Listen Up, Here Comes Badger!), *2019*.

Polonca Kovač (1937) with her collection of modern animal stories *Zverinice z Večne poti* (Little Beasts from Večna Pot Road), 1975, in which she demonstrates the relativity of the individual's perception and understanding of events, brought into Slovene children's literature the kind of animal story that is more about people than animals. Through fairy tale form the author expresses her philosophical doubt about the existence of single truth and reality. The main character of each story is an animal and these animals preserve their biological characteristics

but with the limitations imposed by the cages, enclosures and other purpose-built areas within the zoo. Each protagonist perceives themselves in a different way to how their surroundings see them, some even have potentially negative or disturbing habits (e.g. excessive loquacity, a sense of self-importance, unfriendliness), which, as the stories unravel, is solved to the satisfaction of all the animals at the zoo on Večna Pot Road in Ljubljana. Also worth noting is Kovač's collection of stories *Zelišča male čarovnice* (Herbs of the Little Witch), 1995, illustrated by Ančka Gošnik Godec, considered one of the exceptional literary-informative texts published in picture book format. The plants are listed in alphabetical order from arnica to yarrow, each chapter devoted to one plant, with an initial botanical explanation and its herbal uses, followed by the literary story.

The major part of the opus of **Anja Štefan** (1969) are animal stories in which the author bears in mind the structure of folklore tales in narrating mythical truths and a positive attitude to life. What is interesting in her collection of stories is that their titles almost exclusively refer to objects (apple, whistle, grain mill, shirt, handkerchief, present, bell, coat, gold coin...) even though the main and subsidiary characters are all animals. The most common animal figures in Anja Štefan's stories are domestic animals (chicken, cockerel, cat, dog) and local wild animals (rabbit, mouse, magpie, squirrel, bear). All the animals live in surroundings without people, in their own homes, located in beautiful forest clearings (hedgehog, mouse, cat, dog), in the forest or in animal dwellings, e.g. tree holes (squirrel), burrows (mouse). Domestic animals do not have the same roles they have in human society. Some of them have professions (e.g. the cockerel is a tailor in one story, in another a miller). Only in three of Anja Štefan's stories are the protagonists children, the boy Bobek in *Bobek in barčica* (Bobby and the Boat), 2005, and in *Bobek in zlate kokoši* (Bobby and His Golden Hens), 2017, and the little girl in *Kotiček na koncu sveta* (A Nook at the End of the World), 2005, but in these stories too the secondary characters are all animals. Despite this, Anja Štefan's writing is categorised as realistic because no miracles happen in the stories, instead the main characters carry the story through to a happy end with their own skills and integrity.

Vesna Radovanovič (1963) mostly creates stories published in picture book format. Her first series of six picture books looked at means of transport (train, boat, bus…); her second series (with six books published so far) are tales about anthropomorphic animals that find themselves in human situations. The key literary character, Little Cockerel, solves various plots with other animals from the farm where he lives and a few free-roaming wild animals, reflecting situations and relationships in human society.

Manica K. Musil (1974) publishes picture books she writes and illustrates. In terms of theme and motif they are mostly (classical) animal fairy tales but her literary characters are mostly put into anthropomorphic situations and discover the events and concerns of children (childhood). Her work stands out especially because of her technique of sewn images. The selected work *Slon Stane* (Stan the Elephant), 2017, with its protagonist's problem where his surroundings do not accept him and at the same time he overlooks the tiny ant, is an excellent deliberation on relationships that can also be understood by the youngest readers.

In his collection of short stories *Mislice* (Tales of the Heart), 2000, **Feri Lainšček** (1959) has at first glance preserved so many folkloric elements that one might think of them as folk tales. They are however fundamentally different in that the author merely recaps certain folk tale motifs and freely revises them, preserving the archetypal characters and motifs. These are tales with human literary figures – adults. They have names and individually described characteristics and their moods, emotions and frame of mind are also precisely depicted. The protagonists are often women who also carry through the narrative events (in folk tales and classical literary fairy tales women do not normally have such an active role). The setting and narrative space in all stories is clearly specified (e.g. Blatograd, Bele Vode) or at least indirectly (by the river Mura, by the river Raba). In these stories Lainšček succeeded in depicting the beauty between the rivers Mura and Raba, the kindness of the people of Prekmurje, their hard lives and especially the magic of the Prekmurje Plains. Lainšček is an all-round writer of youth and adult literature, writing all kinds of literary genre, a rarity among writers in Slovenia.

