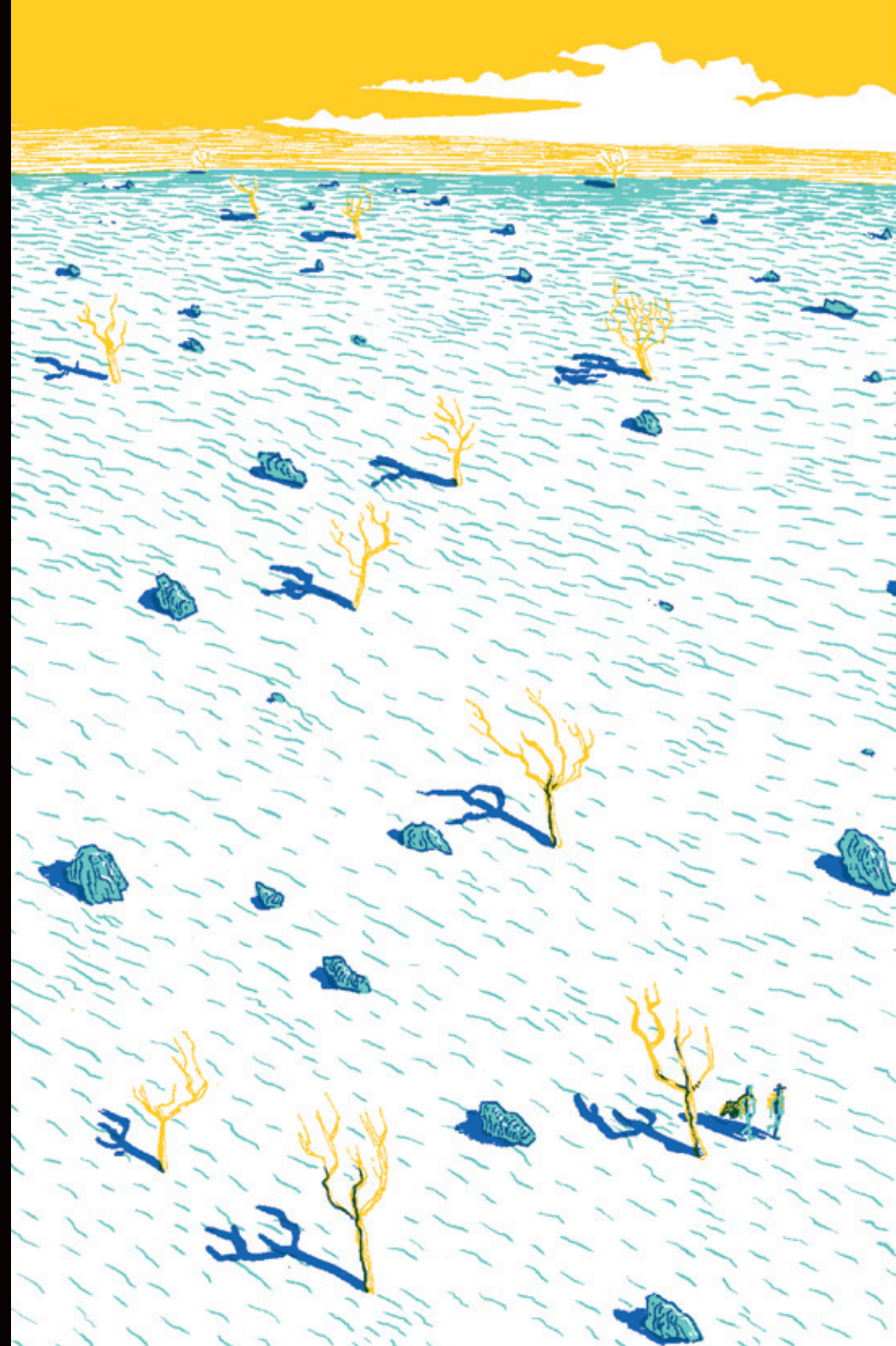


New Czech Books Autumn 2017



Tatána Rubášová & Jindřich Janíček
WILLIAM AND MERIWETHER:
AN EXTRAORDINARY ROBOT EXPEDITION



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the Czech Literary Centre

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Writing is literal thinking. Writing literature means re-thinking the contexts in which we live. Regardless of whether works are from a minor language, good books always share features that are universal and translatable from person to person. We believe that the books in our autumn selection go far beyond the local context. The prose will take you on a long journey from distant regions around a fictionalised rendering of the Aral Sea, through many different aspects of reality in East and Central Europe and even overseas to the Brazilian jungle. The poetry selection offers a glimpse of the islands and woods of both personal and European midlands. The truly epic ambition of the stories presented in the graphic novels and non-fiction books predominantly explore historical topics. The horizons of new Czech literature are vast.

There are two important pieces of news for Czech literature abroad: there is more support for publishing translations of Czech literature than ever before, both in terms of financial subsidies and providing practical support for Czech books, authors and translators. As a publisher interested in Czech literature, you can now apply for grants covering up to 70% of the total publishing costs of each book. Besides translation subsidies, there is now the possibility to also apply for grants for the costs of rights, printing, graphic design and even promotion. Another important piece of news is that since the beginning of this year, Czech literature and book culture has had a new supporting literary organisation named CzechLit — Czech Literary Centre. It is a new section of the Moravian Library and acts both as an information hub and a promotion agency. It also provides grants for authors and translators and organises residencies. If you're a translator, publisher or generally interested in what is going on in Czech literature, don't hesitate to contact us at www.czechlit.cz!

Ondřej Buddeus
CzechLit Head Coordinator

CzechLit – Czech Literary Centre

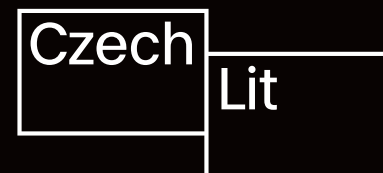
is a state-funded organisation supporting and promoting Czech literature abroad and in the Czech Republic. The centre is a section of the Moravian Library.

CzechLit:

- Promotes prose, literature for children and young adults, poetry, drama, comics, non-fiction and new forms of literature
- Acts as an information hub for foreign publishers, translators, Czech studies specialists, event organisers and others interested in Czech literature and book culture
- Provides grants for authors to attend cultural events abroad and in the Czech Republic
- Organises residencies for foreign translators, Czech studies specialists and authors
- Runs the bilingual website czechlit.cz with information about books, authors, grants, residencies and Czech literature news
- Cooperates with the network of Czech Centres, which promote Czech culture abroad, as well as with other governmental and non-governmental cultural and non-profit organisations and individuals
- Is involved in the presentation of Czech literature at book fairs abroad in cooperation with its parent institution
- Holds the annual Susanna Roth Award for young translators of Czech literature

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Prose

Jáchym Topol

A SENSITIVE PERSON

Topol's highly awaited new novel captures the Zeitgeist, reflecting on love and death, religion, family, friendship, survival, modern politics, the Russian threat, Europe and populism.

Moor, a middle-aged actor, travels around Europe with his wife Olga and their two kids. They attend theatre festivals, where they perform their plays. Being confronted with a growing resentment towards foreigners, Moor decides, after decades spent abroad, to return home to the Czech Republic and settle down. After being caught by accident in the midst of the Ukrainian-Russian war they finally reach their home region on the banks of the Sázava river, south-east of Prague.

Back home, Moor is accused of murdering his father-in-law. He escapes the law and together with his two sons embarks upon a kind of road trip through the region. They go on foot, by car and by boat and encounter a series of local

people, stories and events. We meet clans, hookers, loan sharks, gypsies, hoodlums, drunks, telltales. All leading up to a grand finale including a wedding, a brothel, the police and a Russian tank.

A Sensitive Person has its own specific dynamic and rhythm. Full speed grotesque episodes alternate with witty and vivid dialogues; poetic descriptions contrast with the vulgar, explicit speech of the protagonists. It is a story about ordinary people who are not inhibited by any political correctness and who try to find their way in a community, in a world that is changing. The novel reflects the European society of today, and the characters in Topol's novel are rough people, brutal, but with a heart. They are all sensitive.

"A picaresque romp of black humour and fantasy, the novel teems with extraordinary characters, but it is also urgently contemporary."

—*The Times Literary Supplement*

"*A Sensitive Person* is grotesque and meditative, kind and gloomy, full of irony, sadness and black humour, forming a dazzling geyser in which more and less believable stories alternate in a diabolical rhythm."

—*MF Dnes*



Citlivý člověk
Torst, 2017, 360 pp



Photo: David Konečný

Jáchym Topol (b. 1962) is arguably the most important representative of the postmodern trend in post-1989 Czech prose. He is a poet, prose writer and journalist, lyricist and musician. Winner of numerous literary prizes, including the Tom Stoppard Prize and the Vilenica Prize for contributions to Central European literature. His books have been published in more than ten languages, including English, German, Spanish and Norwegian.

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(Les éditions Noir sur Blanc), Serbia (Heliks)

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English sample translation available

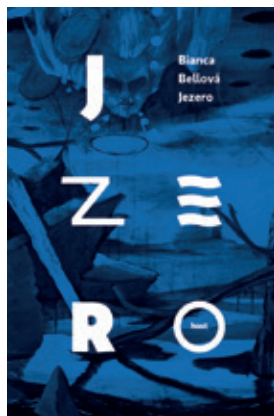
Bianca Bellová

THE LAKE

A dystopian page-turner about the coming of age of a young hero, which won the 2017 EU Prize for Literature.

A fishing village at the end of the world. A lake that is drying up and, ominously, pushing out its banks. The men have vodka, the women troubles, the children eczema to scratch at. Born into this unforgiving environment, Nami, a young boy, embarks on a journey with nothing but a bundle of nerves, a coat that was once his grandfather's and the vague idea of searching for his mother, who disappeared from his life at a young age. To uncover the greatest mystery of his life, he must sail across and walk around the lake and finally sink to its bottom.

