

ARGO PUBLISHERS

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ARGO PUBLISHERS

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ARGO PUBLISHERS is a major Czech publisher, renowned for its vast list of literary fiction, nonfiction and poetry, as well as trade and mass market fiction. Argo books have won extraordinary acclaim over the years, including numerous literary awards, both Czech and international. Due to our books' success and quality, Argo has become the trend-setter and the market leader in the Czech Republic, combining literary excellence with commercial success.

We are specializing in translated literature (translations make up approximately 70 per cent of our titles), Argo authors include such present-day literary stars as Orhan Pamuk, Kazuo Ishiguro, Leïla Slimani, Margaret Atwood, Peter Høeg, Roberto Bolaño, as well as timeless classics, such as James Joyce, Flannery O'Connor, George Orwell, Jorge Luis Borges, Herman Hesse, Franz Kafka, Jack Kerouac etc.

We pay special attention to contemporary fiction in English, continually introducing such British and American authors as Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, Hilary Mantel, Donna Tartt, Michael Chabon, Edward St Aubyn, Sarah Waters, David Sedaris etc.

We publish several series of non-fiction books, ranging from history to humanities to astronomy and physics, with authors including Madeleine Albright, Michelle Obama, Niall Ferguson, E. H. Gombrich, Jacques Le Goff, Naomi Klein or Stephen Hawking.

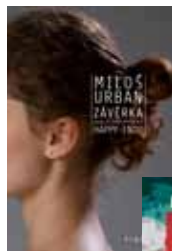
A substantial part of our catalogue is created by bestselling authors, such as Dan Brown, Khaled Hosseini, Paulo Coelho, G. R. R. Martin, Philip Pullman and Umberto Eco.

Among our fastest-growing segments are science fiction and fantasy, with authors such as J. R. R. Tolkien, Philip K. Dick, Douglas Adams, Neil Gaiman or Jeff VanderMeer, comics (Alan Moore, Alejandro Jodorowsky and Moebius) as well as children's and young adults' books (David Walliams, Markus Zusak).



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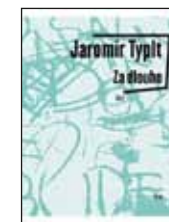


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Robert Fulghum

MENDER OF DESTINIES

DESPITE THE HUNDREDS OF STORIES HE'S WRITTEN IN HIS LIFE, THE AUTHOR DOESN'T LOSE HIS SENSE OF HUMOUR AND HIS POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON THE WORLD.

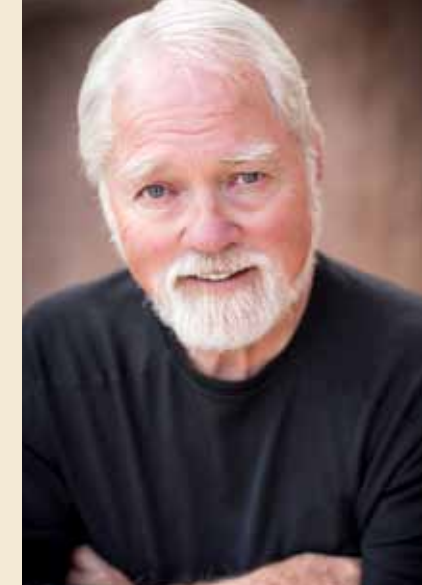
Chief protagonist George Novak comes to Prague to seek out his Czech roots, but eventually finds out that he is actually looking for a meaning to his own life. Looking for yourself and a mission in life is the key motif of this book. George's efforts are helped along most of all by fresh meetings with the rather mysterious young Luci Milena, who presents him with a totally unexpected offer. Again the

MORE THAN
17 MILLION
COPIES
IN 31 LANGUAGES
IN 103
COUNTRIES



author proves that he really does know the Czech temperament very well. He describes the atmosphere of Prague family pubs, a place made especially for conversations, questions and answers, where no few intrigues are resolved. *Mender of Destinies* is a literary work on the interface of the novel, the short story, philosophical meditations and ideas that we can read in particular between the lines. It deals with transformation and rebirth, a man's reconciliation with himself and how our actions, or indeed our small gestures, can influence and perhaps even mend the fates of others.