Bina Štampe Žmavc (1951) is a versatile creator of literature for children and young adults and poetry for adults. The poetry of her language is not only present in her verse but also in other literary forms and it is precisely this magic of her language that captivates her readers. Another important segment of Bina Štampe Žmavc's creativity is her consistent ethical elocution of literary motifs and themes. The fundamental theme of the author's prose can be summed up in the thought that, despite transience, friendship, when it is genuine, is eternal, even if we are separated by distances and time. In the words of the author herself, expressed in her collection *Ukradene sanje* (Stolen Dreams), 2001, "Once, a long, long time ago, beyond the edge of space and time, it almost happened that life would become a fairy tale."

Ida Mlakar Črnič (1956) is a creator of picture book texts of which two series stand out, one about the piglets Bibi and Gusti (each of the story is set in one season so the series includes the entire year though in fact the

time frame in each story is very limited, basically to a single event) and the series *Kje rastejo bomboni* (Where Do Sweeties Grow). Mlakar has so far also published standalone picture books, *O kravi, ki je lajala v luno* (The Cow That Barked at the Moon), 2015 and *Tu blizu živi deklica* (A Girl Lives Near Here), 2019.

Andrej Rozman Roza (1955) is a poet and writer but also works in theatre as a playwright, producer and actor. Whatever his medium of expression, Rozman's works brim with comic elements though these contain just enough cynical edge to make the reader think about their message. The plot in the story *O začaranem žabcu* (The Enchanted Frog), 2019, contains an intertextual relationship that is understood by readers who are familiar with *The Frog Prince* by the Brother Grimm that it is based on. The author often uses satire (in content or structure) and elements of nonsense.

Short Fantasy Fiction

Borut Gombač (1962) has so far published five books for children, two collections of poetry, a fairy tale and two collections of short fantasy prose, *Velike oči male budilke* (The Wide-eyed Little Alarm Clock), 2004, and *Skrivnost lebdeče knjige* (The Secret of the Hovering Book), 2020. The short stories in both range from a fairy-tale (fantasy) space to an imaginary two-dimensional space. The sudden twists and turns are amusing, and the author distinguishes himself with a refined poetic style.

Aksinja Kermauner (1956) has made an important impact in literature for children and young adults with her creation of literature for the blind and visually impaired, her books being adapted to readers with special needs (adaptation of fonts, shapes, materials) but also helpful in making non-disabled children, youngsters and adults aware of issues related to disability and difference. The picture books about Spaghetti Joe (aptly illustrated by Zvonko Čoh) use inventive new words (e.g. when worms dance they are being wormy, Joe moves by spaghettying along, the apple gives a stalky wave goodbye…) and the form of communication is entirely adapted to the various needs (braille, large print, sign language, easy reading).

Gaja Kos (1979) has so far published three picture books for the youngest readers about the family of Yuckies (father Mr Yuck, mother Mrs Yuck, Little Yucksie and half-a-bus-full of yuckselatives), illustrated by Zvonko Čoh. The Yuckies are rather similar to human families, thought they like different things such as mud, dirt, rain. Each member of the family has a different strategy for finding a solution to their problems – for example, how to prepare a surprise (recipe, instructions, idea) – very much in line with their character.

Lila Prap (1955) creates mostly nonsense wherein she uses various methods to play with at least one of the phonological, morphological or syntactic features, deliberately breaking the rules. In her short stories Prap uses mainly hyperbolic exaggeration, which in places leads to funny situations or becomes the fundamental element of humour. Her play with meaning conveys an interpretational contact between what is true and what is made up. In her literary-informative picture books that she writes and illustrates, the literary characters are animals presented according to their biological attributes (dinosaurs, dogs, insects…) and in each book the uniformity of the structure is catered by personified animals (chickens in the book on dinosaurs, cats in the book on dogs, booklice in the book on insects…) where the reader can often infer human characteristics from the developments in the narration. The author creates simplified, typified, even schematised forms, keeping the animal's natural colouring, making them instantly recognisable (e.g. all animals are represented as they are in their natural surroundings; with dinosaurs the author emphasises that she does not know exactly what colours they were but their anatomy is based on paleontological findings).