This novel is a raw account of life in a devastated land and the harsh, primitive circumstances under which people fight to survive. Nami's story touches on various contemporary societal and political issues from life in post-soviet Europe to ecology, but they never take the spotlight away from the powerful central narrative. The tension between the novel's uncertain setting, both in time and space, and its naturalistic realism transforms one boy's coming of age into an often-disconcerting modern myth.



Jezero
Host, 2016, 192 pp, 40,860 words

“Bianca Bellová's raw, ruthless, apocalyptic prose is astonishing. It's a stubborn and prickly book, which resists the reader until the last sentence, yet you won't be able to put it down. Such a confidently and authentically written work with a clear intention, precise and seamless, deserves awards.”

—*Reflex*

“Bianca Bellová has enriched Czech literature with a harsh dystopia, one of the most remarkable books of recent years.”

—*MF Dnes*

Photo: David Konečný



Bianca Bellová (b. 1970) is a translator, interpreter and writer with Bulgarian roots. Her novel *Mrtvý muž* (Dead Man, 2011) received widespread critical acclaim and has been translated into German. Her latest novel, *Jezero* (The Lake, 2016), won the EU Prize for Literature and will be published in more than ten languages. In her work, Bellová shows that she has a good eye for interpersonal interactions and that she does not shy away from raising unsettling questions, as well as touching on the grand themes of our times. This, combined with her great narrative talent, makes her books a joy to read.

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AWARDS:
2017 European Union Prize for Literature
2017 Magnesia Litera Award – Book of the Year

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English sample translation available

Marek Šindelka

MATERIAL FATIGUE

The first novel by a Czech author to address the European migrant crisis depicts the reduction of the lives of “foreigners”, artificially created enemies, to a problem, manpower, material.

The hero of this book is an unnamed teenage refugee. He finds himself in a foreign country in the middle of Europe, which in his eyes looks like nothing more than a complex of fences, overpasses, railway corridors and warehouses. An unknown territory, which to him seems distant and hostile. Travelling through the cold winter landscape, he is denied real life, moving like a shadow on the periphery of the land and society. Šindelka's narrative follows this boy's perilous journey, as he tries to get to a city in the north he had been heading to with his older brother, Aamir, before they were split up by traffickers.

Material Fatigue is a uniquely physical novel; Šindelka's original, raw, succinct poetic style capturing every movement and involuntary reaction, every flash of pain. This draws us into the journeys of both brothers from their war-torn home to a new future but it is up to each reader to draw their own conclusions. The novel doesn't moralise, it isn't a political or social pamphlet, it doesn't point fingers. Although it is based on the current migration crisis, *Material Fatigue* is a powerful exploration of universal themes of alienation, the loss of one's home and roots.

“Šindelka's prose is strongest in its descriptions of the physical experiences of the refugees. Animal instincts seem to awaken in the main characters when their lives are threatened. Some of the insights are extremely powerful.”

—*Hospodářské noviny*

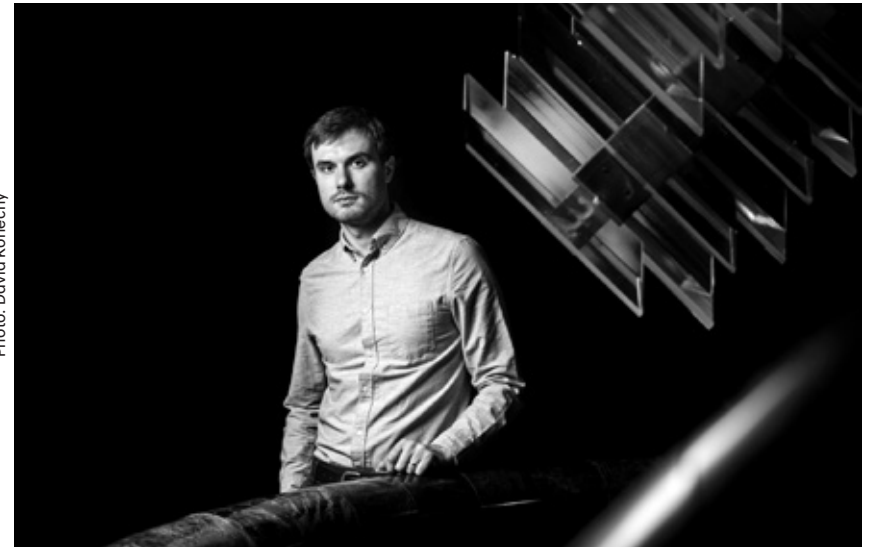
“[Šindelka] is able to convey the movement of every muscle, twitching nerve as well as the effects of the elements: snow, wind, ice or clouds and their fluctuations which are indifferent to humans. These parts have an almost existential dimension.”

—*Lidové noviny*



Únava materiálu
Odeon, 2016, 208 pp

Photo: David Konečný



Marek Šindelka (b. 1984) studied Cultural Studies at Charles University in Prague and screenwriting at the film academy, FAMU. His debut poetry collection, *Strychnin a jiné básně* (Strychnine and Other Poems, 2005), won the Jiří Orten Prize for authors under thirty. His novels and short story collections have been published in English, Dutch, Polish, Hungarian and Bulgarian and have won two Magnesia Litera Awards.

RIGHTS SOLD:
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AWARDS:
2017 Magnesia Litera Award – Prose

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Jiří Hájíček

THE RAINSTICK

Following the best-selling novels *Rustic Baroque* and *Fish Blood*, Jiří Hájíček completes his “rural trilogy of moral disquiet”.

In *Rybí krev* (*Fish Blood*, 2012), Hájíček used the setting of a village threatened by the construction of a nuclear power station to explore diverse social changes and the consequences for people and communities. *Selský baroko* (*Rustic Baroque*, 2005) looked at the after-effects of 1950s communist collectivization of agriculture and its destructive repercussions. In Hájíček’s latest novel, *The Rainstick*, Zbyněk, a land administrator, meets a former love he hasn’t seen for many years, in order to help her with an apparently simple property-related problem. Having returned to the village where he was born and grew up, Zbyněk

is gradually informed about the unclear circumstances of a land dispute; at the same time, he becomes embroiled in a personal and marital crisis. He struggles with insomnia, loses his way in the countryside and cadastral maps, while a mad 18th-century rustic aviator hovers above him like an apparition. Hájíček is a well-established author whose bestselling novels, with their deceptively simple and traditional narrative style, are regularly nominated for all the major Czech literary awards and have been translated into a number of languages including English, Italian and Polish.



Dešťová hůl
Host, 2016, 280 pp

“*The Rainstick* is one of the most powerful prose works of the year.”

—*MF Dnes*

“The conclusion of *The Rainstick* will reverberate in the reader for a long time. Hájíček is an exceptional storyteller.”

—*Hospodářské noviny*

Photo: Jakub Stadler / Wikipedia



One of the most distinctive modern Czech writers, Jiří Hájíček (b. 1967) has written eight books suffused with the South Bohemian countryside. His novels have won the Magnesia Litera Award twice and been adapted into a feature film. Hájíček’s work has been translated into a number of languages, including English and Italian, and a short story was selected for the *2017 Best European Fiction* anthology published by Dalkey Archive Press (USA).

RIGHTS SOLD:
Poland (Książkowe Klimaty), Bulgaria (Izida),
Macedonia (Antolog)

AWARDS:
2016 Lidové Noviny Book of the Year
2017 Czech Book Award

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English sample translation available

Ivana Myšková

WHITE ANIMALS ARE VERY OFTEN DEAF

Brilliantly written short stories about the thin boundary of normality with great wicked humour.

The eleven short stories in this volume, focusing on the phenomenon of disgust and loathing, mercilessly reveal our wrongs, simple-mindedness and the nastiness we do to ourselves and others. The author creates parables from the animal kingdom with unique, refined language, a sophisticated solitary style and biting humour, as well as a fine sense for the sound of words, and leads the reader to the realisation that nothing fictitious is strange enough to be stranger than the world we live in. Our arduous attempts to survive and discreetly integrate into the world, noble wretchedness and malicious kindness are at once sad, touching and

ridiculous. The author brilliantly evokes numerous emotions simultaneously and shows that the ambivalence of human living is unpleasantly natural. Just as in her previous book *Nícení* (Incitement), in *White Animals Are Very Often Deaf*, Ivana Myšková also explores the many different forms of truth: sincerity, veracity, authenticity. Hiding and the reluctance to truly share oneself with the world are viewed as a creeping lifestyle disease. The verbal creatures in these clearly shaped stories with punch-lines and strong plots, as well as carefully built narrative twists create a truly decadent reading experience.

“Although most of the texts are introspective, the author works skilfully and often quite uncompromisingly with the characters and the situations into which she gets them. [...] the reader is reminded of the storytelling masters of the 1960s, namely Julio Cortázar, and the current short-story star, Alice Munro.”

—*Hospodářské noviny*

“The author’s style is polished; not a single word seems unnecessary or uncertain. Clearly outlined themes emerge from the plots without the prose ever becoming simplistic. She is able to connect the unique with the universal.”

—*iLiteratura*



Bílá zvířata jsou velmi často hluchá
Host, 2017, 208 pp



Photo: Marta Myšková

Ivana Myšková (b. 1981) ranks among the stars of the young generation of Czech prose writers. She graduated in creative writing and media communication from the Literary Academy in Prague. She worked as a radio cultural editor and now is a magazine editor. In 2007, she debuted with her radio play *Odpoledne s liliputem* (Afternoon with a Lilliputian) and in 2012, she published her novella *Nícení* (Incitement), for which she was nominated for the Czech Book Award and Josef Škvorecký Award. In 2017, she published a collection of short stories entitled *Bílá zvířata jsou velmi často hluchá* (White Animals Are Very Often Deaf), in which she explores disgust and squeamishness with a scientific meticulousness and sarcasm.

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English and German sample
translations available

Anna Bolavá

GOING DOWN

Magic and symbolism intertwine with a sensitive, realistic portrait of a small town and a detective storyline in this novel by a rising star of Czech prose.