Robert Fulghum (b. 1937) grew up in Waco, Texas. For 22 years he served as a Unitarian parish minister in the Pacific Northwest. During the same period, he taught drawing, painting, art history, and philosophy at the Lakeside School in Seattle. More than 17 million copies of his books are in print, in 31 languages, in 103 countries. All rose to the top of the New York Times best-seller list. Robert Fulghum has published numerous books: *All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It*, *Uh-Oh, Maybe (Maybe Not)*, *From Beginning To End – The Rituals of Our Lives*, *True Love*, *Words I Wish I Wrote*, *What On Earth Have I Done*, *Hold Me Fast*, *Love Me Slow*, *A Memoir of an Adventure*, *Crisis in the Cheese Aisle*, *The Mender of Destinies*.



PRESS VOICES

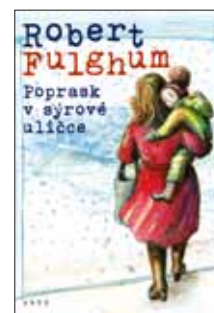
"The author has succeeded in linking up several motifs that hold together as the story entices the reader into eagerly turning each new page. This novel challenges you to get to know yourself and to become aware of the appeal of the people among whom we live."

— Právo

"I don't think I am a great writer, but I do write about great things. I have ventured to speak about things that happen routinely but that nobody boasts about. That is where my strength lies. I am first to speak out loud about some things."

— Robert Fulghum

PREVIOUS BOOK FROM THE AUTHOR



Crisis in the Cheese Aisle is a sweet, lightly humorous and touching assortment of aphorisms about life and observations about the workings of the world. One will entertain you, the next will give you pause for thought, and perhaps all will caress the reader's soul.

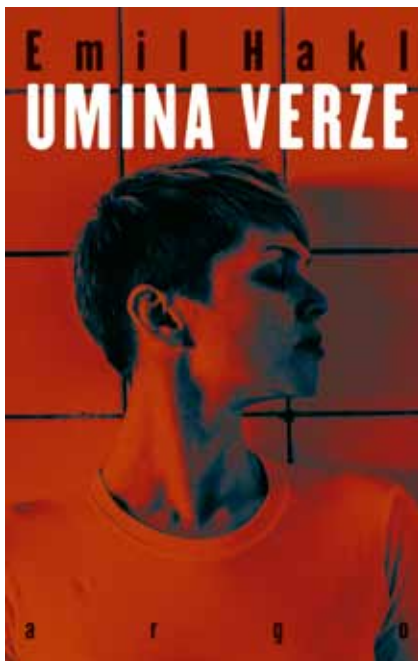
Emil Hakl

UMA'S VERSION

HAKL IS A REAL LITERARY TALENT, "THE HRABAL OF THIS TIME". HE NEEDS LITTLE TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE AND CHARACTERS.

Emil Hakl's novel addresses a hot topic in science and technology – the creation of an artificial human – which has been central to sci-fi since Karel Čapek wrote R.U.R almost 100 years ago. Here humanity's Frankenstein-like desire is to

TWO TIMES
WINNER OF THE TOP
LITERARY CZECH AWARD
MAGNESIA LITERA
JOSEF ŠKVORECKÝ AWARD –
BEST PROSE WORK



create a beautiful female android, the titular Uma. Hakl has achieved a remarkable melding of two genres, as the central point of the book is a classic tale of love. Two main characters are experiencing an intense relationship based on mutual affection, which eventually turns into an addiction of conspiratorial friendship and sex. The mixture of foreignness and intimacy is what makes Uma alluring. Uma is not a submissive partner. On the contrary, she is viewed as the more sophisticated personality, who has the situation in hand and ultimately has the final word on how the relationship will develop. The inscrutable robot becomes the embodiment of the essence of the female soul. This novel is written in the author's typically efficient and fast-paced style.

Emil Hakl (b. 1958) is one of the Czech most appreciated and widely translated contemporary authors, his books have been published in many languages. Hakl was awarded the Magnesia Litera – Best Prose for the novella *O rodičích a dětech* (Of Kids and Parents, 2002). In 2010, a collection of stories *Pravidla směšného chování* (Rules of Ridiculous Behaviour), won the Josef Škvorecký Award, was nominated for the Magnesia Litera in the prose category and came second in the Lidové noviny newspaper's Book of the Year. Three years later he received his second Magnesia Litera Award for the novel *Skutečná událost* (A True Story).