Peter Svetina (1970) writes diverse fiction and the constant in his works are positive values: tolerance, fairness, friendship. In their format his books are most often picture books or illustrated stories, and the illustrator he most often works with is Damijan Stepančič. Svetina's literary characters have interesting, slightly unusual names and often also do highly interesting jobs, e.g. Jaromir the astronaut, Mme Splendeur the retired opera singer, the pelican painter Ludwig, Lilac-folk from Lilac Town, etc. His animal stories and nonsense tales are set in the animals' natural environments; the animals are anthropomorphic but never in contact with humans, even though all of them indirectly describe relationships in human society. A large number of the author's writing is based on a detective story formula in which an insoluble – soluble problem surfaces and is not resolved by the police but a young, amateur (sometimes even child) detective. Particularly noteworthy among his recent works are the short prose collection *Timbuktu, Timbuktu* (2019) and the short story published in picture book format titled *Raznašalka kruha* (The Bread Delivery Girl, 2021). Existential themes are also prominent with Svetina, revealed through a fairy-tale or realistic perspective, consistently conveyed optimistically, with faith in the good in humans.

Longer Fantasy Fiction

Desa Muck (1955) has so far published ten books in her series *Čudežna bolha Megi* (Maggie the Magic Flea). Their protagonists are always the flea Maggie from the title and another animal, a pet, a different one in each

book, a dog, a rabbit, two turtles, a budgerigar, a pair of rats, a cat, a skunk, a mare, a couple of goldfish, a hamster. Maggie is carried through the streets by Zak the dog and in fact has no magical powers but always finds a realistic solution to each problem. Also included at the end of each story is a chapter by the vet Mateja Plevnik, which conveys in a simple manner the biological facts about each animal (what it eats, how we can prepare a home for it, how to look after it…) The series has a picture book format with illustrations by Maša Kozjek. All the books in the series have the same introduction with a warning that it is the animals that choose their owners and not the other way round.

Andrej Predin (1976) began writing for young adults but his later works are aimed at younger readers for which he creates mostly fantasy tales with themes that include ecology such as *Gnusna kalnica* (Yucky Pits), 2013, and family relations such as the series of picture books illustrated by Marjan Manček about Mici (Mary), a pre-school girl with some not quite every-day adventures.

The prose for young adults by **Majda Koren** (1960) mostly follows two basic patterns of literary texts: longer realistic works (tales, novels) look at the every-day life of the average teenager and their growing up (themes of loneliness, divorce, alcoholism etc.); and a second type of work that seems to work just as realistically at first glance but the author introduces fantastic elements into the narration (often a fluffy toy that comes alive). The latter type caters for younger children. A child's imaginary games as the primary activities of a young age are a frequent theme in Koren's books, among which is the series on Mitzy the Little Monster who lives with the boy Simon.

Jana Bauer (1975) has so far published two fantasy tales about Scary Fairy, illustrated by Caroline Thaw. Set in Wicked Wood, home to various animals, Scary Fairy lands with her teapot because of a punishment from her great-grand mother for breaking a teacup. Initially the animals are apprehensive about her but when she sets off back home they are all upset and in the sequel set out to find her, continuing with their amusing adventures. In the picture books *Kako prestrašiti pošast* (How to Frighten a Monster) and *Kako objeti ježa* (How to Hug a Hedgehog), the author addresses important issues about emotions and relationships.

The literary works of **Maša Ogrizek** (1973) are mostly fantasy stories. *Gospa s klobukom* (The Lady With the Hat), 2017, is an adventure story illustrated by Tanja Komadina, in which the magical element is a miraculous suitcase that becomes a means of transport, a *casemobile*. Miss Lyudmila sets off to see the world on it, meeting people and getting to know their different traits and habits. In every chapter she meets a special character that gets excites her about something (a young collector of wonders, an analyst of silence, a swimming instructor…). Two further interesting points in the book are also the use and explanation of foreign words (Miss Lyudmila regularly reads the dictionary) and the appendix at the end of the book, which reveals in a journalistic style the details of the later life of the literary characters. *Lisičja luna* (Fox Moon, 2021) is a fantasy novel about a land beyond life in which the children who end up there turn into animals. From this place, dependant on the phases of the moon, it is only possible to return to our world by joining forces, but some children stay there in the luscious green forest forever. A novel that, through the prism of two different worlds, opens up questions of existence and meaning.