In her second novel, Anna Bolavá follows loosely from her debut, *Do tmy* (Into Darkness), which was praised by both readers and critics. As in her prosaic debut, the short title serves as a kind of a treble clef for the dark score of the story. The number of falls, declines and slumps, both literal and figurative, mounts up in this novel, where the main role is played by swamps outside the central town. A secondary detective plotline – the discovery of the body of a missing teacher – is used as a starting

point for the depiction of a tangled social web around a poultry farm worker, a single mother, Milada, in a small town with its narrow-mindedness, hopelessness and obsessions (food, work, money...). Ironic passages, the vividness of which reveals the writer's first-hand experience, alternate with flashes of the disturbing supernatural reminiscent of the work of Stephen King. It's not just the cool air from the woods that is permeating the town, the tempting call of the watery depths can also be heard in the distance.

"Ordinary does not mean banal to the author; every character has its depth and peculiarity. Her approach is unique in the context of contemporary Czech literature, and shows that there is a great storyteller being born who can captivate diverse readerships."

—*Respekt*

"A masterly stylist, a lover of short sentences and crushed life stories has carefully composed an autumnal, semi-dark, gloomy story from the periphery where characters cut their lives into shifts, keep silent or muddy the waters about their motivation, never getting what they want."

—*Reflex*



Ke dnu
Odeon, 2017, 288 pp



Photo: David Konečný / Větrné mlýny publishers

Poet and novelist, real name Bohumila Adamová (b. 1981). Winner of the 2016 Magnesia Litera Award in the prose category for her debut novel *Do tmy* (Into Darkness, 2016), which was hailed by critics as one of the major discoveries of recent years. She has written under different names in various literary magazines and published a poetry collection, *Černý rok* (The Black Year, 2013), under the Anna Bolavá pseudonym.

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English and German sample
translations available

Marek Toman

THE PRAISE OF OPPORTUNISM

Toman has found a truly original voice for the retelling of modern Czech and Central European history: the testimony of Prague's Černín Palace, which has been witness to many historical, military, political, and personal events.

Marek Toman has made the largest Baroque structure in Prague the protagonist of his latest novel, commenting upon the historical events that have passed it by over the centuries. Narrating its own story, the palace describes the turning points in Czech history, from the day it was built up to the present day. Over time, the palace has served as a gallery, a hospital, military barracks, a shelter for

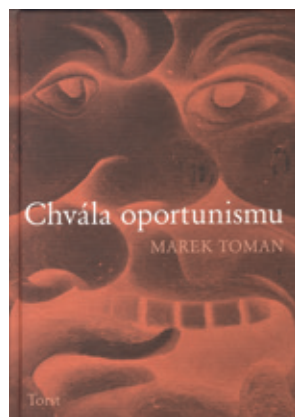
the poor, or office of the Reichsprotektor during the Second World War. In great depth, the palace discusses the death of Jan Masaryk: after the Communist putsch in 1948, the former foreign minister fell out of the window of his quarters on the third floor of the palace. Could it have been murder? The Černín Palace may know the answer.

"[...] exceptionally convincing, at the same time thrilling and emotionally charged. Thanks to the truly original form through which *The Praise of Opportunism* manages to capture the passing of history, the novel bears comparison with the best works of current European fiction: Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White*, Hilary Mantel's *Tudor* saga, or *The Great Century* by Swedish writer Jan Guillou."

—Právo

"This novel about one of the most remarkable buildings in Prague has an unusually powerful narrative drive and a comic flair."

—*Hospodářské noviny*



Chvála oportunismu
Torst, 2016, 420 pp

Photo: Josef Brož



Marek Toman (b. 1967) is a novelist, journalist, poet and translator whose books have been published in English, Finnish, Polish and Hungarian. He studied philosophy at Charles University in Prague and has worked at Czech Radio, for the *Hospodářské noviny* newspaper and as a diplomat in Estonia and Hungary. His books often deal with historical themes and relations between different generations.

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English and German sample
translations available

Markéta Pilátová

WITH BAŤA IN THE JUNGLE

A novel about the life in exile of entrepreneur Jan Antonín Baťa, who played a major role in turning the Baťa shoe company into a global business phenomenon.

While in his homeland the Communists were establishing a dictatorship, Jan Antonín Baťa was constructing new ‘ideal cities’ in the Brazilian jungle based on the Czech city of Zlín. In this novel, Baťa attempts to posthumously tell his story as he experienced it, not as it was portrayed by communist propaganda. He recalls his closest co-workers and advisors, his victories and defeats and refuses to leave this world until he has found justice. A masterful storyteller, Pilátová paints a vivid picture of the 20th century, of intimate stories against the backdrop of grand events that shook the world, that shook Czechoslovakia and the Baťa family.

The women who lived with Baťa in exile also tell their stories in this novel – his daughters Ludmila and Edita and granddaughter Dolores – as well as his son-in-law Ljubodrag and other companions, producing a multifaceted account of his life. Through the author’s extensive research, all the protagonists have their own unique voice. Using family diaries and documents, Baťa’s prose and poetry as well as conversations with Baťa’s granddaughter, Pilátová has produced a page-turner about one of the most remarkable and influential Czech families.



S Baťou v džungli
Torst, 2017, 264 pp

“Historical and existential themes [...] flavoured with distinctive humour and colourful narration.”

—*Lidové noviny*

“A well-written and powerful story.”

—*Host*

Photo: Jiří Sobota



Markéta Pilátová (b. 1973) is a writer, journalist, author of children’s books, translator and Hispanic expert; she has twice been nominated for the Josef Škvorecký Award and for the Magnesia Litera and her books have been translated into German, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and other languages. She alternates between living in the Czech Republic and in South America (Argentina, Brazil), where she teaches Czech to the descendants of Czech emigrants.

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Zuzana Kultánová

AUGUSTIN ZIMMERMANN

25

Prose – Literary Fiction

Inspired by the true story of Augustin Zimmermann, who murdered his children in 1860s Prague, this merciless novel uses historical events and the promise of the Industrial Revolution to capture a timeless story about the desire to overcome one's nature and dark desires.

Although this is Kultánová's debut novel, the response from critics and readers has been overwhelmingly positive, earning her the Jiří Orten Prize for authors under thirty and a nomination in the Magnesia Litera Award's Discovery of the Year category. Augustin Zimmermann, the main protagonist of this book, represents an almost archetypal model of an unhappy person. While the world around him is productive and prosperous during the Industrial Revolution, his family is struggling with an existential crisis exacerbated by his alcoholism and hopeless attempts to succeed in this new world. Augustin's uncertain past, strange unease and deceitful nature cast a dark shadow on his entire family, which is spiralling

into increasing despair and falling to the bottom of the social hierarchy, from which there is no escape. The story culminates tragically in Prague's Josefov quarter, which for centuries was a Jewish ghetto.

Kultánová's gripping naturalistic narrative transcends historical fiction, touching on themes such as the extent to which the environment we live in dictates our lives, or the paralysing effect of newly attained freedom, subtly echoing the feelings of generations who experienced the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. This is a dark novel inspired by true events; nevertheless, it also contains moments of humour. Pitch black humour.

"*Augustin Zimmermann* is an exceedingly good debut novella [...] The author's diverse style is full of naturalism and a number of imaginative analogies, yet it retains its clarity."

—Host

"An exceptional and uncompromising novel."

—*Hospodářské noviny*



Augustin Zimmermann
Kniha Zlín, 2016, 200 pp



Photo: Karolína Černáková

Zuzana Kultánová (b. 1986) is a writer, literary journalist and critic. Her 2016 debut novel, *Augustin Zimmermann*, was a surprise hit and earned her the prestigious Jiří Orten Prize for authors under thirty. Kultánová lives and works in Prague.

AWARDS:
2017 Jiří Orten Prize

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English and German sample
translations available

Miroslav Pech

COBAIN'S FOLLOWERS

A bestselling cult novella of Czechs in their thirties by a young Bukowski from Bohemia.

This generation-defining book about growing up in a small Czech town stands out because of its excellent workmanship: the narrator's credibility, mystery created by leaving enough unsaid, memorable characters, terse beatnik humour, brisk dialogues and a fast-paced plot. A group of teenagers tries to escape from their mundane reality through the constant, rebellious intake of drugs and alcohol, worthless provocations and hopeless attempts at music. However, it turns out that the power of a group of friends can be a destructive and a bonding element, and sometimes a reason to live. Although the novel is aimed at the author's and the narrator's contemporaries, its appeal is

universal thanks to the timelessness of the topics with which it deals: intergenerational conflict, the search for identity and an authentic life as well as the paralysis of freedom. Whether due to a lack of will or money, it turns out the benefits of freedom are often unreachable.

Cobain's Followers is a novel exceptional in its ability to evoke the mindset of a generation that came of age at the beginning of the new millennium and tried to imitate grunge bands with Nirvana and Kurt Cobain at the forefront, but this outstanding prose with its brash humour is far from being interesting only to younger readers.

"*Cobain's Followers* bears unique witness to a generation longing to live their lives by their own rules, especially inspired by their idols. Beatnik rebelliousness radiates from it a mile off. Few writers can achieve that nowadays, although many would like to."

—*MF Dnes*

"This text documenting a certain state of mind shifts towards a bildungsroman about growing up 'despite society', i.e., to a genre which has a very long tradition not only in Czech literature."

—*Tvar*



Cobainovi žáci
Argo, 2017, 200 pp

Photo: Richard Klíčník



Miroslav Pech (b. 1986) has had various jobs (printer, shop assistant, ancillary worker, warehouse worker, editor or driver). He is the author of the collections of short stories *Napišu Pavle* (I Will Write to Pavla, 2013), *Ohromně vtipná videa* (Very Funny Videos, 2014) and the novel *Cobainovi žáci* (Cobain's Followers, 2017), which has become a bestseller. Translations of his texts have appeared on the Belarussian website litrazh.org and on the Slovenian website ludliteratura.si.

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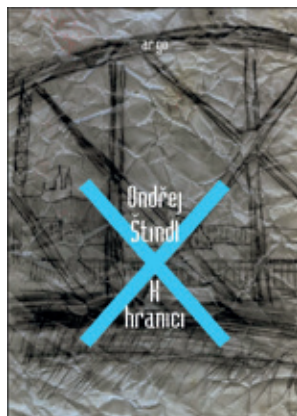
English and German sample
translations available

Ondřej Štindl TO THE BORDER

This novel effectively portrays individual fates set against the background of historical events, combining a love story with a bildungsroman, gunslinger tale and myth.