PRESS VOICES

"Hakl chose a brilliant topic for this book. Questions about how we will co-exist with robots, androids and other technological creations are appealing for everyone."

– MF Dnes

"Hakl has given the novel an appealing story, a clear structure, and 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

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

"Uma goes to sleep. That's what the two of you call it. She lies down and adjusts her settings (you don't know how, exactly, you prefer to stare at the ceiling), you talk for fifteen or thirty minutes before she shuts down. But she isn't silent – she hums like an electric toy. Her toes twitch gently. She emits various smells. When she's half asleep, she often busies herself by synchronizing her files, or at least that's what she says she's doing. You suspect that she's just actively loafing. She learned it from you, and she's learned that she

enjoys it. Sometimes she lies and pretends to be sleeping, but she's awake. It's as though she's waiting for something. She draws breath and she exhales. It's a question of oxygen delivery, the same as for you. When you wake up in the middle of the night, she always startles you – a half meter away lies an immobile, artificial corpse. You go to the toilet, you drink some water. When you return, her eyes follow you – she's responding to your motion and is already beginning to warm up."

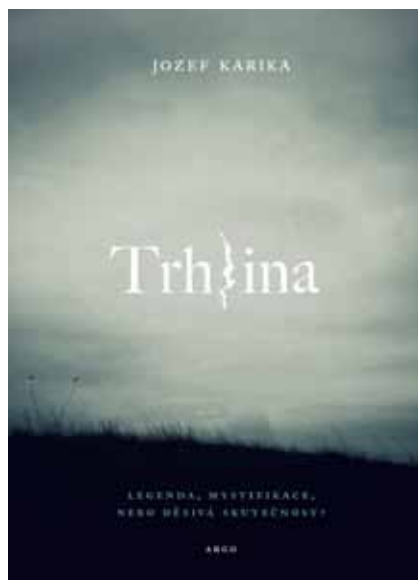
Jozef Karika

THE CRACK

A THRILLER, A HORROR STORY – KARIKA TAKES AN OPPORTUNITY TO PORTRAY THE DARKNESS WITHIN US AND OUR SOCIETY.

Igor, an unemployed university graduate, discovers the testimonies of Walter Fischer, a psychiatric patient. Fischer had disappeared mysteriously in the Tribeč Mountains seventy years ago. When he equally mysteriously reappeared two months later, his body was covered with strange burns and injuries. He was disoriented and couldn't explain what had happened to him. He never recovered. Igor continues his investigation and, to his astonishment, finds that Fischer's case was not at all isolated. The first mentions of mysterious disappearances in these mountains date back to a distant past. The number of spine-chilling cases increases. Igor, his girlfriend Mia, the conspiracy theorist Andrej, and the hard-core sceptic David begin to dig deeper into the mystery and unearth a truth which is much more terrifying than any fantasy. They embark on an expedition into the forests of the Tribeč Mountains, where they experience something that defies human understanding. Their initially innocent quest ends in tragedy. The mystery, as they find out, has incredibly sharp teeth.

MORE THEN 200 000
COPIES SOLD
—
TOP SLOVAK NOVELIST
—
TWO GOLDEN BOOKS FOR
HIS BESTSELLING WORKS



Jozef Karika (b. 1978) is a bestselling Slovak novelist and journalist; more than 200 000 hardcover copies of his works have been sold in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Karika was the top Slovak novelist of 2014 in the prestigious Martinus Book of the Year competition, he is the winner of the Golden Pen (awarded by Slovak literary critics), has two Golden Books for his bestselling works, and several other literary and journalism prizes. His two novels *Fear* and *Black Game* have been published in the Czech Republic last year by Argo Publishers. *Black Game* ranked among the bestselling books of 2015 and earned him the Golden Pen award. *Fear* was classified as the horror of the year 2017 in Poland. His newest book *The Crack* was chosen by readers to win Anasoft Litera Prize. The Slovak company DNA Production is filming an epic TV miniseries based on this novel.