The book *Močvirniki: zgodbe iz Zelene Dobrave* (Marshlanders: Tales from Greenwood Forest), 2012, by **Barbara Simoniti** (1963) is an example of animal utopia in which the author has created the pleasant literary space of Greenwood Forest and through the process of recognition also the eventually excellent relationships between its inhabitants. The book was illustrated by Peter Škerl and brought him numerous awards. It is a richly illustrated book with a map on the front endpaper depicting all the literary locations that the author has given descriptive place names (Fen Pond, Torrent Vale, Mossy Pasture, Bulrush Channel…). At the end of the book Barbara Simoniti has also added an alphabetical list of all the inhabitants of Marshland Mead and also a list of occasional visitors, relatives and friends from other places. The slow pace of the literary text also reflects the way of life in Marshland Mead.

Realistic Fiction

Realistic children's literature with a child as the protagonist enables the reader to relate to the main character, the realistic motivation indicating that the story might also be repeated in the reader's life.

Žiga X Gombač (1976) began his creative course by writing adventure stories with a maritime theme. In 2016 he published a novel for young adults on the theme of refugees, titled *NK Svoboda* (FC Freedom). More recently he has concentrated mostly on stories in comic book form (e.g. *Zgodovina Slovenije v stripu* (A History of Slovenia in Comics), 2017) and short realist stories such as *Gobčko in Hopko* (Snuffy and Hopsy), 2018, that reveals to children simple solutions of what are to them difficult issues through the dialogue of a pre-school child with his imaginary friends from the title.

Boštjan Gorenc Pižama (1977) writes for various age groups. He writes for YA and adult readers (e.g. his

humorous literary history S*LOLvene Classics*, 2016, or the parodies *My Life*, 2018, based on the short stories by the greatest Slovene writer Ivan Cankar) and has, with illustrator Igor Šinkovec also created two picture books for the youngest readers, *Kaj se skriva očku v bradi?* (What Is Hiding in Daddy's Beard?), 2017, and *Si že kdaj pokusil luno?* (Have You Ever Tried the Moon?, 2020). The latter is an entertaining imaginary game of two pre-school boys who travel in a cardboard-box rocket, to find out whether the moon tastes of cheese or white chocolate.

Helena Kraljič (1971) publishes realistic and fantasy short stories in picture books. Her works focus on historical personalities *Kleopatra* (Cleopatra), 2015, on including children with special needs (e.g. *Larina skrivnost* (Lara's Secret), 2012, *Imam disleksijo* (I Have Dyslexia), 2013, *Imam downov sindrom* (I Have Down Syndrome), 2013), and on relationships between peers (also through animal literary figures) and their realisations about different behaviour. Among the latter is also the picture book *Pod srečno zvezdo* (Under a Lucky Star), 2018, with the main characters two girls of the same age, Clara and Felicity. The first is curious about everything, the second lazy, but in the end Felicity also realises that learning is important and can also be fun.

With his book *Luža* (Puddle), 2001, **Matjaž Pikalo** (1963) created an episodic story in which each chapter is a concluded whole, a fragment of the life of the main literary character Ran, known as Puddle. Events are placed in an urban environment, most often at playschool or Puddle's home, with Puddle and his friends seeing to no shortage of funny adventures. This book was followed by two further conceptually similar titles with other protagonists and different adventures (*Samsara*, 2005, and *Genija* (Genius), 2009).

Dim Zupan (1946) has published over thirty books for young readers, most of which can be classified in the adventure-detective and social-psychological genre. The author's opus for children and young adults is aimed at all age groups. Early on in his career he created the important and likeable characters of Drekec Pekec and Pukec Smukec and developed his unique narrative style, peppered with elements of comedy. His other works, whether realistic or fantasy fiction, also contain many comical elements and, through humour, the author often reveals truths about life, people and the world. One of Zupan's most successful books so far has been the series about Hector the Labrador (which mostly tells stories about humans), growing up from a puppy to adulthood, a little older in every story until he becomes a wise old dog.

Mate Dolenc (1945) brought a special kind of maritime genre, the robinsonade, to Slovene literature for children, most notably the novel *Golo morje* (The Barren Sea), 1988, and collections of short stories such as *Leteča ladja* (The Flying Ship), 2002, *Polnočna kukavica in druge zgodbe* (The Midnight Cuckoo and Other Stories), 2008, *Krave so mi povedale* (The Cows Told Me), 2012, and *Maščevanje male ostrige* (Little Oyster's Revenge), 2011, in which the author combines myths, tales and true events about the sea, sailors, as well as life in a house at the edge of a forest in the Julian Alps, close to the shores of Lake Bohinj. To Dolenc the sea or peaceful forest landscapes are backgrounds to timeless truths and doubts about human existence. The chosen passage from *Little Oyster's Revenge* is a re-examination of the meaning of life, death and the memory of the dead who were once close to us.