Ondřej Štindl's narrative is formed of three parts. Each has a different protagonist, each is set in a different historical period and yet many elements connect them: Russian Liberation Army soldier Štěpán at the end of World War II, truck driver Michal during the harsh period after the defeat of the Prague Spring in 1969, and hospital orderly Ivan at the end of the Communist regime. The three of them are outsiders who cannot conform to society and don't even particularly want to. Although they try to integrate into their communities and submit to

unseen forces, there eventually comes a moment when they make a fateful decision and resist. Their lives are irreversibly transformed and start moving towards a tragic denouement, inevitable and devastating. However there is always a chance that there is hope beyond the line they have crossed. Using themes from westerns and even crossing into the realm of apocalyptic sci-fi, *To the Border* explores what it meant to take action during periods when it was simpler to be passive rather than fight against injustices.



K hranici
Argo, 2016, 400 pp, 120 000 words

“Štindl's writing is like a sharp axe held by a butcher in a bloody apron. Its chops are sharp and exact.”

—*Hospodářské noviny*

“The author's language provokes the senses, works with all the registers from the down-and-out to majesty, as well as with stylistic wit, for example, when imitating Russian diction. Emotions go to the core, speed resembles gushing and begs for a greedy reading of proliferating history.”

—*Respekt*



Photo: Argo publishers archive

Ondřej Štindl (b. 1966) is a film and music critic, author, screenwriter and DJ. After the Velvet Revolution, he co-founded the first private Czech radio station, Radio 1, where he broadcasts to this day. He has also worked as a journalist for the *Lidové noviny* newspaper, the Czech section of the BBC and the *Revolver Revue* literary magazine. Štindl's screenplays have become successful feature films and his first novel, *Mondschein*, was published in 2012.

Chaim Cigan OUT IN THE STICKS TETRALOGY

A superb blend of Jewish teachings and philosophy, dreams, sci-fi, and even a touch of detective work.

Today we know that Chaim Cigan is the pseudonym of author and former Chief Rabbi of Prague, Karol Sidon. However, when *Altschulova metoda* (Altschul's Method, 2014), the first volume of the *Out in the Sticks* tetralogy, came out in 2014, the search for his true identity became a major topic in the Czech literary world, for at the time the book came as a revelation.

These four novels combine science fiction elements, adventure, mystery, philosophy and humour. The heroes of the series attempt to understand the implications of an experiment which leads to time-travel, the creation of parallel

worlds and an infinite number of human copies. Those responsible for the original phenomenal discovery struggle to reverse the effects of scientific temptation which led them to irresponsibly use the discoveries of their unleashed intelligence.

In this gripping, brilliantly written story spread over various countries, continents, historical epochs and alternative worlds, the author confronts the reader with the consequences of postmodern technology developed in the future from the medieval Kabbala. In masterly fashion, the author highlights the Middle Ages, Jewish thinking, culture and history from surprising angles.

"A sci-fi page-turner full of humorous and erotic scenes, historical or Judaic digressions and realistic dialogue about what causes a person to make a free choice and what far-reaching consequences it can have in history."

—*Hospodářské noviny*

"Sidon remains a master of dialogue and depicting the tension between the conventional and the erotic."

—*Respekt*



Kde lišky dávají dobrou noc
Torst, 2014–2017, 480–504 pp



Photo: David Konečný / Větrné mlýny publishers

Chaim Cigan, a pseudonym of Karol Efraim Sidon (b. 1942), studied dramaturgy and scriptwriting at the FAMU film academy and worked in radio and on the editorial board of several magazines. After signing the Charter 77 anti-regime initiative, he and his family had to emigrate to Germany. Sidon is a playwright, scriptwriter, novelist and rabbi whose books have been published in Polish and Dutch.

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English sample translation available

Emil Hakl

UMA'S VERSION

A unique blend of sci-fi and Hrabalian digressions by one of the most widely read and translated contemporary Czech authors.

Hakl's latest novel employs a theme which has been central to sci-fi since Karel Čapek wrote *R.U.R.* almost 100 years ago – the creation of an artificial human. Here the robot takes the form of a beautiful woman, the titular Uma, who the main character encounters after a series of events started by locking himself out of his flat. Hakl is often described as a continuator of the literary legacy of Bohumil Hrabal, so the topic he chose for this novel may come as somewhat of a surprise. However, what he has

achieved here is a remarkable melding of these two genres. On the one hand, Uma provides an exciting, almost detective plot, to the novel, especially when the two central characters have to confront her 'makers'. At the same time, the process of her 'discovering' the world leads to humorous and poignant dialogues about religion, terrorism, social networks or the ethics of eating meat, all written in the author's typical humorous, ironic and efficient style.

"Hakl has given the novel an appealing story, a clear structure, functional relationships between the central characters and one dog, he switches naturally from writing in the first-person to the second-person and back again."

—*Hospodářské noviny*

"Hakl chose a brilliant topic for this book. Questions about how we will coexist with robots, humanoids and other technological creations are appealing to everyone."

—*MF Dnes*



Umina verze
Argo, 2016, 248 pp

Photo: Richard Klíčník



Emil Hakl (real name Jan Beneš, b. 1958) is a writer of prose and poetry. He studied at the Jaroslav Ježek Conservatory and after a number of manual professions worked as an advertising copywriter, journalist and editor. In the 1980s, he wrote poetry, dramatized books and helped organise performances with amateur theatre troupes. Hakl started writing prose in 1998. His novel *O rodičích a dětech* (Of Kids and Parents, 2002) received a Magnesia Litera Award in 2003, has been translated into more than ten languages and was adapted into a feature film. In 2010, he received the Josef Škvorecký Award for his novel *Pravidla směšného chování* (Rules of Ridiculous Behaviour). Three years later, he published the novel *Skutečná událost* (A True Story), for which he received his second Magnesia Litera Award. One of the most widely translated contemporary Czech authors, his books have been published in many languages including English, German, Italian, Dutch, Swedish and Norwegian.

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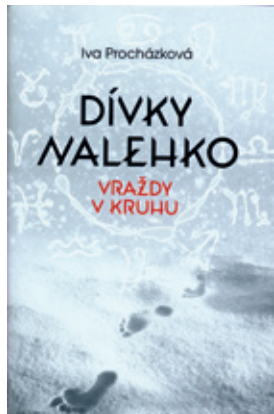
Iva Procházková

LIGHTLY DRESSED GIRLS

The second volume in a popular series of crime novels, *The Zodiac Murders*, which has been turned into a perhaps even more popular television series.

A murdered Vietnamese woman clad only in erotic lingerie is discovered in a private garden on the outskirts of Prague. The idiosyncratic police commissioner Holina, who sets as much store by his policeman's intuition as the advice of his old flame Sabina, a psychologist and astrologer, tries to penetrate as deeply as possible into the circle of people surrounding the dead girl. Together with his sympathetic team, commissioner Holina will have to unravel a labyrinth of

clues as tangled as the alleys of Prague's SAPA Vietnamese marketplace (nicknamed Little Hanoi). Procházková never does anything just for effect; she uses the murder victim's origins as the basis for a deeper probe into contemporary Czech society. What's more, she knows how to depict believable characters that you can live with and sympathize with. Their inner life is just as important as the detective plot.



"The detailed psychological depiction of the characters coupled with the engaging description of the atmosphere of Prague in winter give added value to this proper detective story and make it well worth buying."

—*Centrum detektivky*

"In *Lightly Dressed Girls*, Procházková tells the story not only from the investigator's point of view but also that of other characters, who she has managed to portray very convincingly, just as she has with the setting of the Vietnamese community and houses of ill repute."

—*E15*

Dívky nalehko
Paseka, 2016, 340 pp



Photo: Vladimír Holomek

Iva Procházková (b. 1953) is a writer of children's books, plays and fiction for adults. Her work is regularly published in Germany and has been translated into more than a dozen languages. She has won numerous awards, including the most prestigious German award for writing for children, the Friedrich Gerstäcker Prize. In 2014, she published the first part of a series of detective novels, *Vraždy v kruhu* (*The Zodiac Murders*), which has been successfully adapted for television.

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German sample translation available

Pavel Mandys (ed.) PRAGUE NOIR

Stories by fourteen leading Czech authors, exploring Prague crimes and mysteries, continuing the rich tradition of detective and mystery fiction set in this Central European capital.

As editor Pavel Mandys explains in his introduction, writing noir stories set in Prague presents an interesting set of problems: “How to write noir in a city where, until 1990, the profession of private detective hadn’t existed? Where the censors insisted on portraying the police in the media and literature in a positive light? Where freelance organized crime hadn’t existed, but where the largest criminal group was the secret police?” The authors featured in *Prague Noir* use this to their advantage, creating a unique and stylistically varied collection of stories which show the darker side of this popular tourist destination.

Prague Noir is also an unusual guide to traditional and lesser-known sights of Prague. Visit Charles Bridge with Miloš Urban, explore the mysterious world of the Jewish ghetto with Petr Stančík, read Petra Soukupová’s account of an unexplained disappearance in Stromovka park or follow Kateřina Tučková’s investigation into the dark past of an old house on the bank of the Vltava river.

This volume will be published in English in 2018 by the New York-based Akashic Books as part of their well-known *Noir* series.

“*Prague Noir* is a success. Due to its variety and the way it plays with the genre, the anthology will appeal to a wide range of readers. The book is also tangible proof that Czech authors are able to construct a good story and fulfil genre expectations.”

—E15

“An excellent cross-section of, and introduction to, contemporary Czech writers.”

—Aktuálně.cz



Praha Noir
Paseka, 2016, 304 pp



Photo: Jakub Hněvkovský

Pavel Mandys (b. 1972) is a literary and film journalist. He graduated in journalism and mass communications from Charles University in Prague. Mandys is an editor of the literary magazine iLiteratura.cz and organises the annual Magnesia Litera book awards.