PRESS VOICES

"*The Crack* is redolent of the madness-induced questions that give you goose pimples as you read. Despite references to such films as *Blair Witch*, *The Hills Have Eyes* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, after you have read this work it will be all the same whether it is a hoax or a true story."

— *Právo*

"Karika's horror is a unique contribution to a topography of weird places, perhaps comparable with Laird Barron's *Washington*, with its roots going back to Lovecraft's para-scientific tales."

— *Host*

PREVIOUS BOOK FROM THE AUTHOR



Fear is a masterpiece at evoking a sense of unfounded fear in the reader (like some of Stephen Kings' works do). Jozef Karika managed to evoke the spirit of the genre that forces us to open our eyes and also see what we have been instinctively hiding from.

Miloš Urban

THE SHUTTER

THE CONTEMPORARY FACE OF MODERN CZECH LITERATURE, NONE OF MILOŠ URBAN'S PREVIOUS WORKS HAVE MADE SUCH EASY AND SMOOTH READING AS HIS LATEST BOOK.

The Shutter is an erotic novel about the curse of our age when anyone can become a photographer and take at least one good shot. Motivation is the key. Amateur photographer Matěj approaches Věra, a female model with zero modelling experience, randomly in the street and starts to post his unique photographs on the picture-sharing site Blickperson, gradually building up an army of fans. The arrangement leads to the blossoming of a unique relationship, photographs that radiate a genuine kind of magic and a combined chemistry that creates something above-average.

Matěj continues to view his relationship with Věra as entirely professional, but there is a realistic chance of romance developing. Then the model decides to take it upon herself to dramatically resolve, one way or another, her still ill-defined relationship with Matěj and it ends up threatening the young man's job, potentially turning his entire world upside-down.

WINNER OF THE MAGNESIA LITERA AWARD – BEST PROSE (2012)

FILM ADAPTATION OF THE WATER-GOBLIN IN CZECH THEATRES



Miloš Urban (b. 1967), one of the most translated Czech writers has published a total of 15 books. The novels *Santiniho jazyk* (Santini's Language) and *Hastrman* (Water-Goblin) have been made into films, and Water-Goblin won the top Czech literary award Magnesia Litera (2012). The feature film *Water-Goblin* directed by Ondřej Havelka is the modern utopia, which confronts the problem of ecology with the phenomenon of the victim, and entered cinemas in the spring of this year. The novel *Sedmikostelí* (The Seven Churches, 1998), written in the spirit of Gothic novels and tales of terror, has sold tens of thousands of copies and was translated into 20 languages. Almost every year he publishes a new novel on a variety of themes, which underlines his wide scope of interest. He combines suspense with literary quality.



PRESS VOICES

"Urban decided that this time he could dispense with history and mystery, and has written an erotic novel in the age of modern technology. Miloš Urban's *The Shutter* is a book for today."

– *Respekt*

"The reader is the captive of the author, the possibilities of imagination are becoming handicapped. The word is overpowered by the image. This is the age we live in."

– *Týdeník Echo*

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

"Věra knelt down, spread out her arms, and again gradually exhaled through her nose. At first, she touched the base of the lake with her toes, but then her footing gave way. The last air in her lungs bubbled around her head. Matěj took his pictures through the water, and then, with his right hand, grabbed the model around her waist and yanked her up. In his left hand, the camera was manoeuvred in such a way as to keep it dry from both the lake and the spattering rain. 'Bit

over-enthusiastic, aren't we? You know, sooner or later you would have ended up inhaling water, you silly girl.'

'Why are you photographing me in the process of drowning?'

'I don't know. The surface is like its own lens. It deforms you just a little – but not too much. Enough to change you ever so slightly. Věra floating in the streams of time...'

'I think you're trying to get rid of me.'

Josef Pánek

LOVE IN THE TIME OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

REMARKABLY DENSE AND DISTURBING TEXT FROM ONE OF THE MOST DISTINCTIVE VOICES OF CONTEMPORARY CZECH LITERATURE.