Nataša Konc Lorenzutti (1970) writes realistic fiction in which a family with numerous children has a central role. The dynamics of family members is supplementary to the main literary character, usually the youngest in the family. The child observes their older siblings in their every-day life (e.g. doing homework, house chores) and has a strong desire to grow up and become like them. When it happens, though, they realise that some of the obligations that come with starting school and growing up are not as fun as expected (e.g. the little girl Nika in the realistic tale *Zvezek in brezvezek* (Notebooks and Gibberish Pads), 2018. The author also writes realistic novels for young adults (A*vtobus ob treh* (The Three O'Clock Bus), 2016, *Lica kot češnje* (Cheeks Like Cherries), 2015) that also focus on relationships.

In 2018 **Andrej E. Skubic** (1967) began creating his series *Trio golaznikus* (The Pesky Trio). The first book in the series presents in an interesting way the everyday adventures of children in the lower classes of primary school. The books in the series have the same literary characters, the same narrator, structure of text, way of conveying the story, genre and the same graphic and artistic approach (similar, easily recognisable covers), yet vary in their literary space and time and especially events have long been popular with readers. *The Pesky Trio* is a series intended to beginner readers. Though the themes are known from world and Slovene adventure literature, they are convincingly incorporated into humorous stories about friendship and small adventures (pranks) by three eight-year-olds who get round or jointly solve any situation. Trust and friendship are key to all positive interpersonal relationships.

In his writing for young readers, **Sebastijan Pregelj** (1970) is recognisable mainly by his series of historical tales *Zgodbe s konca kamene dobe* (Tales from the End of the Stone Age), with five books published so far. The time period where the books are set is defined by the tile of the series, initially limited geographically to the pile-dwelling settlements at the edge of the marshes to

the south of Ljubljana but in the next books expanding to other areas of Europe where archaeological evidence has indicated the existence of prehistoric pile dwelling people. Especially notable in the series is the addition of maps of the geographic space in which the literary narrative takes place, and an informative chapter at the end of each book explaining the archaeological evidence, describing important finds etc.

Primož Suhodolčan's (1959) sports adventure series about the basketball player Sprout also has a realistic motivation. Sports adventures are interwoven with secondary motifs including Sprout's love for Metka and the problems he has at school. The literary space in which all this unfolds is the town environment, school, the playground and home, all within an un-named smallish town where the main character lives. The first two books were also adapted into very successful films. In general writes Suhodolčan a lot about sport themes (also about famous Slovene sportsmen and women, the skier Tina Maze, the basketball player Goran Dragić and the hockey player Anže Kopitar), and is also popular with younger readers with his series *Peter Nos* (Peter Nose), *Živalske novice* (Animal News) and *Pozor, pravljice* (Warning, Fairy Tales!) The basic element of Suhodolčan's literature, regardless of the genre the work belongs to, is humour.

Huiqin Wang's (1955) Silk Road trilogy: *Hallerstein: Slovenec v Prepovedanem mestu* (Hallerstein: The Foreign Astronomer in the Forbidden City, 2014, 2017), *Giuseppe Castiglione: slikar v Prepovedanem mestu* (Giuseppe Castiglione: A Painter in the Forbidden City, 2015) and *Jaz, Marco Polo* (I am Marco Polo, 2018) looks at the stories of three early European visitors to China. All the books are published as bilingual (Slovene–Chinese or English–Chinese) editions, emphasising the interchange between European and Chinese cultures. If we read the three books as a single work we should, in order to appreciate the timeline of the three historical figures whose stories the trilogy examines, do so in reverse order. Each individual book, however, examines unrelated experiences of contact between European and Chinese cultures in different centuries.

Young Adult (YA) Fiction

Young adult literature addresses different issues to children's books (e.g. puberty, growing up, social rules, love) with different literary characters and thematic approaches. The young adult novel no longer depicts the lightness of childhood, play, friendship and happy endings.