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English and German sample
translations available

Vilma Kadlečková

MYCELIUM SERIES

An epic series of six sci-fi novels offering exciting action while also raising questions about the nature of manipulation, dominance and freedom.

The plot takes place on our planet a few centuries from now, where humans have survived only due to the technological achievements of the Ōsseans, an ancient theocratic alien civilisation. The two groups co-exist on Earth, however, the Ōsseans have brought more than just new technologies – a fundamental part of their culture is an ideology based on fanatical devotion, mysticism and sacred drugs, which is slowly spreading throughout the human population.

This sets the stage for a deeply allegorical story about the current state of the western world, clashes of cultures, xenophobia and power. Because of *Mycelium's* profound and often unsettling insights, and the psychological complexity of the narrative, critics have compared it to Orson Scott Card's classic *Ender's Game*. While never short on action, like all great science fiction the saga's most significant conflicts are battles of ideas.



Mycelium
Argo, 2013–2017, 319–482 pp

“A monumental metaphorical contemplation on different approaches to values, on finding a transcendental purpose, on reality and delusions.”

—Český rozhlas Vltava

“Kadlečková wants to ask questions and offer not only physical, but also intellectual conflicts, to experiment with form and combine sci-fi with fantasy.”

—iLiteratura



Photo: Richard Klíčník

Vilma Kadlečková (b. 1971) is a science fiction and fantasy writer known as the first lady of Czech fantasy. She studied at Charles University in Prague and her stories first appeared in competitions and fanzines in the late 1980s. Since then, Kadlečková has published more than ten books, many of which take place in the same fictional universe. Her short story *Longing for Blood* was published in English in the US *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* and praised in a review by Jeff VanderMeer. She is perhaps best known for the six-part *Mycelium* series, which has so far earned her three awards from the Czech Academy of Sci-fi, Fantasy and Horror.

AWARDS:

2013 Academy of Sci-fi, Fantasy and Horror Award – Best original Czech or Slovak book
2014 Academy of Sci-fi, Fantasy and Horror Award – Best original Czech or Slovak book
2016 Academy of Sci-fi, Fantasy and Horror Award – Best original Czech or Slovak book

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English and German sample translations available

Poetry

Petr Hruška NOT MY OWN

An extraordinary mono-thematic collection by the most respected contemporary Czech poet.

Petr Hruška has been publishing collections of poems for 20 years and throughout that time, they have all contained a noticeable motif of a character inspired by his stepson, Adam. Hruška selected these poems, added new ones and compiled a collection. A man “on the periphery”, who is not and cannot be part of

our world in its current form, and yet has been yearning for it, takes centre stage in this collection. A tall, old for his age child, as a symbol of our tragicomic, obstinate and always vain efforts to succeed, is a bitter metaphor as well as a central point of these poems.



Nevlastní
Argo, 2017, 56 pp

“Remarkable: what happens here in fewer than 40 texts happens in some novels.”

—*Hospodářské noviny*

“*Not my own* is a serious collection, a text with a chilling awareness of reality. It is true darkness, a deep black, as is written in one poem. Despite this, the message conveyed by Hruška in *Not my own* isn’t a tragic message.”

—*Literární noviny*



Photo: Ondřej Lipár

Petr Hruška (b. 1964) is a leading Czech poet and literary scholar. He was born and lives in Ostrava, where he regularly organises reading nights in the Les absinth club. He works for the Czech Literature Institute of the Academy of Sciences as an expert in post-1945 Czech poetry. He taught Czech literature in turns at Masaryk University in Brno and at the University of Ostrava. He is the author of many collections of poems published since 1995. In 1998, he was awarded the Czech-German Dresden Lyrics Prize and in 2009 the Jan Skácel Prize, which once every three years is awarded to the author of an outstanding Czech work of poetry which builds on the best tradition and spirit of Moravian poetry. In 2013, he won the highest Czech literary award, the State Prize for Literature, for his collection *Darmata* (Petty Tragedies, 2012). His poems have been translated into many European languages and books of his selected poems have been published in Germany, Poland, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia.

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English and German sample
translations available

Jitka N. Srbová

THE FOREST

45

Poetry

The Forest as a character in a collection of poems: a being complicated, comprehensive and immensely tempting, the Forest is both a lover and a magician, both an observer and a discreet initiator of action.

In her third collection, Jitka N. Srbová raises the term “mono-thematic” to a new level. She uses such methods as anthropomorphism and personification, presenting the mystical character of the Forest as an unconventional being, full of opposites; although this being is fragile and endangered, he is flourishing, open to visitors, but still defensive against

trespassers. The Forest does not forget debts, and yet, his hands are open, giving away everything he has. The city, standing “opposite him”, is only a very feeble rival, and journeys by train, connecting both poles of this exceptional collection of poems, are the moments when a wanderer of the world can attain understanding and awakening.



Les
Dauphin, 2016, 99 pp, 6647 words

“*The Forest* is a great collection by an author whose writings are constantly improving.”

—*Tvar*

“Tension between rationality, experience and imagination which is squeezed into a remarkably coherent unit.”

—*Karel Piorecký, literary historian and critic*



Photo: Jan Hordčák

Jitka N. Srbová (b. 1976), poet. She graduated from the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University. Srbová is the leading personality of the Czech internet poetry community and her poems are part of several anthologies. She was in charge of an internet literary magazine, *Wagon on-line*, and has published the collections of poems *Někdo se loudá po psím* (Someone Takes Dog-tired Strolls, 2011), *Světlo vprostřed těla* (Light at the Heart of the Body, 2013) and *Les* (The Forest, 2016). Srbová works as a copywriter.

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English and German sample
translations available

Milan Děžinský WALKING AROUND AN ISLAND

The last, paramount part of a loose trilogy of poetry with loneliness at home as its theme.

The sixth collection of poems by Milan Děžinský, *Walking Around an Island*, cements the leading position of this author from the younger generation of poets in the context of Czech poetry. In his collection of poems from 2011 to 2016, the author stays in his own exclusive domain: creating strong, mature poems, “shields

against emptiness”, from inconspicuous, simple starting moments. The expressivity of these poems is not straightforward, which makes them more impressive. The central image of an island to be inhabited and turned into a home runs throughout the book.

“It is not only private nostalgias the text rests on, but at the end of the book a phosphorescent ray of the Syrian war flashes in the intimate world and we can also notice the reflective colour of refugees’ vests on lifeboats. [...] Děžinský’s inconspicuous informality and words of subtle depiction will not absorb you upon the first reading; they will get under your skin only after repeated reading.”

—*Literární noviny*

“It is an existential testimony in casual attire; rather than expressivity we encounter a restrained testimony. Everyday reality, routine work, repetitiveness, as well as moments of laughter and occasional joy are all embraced in this collection of poems.”

—*Týden*



Obcházení ostrova
Host, 2017, 64 pp

Photo: Marta Režová



Milan Děžinský (b. 1974), a poet and translator, graduated in English and Czech language teaching. He started writing literature in the mid-nineties. Three of his six books of poetry published so far were nominated for the Magnesia Litera Award for poetry. In 2014, he was nominated for the German-Czech Dresden Lyrics Prize and in 2016, he became the first laureate of the international Václav Burian Prize for poetry. Milan Děžinský translates poems from English and lives in Roudnice nad Labem, where he is also engaged in politics.

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English and German sample
translations available

Milan Ohnisko

LIGHT IN THE WOUND

The crowning 10th collection by this leading Czech poet builds an entire life, the entire world, on a fleeting moment: a world which is fascinatingly and grotesquely off-kilter.

Milan Ohnisko reaches for eternity with his unique sense of fleeting detail and his essential observations. He is able to view the things which diminish in life and with life as both rarities and simple oversights; with eyes which are simultaneously gentle and stern. His memories of youth and childhood are sensuously full, as well as full of mystery.

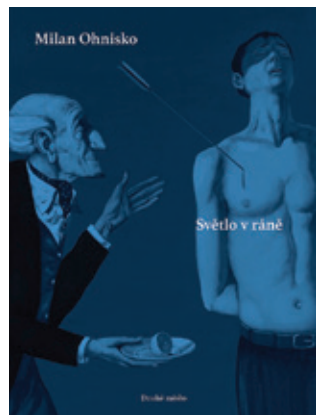
Through light and darkness, life never ceases to enchant, amaze, entertain and tire. Moreover, the things which are commonplace and everyday are usually the most miraculous. That which is terrifying most resembles farce. In this existential collection, Ohnisko demonstrates that he is able to deal with all these facets in a masterly fashion.

"Light in the Wound blinds with the absurdity of human action. It doesn't cleanse the reader, rather it illuminates and deepens the unseen pain hidden in Ohnisko's verses behind the backdrops of tragicomic and twisted fates."

—*iLiteratura*

"Ohnisko has managed to connect the purity of the Czech language with an urgent poetic testimony – to capture the unnameable in a refined, yet succinct way. There is nothing superfluous here – words flow and apparently innocently comment on moments from everyday life as well as scenes which seem to be from dreams or fairy tales."

—*Magnesia Litera Award jury*



Světlo v ráně
Druhé město, 2016, 82 pp



Photo: Veronika Králík

Milan Ohnisko (b. 1965), poet, publishing and magazine editor and a cultural journalist. He left grammar school prematurely in 1981, and then proceeded to do the same thing from the secondary school of library studies. He subsequently held various jobs. After the revolution in 1989, he operated his own publishing house and bookshop in Brno. He now works as the deputy to the editor-in-chief of the literary biweekly *Tvar*. He published his first poems in the 1980s in samizdat. He is the author of ten collections of poems and the co-author of *Bykárna* (Hogwash, 2006), a book of poetry written with Michal Šanda and Ivan Wernisch. An extensive anthology of his poetic works from 1985 to 2012 has been published under the title *Oh!* (2012).

AWARDS:
2017 Magnesia Litera Award – Poetry

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English and German sample
translations available

Children's and
Young Adult

Tereza Vostradovská

PLAYFUL SCIENCE

53

Children's and Young Adult

When it comes to teaching primary school children about the world around them, why present them with a series of dull, unconnected facts when you can link it all together in an appealing way through an entertaining story and even let the children try things out for themselves.

A young graduate of the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, Tereza Vostradovská is behind the text and illustrations for this inventive book, which presents information about nature in a gentle and interactive form. In its underground burrow, an inquisitive big-eared mouse is putting together its own nature encyclopaedia. For this purpose, it sets out to investigate both under the ground and above it, through the woods and orchard and around the fish pond, encountering worms and larva, tracing the outlines of stones from fruit, listening

to birdsong, thinking about how to tell the age of a tree or how to decide what is a fruit and what is a vegetable. It also sets tasks for its readers, teaching them how to catch beetles, grow plants or make a garden pond. In addition, the book comes with an app and a website (www.hravouka.cz), which are also in English. Although the book is primarily intended for younger schoolchildren, the playful and yet clear (often full-page) illustrations make it comprehensible and attractive for pre-schoolers too.

"Playful Science may seem like a natural history textbook, but it is much more than just a teaching aid: the picture panels depicting, for example, life in the soil, in the trees or below the surface of a fish pond, combine comparatively realistic drawing (yes, all those little creepy crawlies really are recognizable!) with artistic flair and at times with situational humour, too."

—Host

"Tereza Vostradovská's large-format book, Playful Science, is an attractive way to teach infants about the world around them, and thanks to the dependable yet playful illustrations it can even be used with toddlers."

—iLiteratura

Age: 4+



Hravouka
Běžilíška, 2016, 52 pp

Photo: Tereza Vostradovská's archive



Tereza Vostradovská (b. 1988), writer, illustrator, animator and designer. She graduated from the Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design in Prague. She organises classic animation workshops for children and is a preschool art workshop teacher. In cooperation with Circus Atos, a team of independent video game developers, she created a game for children which became the basis for *Hravouka* (Playful Science, 2016), an award-winning didactic book for children and parents about nature. Vostradovská has participated in Czech and international exhibitions.

AWARDS
2017 Golden Ribbon Award – Literary section:
Non-fiction for children and youth

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Tomáš Končinský, Barbora Klárová & Daniel Špaček TYPO AND SKIM

A visually striking and linguistically innovative steam-punk story for children about entropy and the ageing of things.

Typo and Skim are “imps-entropists” whose task is to make everything grow old in chaos under the reign of the Ravages of Time. Typo the imp attends the Things Ageing Primary School, where he learns how to wear down things to decay thoroughly. He especially focuses on making grammatical errors in books. However, when on a trip to the world of humans, he finds out that they do not like things ageing. Therefore, he and his friend Skim decide to stop the Ravages of Time... This large-format book with a beautiful graphic design and

art style is full of sketches of instruments which are the basis of entropy.

The book was artistically prepared by an illustrator whose work includes the visual style of the popular Czech TV channel for children, ČT:D. Thanks to him, children can see a real desert, library, sweet shop or dump site. Everywhere they can enjoy various puns, plays on words and parodies prepared for them by the authors, but at the same time they can observe the Big Ravages of Time taking its toll and find out that stopping it is not advisable.

“The title with the jokey names of the protagonists and the cover illustration depicting elves destroying a book might give the impression that this is one of many nonsense children’s tales whose main ambition is to entertain the child reader by juxtaposing crazy and realistic life situations. However, *Typo and Skim* offers much more. Beneath the surface of the humorous action, it touches upon important existential questions.”

—*iLiteratura*“

“Beautiful illustrations, an engaging story, an original idea and wonderful humour for children and parents alike. This book turns reading bedtime stories into fun for parents too.”

—*Blesk*

Age: 9+



Překlep a Škraloup
Albatros, 2016, 120 pp

57

Children’s and Young Adult

Photo: Tomáš Končinský’s archive



Tomáš Končinský (b. 1978), scriptwriter, dramatist and writer, works mainly for the Czech TV children’s channel ČT:D, where he is the writer of several programmes for children. He has written many successful TV, radio and film scripts including the mysterious comedy, *Schmitke* (2015), for which he was awarded the prestigious Czech film prize the Czech Lion. He is the creator of cartoon character Květa the Custodian (*Kustodka Květa*), which won the Muriel Prize for best comic strip in 2014.

Photo: Petr Weigl



Barbora Klárová (b. 1983) graduated in music and English from Charles University, worked as a copywriter and radio presenter, and now works as a scriptwriter for the children’s TV channel ČT:D. She plays the violin and sings in several music projects, writes her own poems, hosts many cultural and commercial events, and photographs.

Daniel Špaček, freelance illustrator, animator and designer. He graduated in journalism from Charles University and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. At present, he is engaged in illustrating children’s stories in his graphic studio, Loom of the Moon. In 2009, he released an award-winning electronic music album entitled *Mythematica*. His artistic style is influenced by the many years he spent in the psytrance subculture, the visual language of which is influenced by the sci-fi genre. Daniel Špaček has won many prizes for this work, including two Promax Awards.

Illustration: Daniel Špaček



AWARDS:
2017 Golden Ribbon Award – Literary section:
Literature for children
2017 Magnesia Litera – For children and youth

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Branko Jelinek

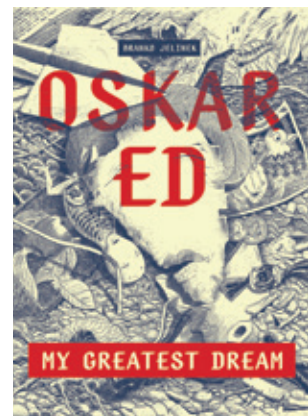
OSKAR ED: MY GREATEST DREAM

One of the most ambitious Czech comics ever written, *Oskar Ed* fuses a poignant family drama with fantastical scenes playing out in the mind of its young protagonist.

Bored during a car journey with his dysfunctional parents, Oskar escapes into surreal dreams and fantasies reminiscent of the films of Lynch and Cronenberg. This imaginary universe created by Oskar parallels, warps and transforms the real world, unveiling the strained relationship with his parents and forgotten family secrets. Although it is built on the framework of a small, intimate story, this comic presents a monumental narrative played out on several time levels and in several spiritual worlds culminating in

a devastating finale. Branko Jelinek's art style, incorporating fine lines and elaborate backgrounds on both multi-panel pages and disturbing full-page visions, complements his multifaceted story.

Hailed by critics as one of the most important Czechoslovak comics of the past decade, *Oskar Ed: My Greatest Dream* vividly illustrates the manner in which a child perceives and processes family disagreements, and demonstrates how trauma and dreams may have a great deal in common.



Oskar Ed: Můj největší sen
Lipník, 2016, 344 pp

“Branko Jelinek has again created a piece of art which excels in its exceptional composition, unique visualism and fictional mastery, and can compare with world-famous cartoons by Chris Ware or Charles Burns.”

—A2

“The story of a child hero shows what a great cartoonist and a perceptive psychologist 38-year-old Jelinek is. Using a large format, he raises the universal topic of interpersonal relationships and melts their heart-rending nature into almost surreal landscapes.”

—Respekt

Photo: Branko Jelinek's archive

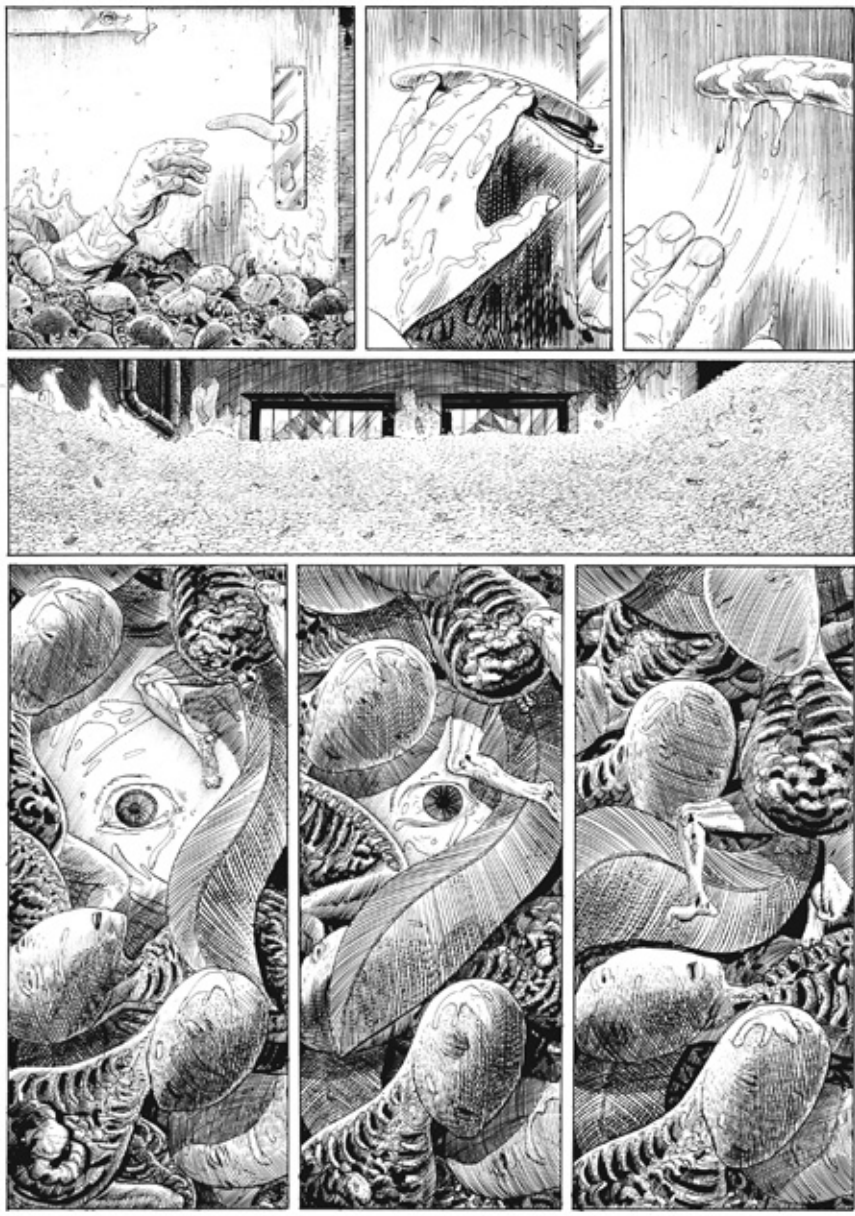


Branko Jelinek (b. 1978), a cartoonist, computer graphic designer, artist and script-writer of Slovak origin living in the Czech Republic. He graduated from the School of Applied Arts in Košice and from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design Bratislava. He is acclaimed for his award-winning cartoons from the *Oskar Ed* series (2003–2016), for which he also writes the scripts. Typical characteristics of his artistic style are hatching and sharp lines, and his graphic books are known for their psychological elaboration and distinct features of characters.