Cvetka Bevc (1960) has so far published two novels, *Desetka* (The Mighty Ten), 2010, and *Božiček v ušesu* (The Santa in My Ear), 2018. Both deal with the protagonists, various teenage literary figures, each searching for their identity, reflecting upon their understanding of family relationships and socially acceptable behaviour. The author also writes stories for younger children, especially worth noting is her bilingual book *Pesem za vilo/ Song for a Fairy*, 2009, in which folk music and old musical instruments are presented though an interesting story.

Mateja Gomboc (1964) has so far published the picture book *Polonca, mala in velika* (Polly, Little and Big), illustrated by Ana Razpotnik Donati, 2013; the YA novel *Ime mi je Jon* (My Name is Jon), 2013; the collections of short stories *Tinka*[2] (illustrated by Kristina Krhin), 2014; *Kdo si pa ti?* (And Who Are You?), illustrated by Ana Razpotnik Donati, 2014; and the novel *Balada o drevesu* (A Ballad for the Tree), 2021. Two of her books are of an informative nature (manners, ecology). In her realistic novel *Balada o drevesu* (A Ballad for the Tree), the first person narrator is Ada, a third year student at secondary school and a talented young violinist trying to deal with life after the suicide of her boyfriend Mike (Mitja). The story is limited to four days, from the suicide to the funeral, but also includes numerous retrospective inserts from the time before the suicide, explaining Ada and Mitja's life stories.

Neli Kodrič Filipić (1964) writes a variety of literary types and genres. Many of her realistic works look at subjects that are still taboo, death, attempted suicide, homosexuality, domestic violence and especially a lack of tolerance, kindness and understanding among people. In the author's longer fantasy fiction we find three different ways of transition of the literary heroes from the real into the fantasy world and back, namely in a time lapse, (*Na drugi strain* (On the Other Side), 2004), the appearance of magical objects in the real world (*Lov na zvezde* (Star Hunting), 1995) and literary heroes coming alive in the real world (*49:03:39*, 2008). Her picture books are crossover literature, addressing both children and adults (e.g. the refugee issue in the picture book *Požar* (Fire), 2016, domestic violence in the picture book *Punčka in velikan* (The Little Girl and the Giant), 2009). In her stories, regardless of their realistic or fantasy motivation, Kodrič Filipić sheds light on family relationships that appear to deeply affect her literary figures. Even when they are not aware of their family roots and ties, these mark the way they function and their relationships in the present. (e.g. *Solze so za luzerje* (Tears Are for Losers), 2013, *Povej mi po resnici* (Tell Me the Truth), 2017, and *Fronta* (Front), 2021)

An excellent example of an adventure novel is the book *Preživetje* (Survival), 2018, by **Igor Karlovšek** (1958). The dual tier structure of the novel has proven to be an excellent move by the author: Karlovšek combines the social-psychological story about the protagonist Simon surviving a traffic accident, his search for a new goal in life and handling his anxieties at his budding first love, with an excellently timed crime story where Simon becomes the saviour of the kidnapped girl Janja and at the same time once more finds a meaningful path, love, and a point of connecting with his school friend. Karlovšek's earlier notable success came with the novel *Gimnazijec* (The Pupil), 2004, which depicts court proceedings during which the main character, the seventeen-year old pupil Peter Janežič is convicted. His appeal hearing is successful and Peter gets another chance in life. In 2019 Karlovšek began publishing the series *Ognjeno pleme* (The Tribe of Fire), with which he is embarking on adventure-historical novel writing.

With the themes of her novels **Marjana Moškrič** (1958) also addresses social problems but delivers them at a particularly intimate level, making them all the more shocking. *Čadavec* (Smoky Quartz), 1998, is a novel written through the letters of the teenage girl Marjetica. The letters are addressed to her mother who has abandoned her daughter and husband. The letters reveal the girl's anxieties, her first love and coming to terms with her mother's death from AIDS. Moškrič's second novel, *Ledene magnolije* (Ice Magnolias), 2002, contains the shocking testimony of Lucija, a girl being raped by her stepfather. Lucija's monologue, even the title, indicates the symbolism of an interrupted childhood and the girl's withdrawal from her surroundings as she loses all confidence in people as a result of the sexual abuse to which she is subjected. The chosen passage is from the novel *Sanje o belem štrpedu* (Dreams of the White Štrped), 2015, in which a once united town splits into two very different units due to the ever increasing economic differences between its inhabitants, the Zone and the Green Grove. The Green Grove is where all the cultural institutions operate, school is quite different to the Zone, and life is measured by wealth. The same applies to rights; the more rights the important people from Green Grove claim for themselves, the fewer rights the residents of the Zone seem to have. The novel is excellent reading for secondary school readers, the same age as the protagonists Šona, Olmo and Sine who are interested in the same things, love, friendship, tolerance, inclusion in society and social values. The novel opens up numerous questions, the answers to which lie within ourselves and each person's attitude towards the world.