AWARDS:
2016 Muriel Award – Best original book
2016 Muriel Award – Best original script

RIGHTS:
Branko Jelinek:
brankojelinek@gmail.com

English sample translation available



Oskar Ed: My Greatest Dream

William and Meriwether: An Extraordinary Robot Expedition



Tatána Rubášová & Jindřich Janíček WILLIAM AND MERIWETHER: AN EXTRAORDINARY ROBOT EXPEDITION

In this epic comic book diary, two bickering robot explorers embark on a tragicomic journey to make sense of a post-apocalyptic earth.

This book, based on the juxtaposition of text in the form of diary entries and full-page illustrations, tells the story of the adventurous expedition of two robots with opposite personalities: sometime in the 22nd century, the shy and idealistic scientist William and the practical and fearless explorer Meriwether set out into the unknown to discover life and the remains of an extinct human civilization. The naivety of the robots, who misinterpret the remnants of civilization in

a post-apocalyptic world, fills the book with tragicomic humour, while another source of entertaining clashes is the different “human” personalities of the two explorers, whose names refer to famous conquerors of the Wild West. However, questions about existence and the potential for learning surface from beneath the jokes, and the theme of the end of civilization rears its head in a disturbing way. Because of that, the book offers something for readers of all ages.

Age: 12+



William a Meriwether: Podivuhodná robotí expedice
Labyrinth and Take Take Take, 2016, 96 pp

“An *Extraordinary Robot Expedition* is richly illustrated and will be an exceptionally powerful experience for both children and parents; it is undoubtedly one of the best books to appear on the Czech market in recent years.”

—*iLiteratura*

“Readers of all age categories will be entertained by the petty squabbles between the robots and the playful humour stemming from the differences between the human view of the world and that of the robots. Naming a river after William’s favourite online shop Amazon is a touch of genius!”

—*abc*

Photo: Dávid Tkačík

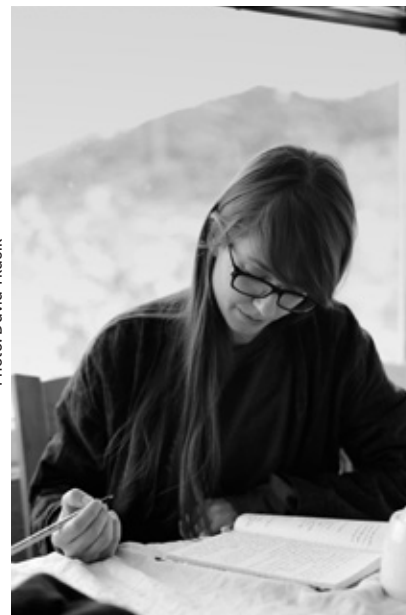


Photo: Kateřina Písačková



Tatána Rubášová (b. 1988), a scriptwriter and cartoonist, studied scriptwriting and dramaturgy at the FAMU film academy. For many years, she worked as an editor of Czech Television’s children’s channel and now works in the Václav Havel Library in Prague. So far, she and Jindřich Janíček have published two comic books: *Přicházíme v míru ve jménu lidstva* (We Come in Peace in the Name of Mankind, 2015) and *William a Meriwether: Podivuhodná robotí expedice* (William and Meriwether: An Extraordinary Robot Expedition, 2016). She is the author of three scripts for student films. Her featurette *Na knížecí* (At Knížecí, 2014) won in the project My Street Films and her short remake of the film *American Beauty* (2014) won first prize in the Done in 60 Seconds competition.

Jindřich Janíček (b. 1990) studied animation at Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín and is currently studying illustration at the Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design in Prague. He works as an illustrator of books and magazines. He also illustrated his grandfather’s diary, published in book form as *K večeru spustil se déšť* (The Rain Came Before the Evening, 2016). He and graphic artist Nikola Klímová are managers of the art studio and publishing company Take Take Take.

RIGHTS:
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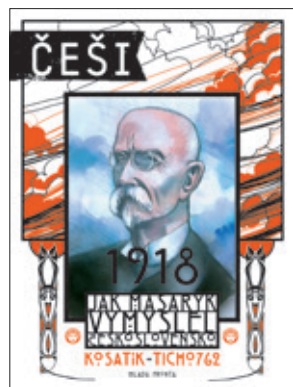
Pavel Kosatík (and various illustrators): CZECHS 1918–1992

Nine key events of Czech(oslovak) history in a caustic, ironic, dismal, as well as playful, hyperbole.

This monumental comics series by experienced historian and journalist, Pavel Kosatík, looks back at key moments of Czech history – from the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 to its separation into the States of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1992. The first medium for Kosatík's scripts was Czech Television; concurrently with the broadcasting of the series, the Mladá fronta publisher started publishing comic books, which, based on (more or less) modified Kosatík scripts, were always drawn by different cartoonists, usually one generation younger. This is the reason for the different mood of each comic book: the volume *Jak Gottwald zavraždil Slánského* (How Gottwald Murdered Slánský, 2014) is extreme, suggestive, greatly conceived by Vojtěch Mašek's non-standard drawings; by contrast, the

playful collages in Jiří Husák's work *Jak z rock'n'rollu vznikla Charta 77* (How Charter 77 Arose out of Rock'n'roll, 2016) creatively use contemporaneous photos of Václav Havel and other dissidents, as well as pictures of men in police uniforms. A distinctive approach was presented by Karel Jerie; in his work *Jak Dubček kapituloval v Moskvě* (How Dubček Capitulated in Moscow, 2016), he added dinosaur heads to the bodies of Czech and Soviet communists, accurately depicting the physiognomies of the historical figures even in this form.

Kosatík and the cartoonists he cooperated with have created more than just trivially educative works: their comics are inspirational, provocative and original, while depicting the historical events honestly and suggestively.



Češi 1918 – 1992
Mladá fronta, 2013–16, 9 volumes, 80–128 pp

“The comic of the year.”
—*E15*

“[This] series of comics reconstructions of important Czech historical events is exceptional in the Czech context.”
—*iLiteratura*



Photo: Mladá fronta publishers archive

Pavel Kosatík (b. 1962) is a writer, journalist and screenwriter. He graduated from the Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague, and has worked as a lawyer and editor. He started out as a sci-fi author but is now better known for his non-fiction writing and his TV scripts. He has won numerous prizes, including the Tom Stoppard Prize for essays and the Ferdinand Peroutka Prize for journalism.

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Czechs 1968: How Dubček Capitulated in Moscow



Czechs 1989: How Václav Havel Became President

Non-fiction

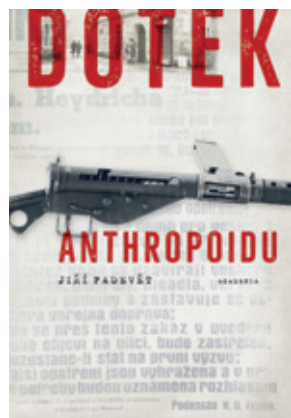
Jiří Padevět

THE TOUCH OF ANTHROPOID

An impressive collage of documents of the time, visual materials and thrilling fictional passages gives a tangible portrait of the 1942 assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague which changed history.

Using an innovative approach, this book describes the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia with a terrifying vividness: it is compiled of reports from the press of the time, police decrees, the Gestapo's investigation reports, rich visual material, maps, messages, but also recipes and short prosaic passages in which real historical characters appear. With insistent emotions and through the eyes of a screenwriter, the author

presents Operation Anthropoid, an airdrop of parachutists with the aim to assassinate the acting Reich protector, Reinhard Heydrich. The author proceeds chronologically from the planning for the assassination in Great Britain in 1941 to the punishments of people involved in this operation in the spring of 1942 and other reprisals including the destruction of several Czech villages.



Dotek Anthropoidu
Academia, 2017, 304 pp

“A thrilling book combining artistic prose and protectorate-era documents [...]. This book, completely defying the “fiction” and “non-fiction” categorisation, will captivate anyone who knows this dramatic and in some respects extremely gruesome period of our history.”

—Host

“A remarkable reflection on the depths and heights of human bravery, fear and pain.”

—iLiteratura



Photo: Jiří Padevět's archive

Jiří Padevět (b. 1966), a writer dealing predominantly with the history of the WWII resistance movement, the Holocaust and war events. After studying geodetics, working as a surveyor and teacher, he worked as a bookseller. Since 2006, he has been director of the publishing house Academia. He is the author of many books with historical themes, such as the award-winning *Průvodce protektorátní Prahou* (Guide to Protectorate Prague, 2013). In 2016, he published the book *Anthropoid* (with Pavel Šmejkal) and a year later, *Dotek Anthropoidu* (The Touch of Anthropoid). Also in these guidebooks about the Nazi occupation and its consequences, Jiří Padevět inventively describes the atmosphere in Prague in 1942 using a collage of documents of the time and fictional passages. Jiří Padevět was awarded an Operation Anthropoid commemorative medal.

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English and German sample
translations available

Pavel Juráček

DIARY I 1948–1956

The first volume of a monumental diary work by the world-famous Czech film director of the New Wave, which is an important record of the communist era in Europe and a unique chronicle of the past.