Vinko Möderndorfer (1958) is an all-round writer of children's and adult literature. His works for youth is mostly poetry aimed at younger primary school age children but he has also so far written three successful novels for young adults in which he addresses everyday themes on events experienced by teenagers while the adult protagonists are more reserved towards these subjects. The main theme of his novel *Jaz sem Andrej* (I Am Andrej, 2018), is teenage love and discovering sexuality; The novel *Kot v filmu* (Just Like a Film, 2013) is the story of a teenager who lives in a family that is in fact very different to what he thought before the age of twelve when the truth is revealed and this greatly affects his life: at first it appears tragic, but his father shows him which values in life are worth considering. The social-psychological novel *Kit na plaži* (Whale on a Beach), 2015, is a novel about being different, about growing up and relationships. Möderndorfer cleverly uses various literary means and processes among which two are particularly worth noting: a sensible use of humorous elements that reveal Nika's character and at the same time humour mildens the most sensitive points in the novel; and a linguistic subtlety that is clearly shown with her brother Igor where Möderndorfer successfully conveys his sincerity, genuineness and ability to empathise through simple childish language; also eloquent are Nika's friend Barbka's SMSes that she writes so people would hear her. The writer thus unobtrusively points out the issue of inclusivity that will only be fully possible once society comprehends that people have similar needs and desires and that people with special needs present no threat. Also that we all have thing we are 'slow' at and that maturity means that we know how to say sorry at the right time.

Slavko Pregl (1945) in his writing, regardless of the age group it is aimed at, mostly keeps within the category of realistic literature. The actual events in each work are usually related to school and extra-curricular activities, as well as spending free time in a contemporary urban environment. Children, the main literary characters, are aged between eight and twelve, occasionally slightly older (in his novels) or younger (pre-school in his books for younger children), and the problems they come across are appropriate for their age. The protagonist role is often taken by a group of children, though there is usually a clear leader among them. Comedy is also an important structural element of Pregl's prose with humorous inserts providing some relief in the everyday dreariness experienced by his growing-up literary characters. In his novel *The Silver of Blue Grotto* (2022, first edition 2003), the author combines descriptions of the beauties of the Adriatic Sea, finding treasures, making friends and the fleeting nature of time that always passes too quickly on holidays.

Damijan Šinigoj (1964) has so far published two successful YA novels, *Looking for Eva*, 2014 and *Kjer veter spi* (Where the Wind Sleeps, 2020). The latter addresses important questions about growing up that always appear only in extreme situations (dangers). It reveals to the YA (and adult) reader the world of underground Karst caves, their immense beauty and dangers. On the other hand, it is an also an adventure story with a happy romantic ending.

Suzana Tratnik (1963) writes mostly adult fiction with the themes of certain novels such as *Ime mi je Damjan* (My Name Is Damian), 2001, and *Tombola ali življenje* (Bingo or Life!), 2017, appealing to young adult readers, growing-up issues, especially searching for sexual identity and the meaning of existence (conforming to the expectations of their surroundings and the literary figures search for fulfilment).

Janja Vidmar (1962) is one of the most recognisable Slovene authors for young adults, distinguished particularly for her polished style, precisely depicted literary characters and social sensitivity at the theme-motif level. The most extensive and also most important part of her work is longer prose for children and young adults that includes her realistic tales and novels. Vidmar often places estrangement and the stratification of contemporary Slovene society into the foreground of events in her social-psychological novels and tales and uses it as the core material of her longer literary works. Her literary heroes come from such different worlds that logical probability might have never have brought them together, yet they meet. The revelation of the characterisation of the literary figures often occurs through internal monologues and comments by the third-person, omniscient narrator. Counterbalancing the sombre nature of her themes (eating disorders, domestic violence, xenophobia, death, homosexuality, inadequacy, religious discrimination), we can trace a great deal of irony and self-irony in the protagonists. It seems that it is this ironical attitude to the world that helps them get thought their difficulties and to some degree maintains the dignity of these figures within society. In her works Janja Vidmar often exposes problems that are in general terms unacceptable but complacency and general disinterest make it acceptable that they remain concealed. In most of her books, close to sixty in number so far, the author addresses broader social issues. For example, with the novel *Baraba* (Scoundrel), 2001, she warns about domestic violence that society has only relatively recently begun to address, especially in terms of helping the victims of violence. The novel *Debeluška* (Miss Chubby), 1999, handles the theme of anorexia and bulimia, contemporary eating disorders. Spread throughout all her novels is a fear of loneliness and seclusion as important factors in attempts to fit into social norms and moulds. The novel *Princeska z napako* (A Princess With a Flaw), 1998, looks at the issue of refugees; the main literary character, the teenager Fatima, personifies the difficulties refugees have in adapting to the habits and customs of the places they have moved to because of the horrors of war in their own countries, and also how refugees are rejected (or at least ignored) by the local population. The author also looks at the issue of diversity in her collection of short stories *Otroci sveta* (Children of the World), 2013, articulating the stories of children from different parts of the world, especially from the margins of society. The author conveys the conviction that we are all connected in the modern global world. Her stories are a social reflection of the world that should be much kinder to children, more humane and giving everyone a chance for a better life. Tolerance could generate understanding if we were to internalise our sensitivity for vulnerable groups that also include children... In her novel *Črna vrana* (Black Crow), 2018, the author takes a deeper look at children from the world's war zones, refugees and the resettlement of the young who must use their own resourcefulness on their long path to freedom.

In studying contemporary Slovene literature for children and young adults, what is noticeable is the development of certain literary forms and genres, the contemporary nature of the themes and motifs, an in depth presentation of literary characters and with the majority of authors also an exceptional creative use of language.

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Bee Curious

SLOVENIA'S BEST FOR YOUNG READERS

The title of this anthology is related to the idea of ***a honeycomb of words***; a honeycomb is built by bees to store precious honey, a honeycomb of words can be a poem, a novel, an essay, containing a precious idea, a message, a story. Bees hold a special meaning in Slovenia, its cultural and spiritual space. Unsurprisingly, beekeeping has also 'left its mark on folk art. It is traditional in Slovenia for the front panels of hives to be decorated with colourful paintings, and these unique ornamented beehives have become a part of our rural architecture, an important feature of the cultural landscape.' (Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, https://en.czs.si/)

Allegedly Slovenia holds the world record for the most beekeepers per capita. The Slovene version of the phrase busy as a bee translates as 'hardworking as a bee.'

- **Carniolan honey bees** (*Apis mellifera carnica*), also known as **grey bees** (among beekeepers as **Carniolans**, or '**Carnies**' for short), are a subspecies of the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). Native to the Balkans, their name is associated with Carniola (a part of present-day Slovenia) for historical reasons. More about this on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carniolan_honey_bee).
- **20 May is World Bee Day:** The initiative for proclaiming World Bee Day came from Slovenia. The date chosen was the date of birth of the great 18th century apiarist Anton Janša, the first teacher of beekeeping at the court of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa. (https://www.slovenia.info/en/stories/celebrate-world-bee-day-with-us)
- In 2022, **Beekeeping in Slovenia** was inscribed by UNESCO on its Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857).
- **The *Krajnska čbelica*** (The Carniolan Bee) was an important poetry almanac published in five volumes between 1830 and 1848. It was especially influential in spreading the Slovene language among intellectuals (previously German was largely used). (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Carniolan_Bee)
- **The Čebelica** (Little Bee) collection is the oldest Slovene book collection, published since 1953, containing over 400 titles (https://www.mladinska-knjiga.si/zbirke/cebelica). It is a cult collection known by every child in Slovenia. Many of the volumes were illustrated by painter Jelka Reichman, almost a kind of trademark of the series.

With the bee so closely linked to the culture and language of Slovenia, it is not surprising that it also appeared early on as a literary character in children's and young adult literature, for example, in the poem by Oton Župančič *Ciciban in čebela* (Ciciban and the Bee, in his 1915 collection *Ciciban in še kaj*), in the fantasy story *Čebelice* (Little Bees, 1966) by Ela Peroci, the 100th picture book in the Čebelica collection, as well as more recently, for example, in Anja Štefan's poem *The Bee* in her 2020 collection *Imam zelene čeveljčke* (I Have Green Shoes).

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