Of the quarter-century of diaries of film director, scriptwriter and writer Pavel Juráček, only an abridged edition depicting the 1960s was published 14 years ago, becoming a hit with readers and selling out immediately. This re-publication of the monumental diary depicts life in Czechoslovakia over the course of thirty years and then in exile in the Federal Republic of Germany. The first volume of the planned four-volume publication contains records from 1948 till 1956. This monumental work documents the adverse

epoch in its entire scope. The value of Juráček's work is, however, not only documentary, but also highly artistic – Juráček was a writer with a unique storytelling talent and a sense for dramatic situations, descriptions and dialogue. He was convinced he had to address his hand-written diaries to future historians, to us. In his diary, he is survived by an immensely impressive work of the utmost literary quality, documenting the creative rises and falls of an artist in the time of so called real socialism.

“The perfect probe into the absurd world in which millions of Czechoslovaks lived. [...] From the astonishing quantity of personal experiences and impressions, of which Juráček kept records with an obsessive energy basically day after day, sentences keep appearing between lines, all giving a unique report not only about his life, but the lives of thirteen million people who were with him “in the same boat” at that time.”

—*Respekt*

“It reveals how complex Juráček's bountiful, vulnerable and helpless personality was. He also presents a picture of the time, free of any idealisation – and ideologization.”

—*Lidové noviny*



Deník I. 1948–1956
Torst, 2017, 623 pp



Photo: Václav Havel Library archive

Pavel Juráček (1935–1989), a screenwriter, dramatist and director, journalist, prose and poem writer, and significant representative of the Czech New Wave of the 1960s, studied journalism and the Czech language, but because of his bohemian nature he was expelled from university. Later, he studied dramaturgy at the FAMU film school and started, in parallel, to make films. He worked with the Barrandov Film Studios and contributed to films by some of the most outstanding Czech directors of the 1960s and 70s. With the onset of the harsh normalisation era, he was dismissed. He was the only Czech film-maker to sign the Charter 77 anti-regime initiative and was banned from pursuing artistic activities. He temporarily worked in exile in West Germany, returned to his homeland in 1983 and died in May 1989.

AWARDS:
The first abridged edition of Juráček's diaries won the 2004 Magnesia Litera Award for Achievement in Publishing and was voted book of the year by the Lidové noviny newspaper.

RIGHTS:
Pluh
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www.pluh.org

Milena Jesenská

CROSSROADS

(AN ANTHOLOGY OF WORKS)

This anthology of articles by the famous Czech journalist and friend of Franz Kafka, Milena Jesenská, has revived the legend of her life, work and character: the legend of an intelligent and courageous woman who was true to her ideals.

The preparation of this extensive anthology of journalistic pieces, written between 1919 and 1939 by the famous Czech journalist, Milena Jesenská, took its editor, the literary historian Marie Jirásková, 40 years. The anthology captures the continuity and transformation of Milena Jesenská's opinions, attitudes and style throughout the historically tense years of the First Czechoslovak Republic and the 2nd World War. Empathy and a social conscience, unpretentiousness and

simplicity were always the highest values in her eyes. As well as being an excellent analytical reporter, Milena Jesenská is also considered to be the leading founder of the Czech feminist movement, whose opinions on women's issues are remarkably current and visionary. Jesenská's bravery in the face of Nazism and Stalinism can be appreciated by the reader to at least the same extent as her personal life, which was of such interest to the media at the time.

"There are at least two reasons why we should welcome an anthology of the works of Milena Jesenská. The book shows the quality which journalism can attain and how close it naturally comes to high literature. And it provides a testament to Jesenská's morals and character. We are in great need of both of these today."

—MF Dnes

"Jesenská formulates her prose with honesty, thanks to which her reports on the traumatising chapters of Czech history – especially the reports from the Czech-German border from 1938 and 1939 – acquire a timeless and literary value."

—Hospodářské noviny



Křižovatky (Výbor z díla)
Torst, 2016, 880 pp



Milena Jesenská (1896–1944) was a journalist, writer and translator. She attended the Minerva Grammar School for Girls and was friends with the leading representatives of the so-called Prague German Jewish literature: Franz Werfel, Max Brod and Franz Kafka among others. She abandoned her studies at medical school and moved to Vienna, where she taught Czech to Hermann Broch, for example, translated texts from German and wrote articles for Czech newspapers. She translated the prose of Franz Kafka from 1919; their friendship by correspondence lasted until Kafka's death in 1923 (Franz Kafka's *Letters to Milena* is one of the fundamental literary works of the twentieth century). She continued to work as a journalist after returning to Prague in 1925 (for example, she led the *Prítomnost* review in 1938–9). She participated in the anti-Fascist resistance, as a result of which she was arrested in 1939 and deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she died in 1944. Her journalistic work achieved recognition after the World War II; an international journalism prize now bears her name.

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www.torst.cz

European Union Prize for Literature

An annual prize awarded to nominees from a number of EU, EEA and candidate countries. Each winner receives a financial reward and the EU promotes the translation of their book.

Bianca Bellová in 2017 for *The Lake* – p. 10

State Prize for Literature

This highest Czech literature prize is awarded by the Czech Ministry of Culture for an outstanding Czech literary work (and for a translation into Czech).

Petr Hruška is a laureate – p. 42

Magnesia Litera Awards

Magnesia Litera is a set of annual Czech literary awards in many categories noticeably covered by the media which has been awarded since 2002. The main award, *The Book of the Year*, includes a financial bonus of CZK 100,000.

Bianca Bellová in 2017 for *The Lake*, – p. 10
Marek Šindelka in 2017 for *Material Fatigue* – p. 12
Milan Ohnisko in 2017 for *Light in the Wound* – p. 48
Tomáš Končinský, Barbora Klárová and Daniel Špaček in 2017 for *Typo and Skim* – p. 56

Dresden Lyrics Prize

This Czech-German competition in poetry is held under the auspices of the city of Dresden every other year for authors living in Europe and writing in German or Czech. It includes a 5,000 euro prize for the winner.

Petr Hruška is a laureate – p. 42

Jiří Orten Prize

An award for authors of prose or poetry under the age of 30. The Prize dates back to 1987, when it was started outside official structures; at present, it is awarded jointly by the Union of Czech Librarians and Publishers and the Municipal Authority of the Capital of Prague. The Prize includes a financial bonus of CZK 50,000.

Zuzana Kultánová in 2017 for *Augustin Zimmermann* – p. 24

Jaroslav Seifert Prize

The Jaroslav Seifert Prize is an important Czech literary award established by the Charter 77 Foundation in Stockholm in January 1986, and named after the only Czech winner of the Nobel Prize for

Literature. The Prize is awarded for outstanding fiction published in the previous three years in the Czech Republic or abroad. Since 2013, this award ceremony has taken place every other year.

Jáchym Topol is a laureate – p. 8

Václav Burian Prize

A poetry competition and a Czech-Polish-Slovak literary meeting in Olomouc. An international expert jury nominates a trio of poets. Winners are selected by a Czech-Slovak-Polish jury in two categories: Poetry and Cultural Benefit for Central-European Dialogue. The Prize is supported by 1,000 euro.

Milan Džžinský is a laureate – p. 46

Golden Ribbon Awards

The Golden Ribbons have been awarded to the authors of the best Czech books for children and young adults for more than 20 years. It is the only award in the Czech Republic focusing solely on children's literature. The prize is organised by the Czech section of IBBY.

Tereza Vostradovská in 2017 for *Playful Science* – p. 52
Barbora Klárová, Tomáš Končinský and Daniel Špaček in 2017 for *Typo and Skim* – p. 56

The Most Beautiful Czech Book

The annual award of The Most Beautiful Czech Book evaluates the graphics, illustrations and printing of books published by Czech publishing companies and printed by Czech printing works. Prizes are awarded in seven categories. The winners are rewarded with CZK 50,000. The co-organiser of the competition, the Czech Ministry of Culture, ensures that the winning books are featured at international exhibitions of the most beautiful books of the world.

Tereza Vostradovská in 2016 for *Playful Science*, 2016 – p. 52

Muriel Awards

In 2006–2016, the Muriel prize for Czech cartoons was awarded annually in 10 categories as the only Czech award in this genre as part of the international festival *KomiksFEST!* It is currently awarded in 9 categories as part of the *LUSTR* illustration festival.

Branko Jelinek in 2016 for *Oskar Ed: My Greatest Dream* – p. 60
Pavel Kosatík in multiple years for the *Czechs* series – p. 66

GRANTS FOR PUBLISHING CZECH LITERATURE ABROAD

Every year, the Czech Ministry of Culture awards grants to support the publication of Czech prose, poetry, drama, essays, comics and children's literature abroad.

Publishers can apply for funding for:

- translation costs
- graphic design, typesetting and printing costs
- copyright costs
- promotion costs

Publishers, agents and translators can apply for funding for:

- the translation of an excerpt of between 10–25 standard pages (1,800 characters with spaces)

Magazines can apply for funding for:

- translation costs of an issue where at least 50% of the total content is dedicated to original Czech literature

Deadlines

- **15th April** for books and excerpts to be published in the same year as the application is submitted
- **15th November** for books and excerpts to be published in the following year after the application is submitted

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For more information visit:
www.mkcr.cz/literature-and-libraries-1123.html?lang=en



MINISTRY OF CULTURE
CZECH REPUBLIC

The presentation of Czech book culture at book fairs abroad has a long tradition. The Moravian Library, one of the leading Czech heritage institutions, has been in charge of coordinating the Ministry of Culture's national expositions since 2014. In cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, authorities of Czech literary culture and Czech Centres abroad, the Moravian Library focuses not only on presenting major publishing houses but also on small publishers and printers. Significant Czech literary awards and their winners, along with a selection of current fiction and non-fiction are presented within the frame-work of a thematic national exposition. The accompanying cultural programme aims at bringing Czech authors together in the form of discussions and readings, especially at the Leipzig Book Fair (focused primarily on translations) or at the most important venue, the Frankfurt Book Fair. Czech book culture is presented in a similar scope also at the book fair in Bologna, which focuses on books for children, and at the London Book Fair. The Moravian Library is also the parent organisation of the Czech Literary Centre, which supports and promotes Czech literature abroad and in the Czech Republic.

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