Love in the Time of Global Climate Change tells a tale of the global village we call Earth, the illogicality of racism and the unpredictable paths of the heart, and how we all fear change, while the greatest of all is taking place around us. The plot is straightforward: the protagonist, Tomáš, travels to attend a conference that takes place in Bangalore. He is a man struggling to pull himself together after a divorce, a scientist forced by our hectic, globalised world to learn to work with others and suppress his individuality for the sake of his research.

TOP CZECH LITERARY
AWARD MAGNESIA LITERA
(2018)

A more or less chance encounter with an attractive Indian participant at the conference leads to a night of intense passion, both in terms of sex and conversation. The author's playful ending leaves it to the reader's imagination to decide what has really happened. But one ought not to dwell on the plot too much, since what is more important in *Love in the Time of Global Climate Change* is that Pánek's writing continues a tradition of Czech literature that started with Bohumil Hrabal and can be traced to more recent writers such as Emil Hakl. This pedigree is apparent in the author's relentless narration, story-telling for the sheer pleasure of story-telling, a verbal deluge sustained for pages on end, alternating between outright bragging and masochistic self-denigration. At the same time, Pánek's writing shows a kinship with writers such as Josef Škvorecký, particularly in the portrayal of life "elsewhere," i.e. outside the Czech environment.



Josef Pánek (b. 1966) received his masters and PhD in Prague, Czech Rep., then worked in Norway and Australia, before finally returning to the Czech Republic. He debuted with a collection of short stories *The Opal Digger* (2013). His second book *Love in the Time of Global Climate Change* (2017) has won the Magnesia Litera prize this year.



PRESS VOICES

"Pánek's novel disconcerts the reader with its linguistic abrasiveness and the self-destructive, self-centered approach of its main protagonist, it is as agitated and intoxicating as the exotic city in which it takes place." — *novinky.cz*

"Readers should take note of this novel, which takes Czech literature into the European league." — *Visegrad Insight*

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

"You've never been to India – imagine that. Now you find yourself in Bangalore, in the middle of the noise, the stink, the traffic chaos and an endless crowd of people that you've no defense against, you're frightened, disgusted and overwhelmed. You get out of the street into the safety of your hotel, but you still hear the noise, smell the stink, you are disgusted and excited at the same time, you want to understand, you've never experienced anything like this in your life.

OK, you summon the courage to walk out of the hotel and walk straight

into something you think is a slum, having no idea what the slum is and how far you are from it. Anyway, in a clumsy and dense crowd of men in traditional clothing and women in sari you see an Indian girl wearing an ordinary T-shirt with jeans, she's represents the only normal, familiar object to you in the surrounding turmoil, so you take her picture. She notices and tells you in fluent, perfect English to delete her picture. You shrug and do what she wants, and immediately forget the whole episode."

RIGHTS

Argo

Poland (Stara szkola), Bulgaria (Iskry),
Italy (Keller editore), Croatia (Umjetnička
organizacija Artikulacije)

English sample,
German sample

Láska v době globálních klimatických změn

February 2017

160 pages

Miroslav Pech

FATHER AT THE BIRTH

A YOUNG BOHEMIAN BUKOWSKI PROVES HIS EXCEPTIONAL TALENT.



Following on from his successful novella *Cobainovi žáci* (Cobain's Disciples), this young Czech author has come out with another work, entitled *Otec u porodu* (Father at the Birth). The hero is a dad expecting the birth of his first child, so he begins to write diary entries for this unknown creature, describing his experiences at work and what he has seen and heard on the bus. However, new experiences associated with the expected offspring emerge from his everyday routine, as he follows devel-

opments on his web pages and in the doctor's surgeries, as well as his associated faint notions about the future, and his uncertainty over the unknown. For dad makes earnest efforts, but he is definitely not one of those modern-day trendily self-confident fathers who take parental leave and would definitely breast-feed themselves if they could. Dad feels that too many expectations are being placed upon him from all sides, and he is not at all sure he is up to meeting them. This is the story of another of Pech's heroes who feel rather out of place in life, as if never able to psychologically acclimatize to their surroundings, whether in their family or their working life. Again Miroslav Pech proves his exceptional talent for listening and precisely reproducing language in all its possible stylistic registers. His text includes gender and social subjects, with raw existential feelings and thoughts, but you can also just royally enjoy yourself reading it.

Miroslav Pech (b. 1986) has had various jobs (printer, shop assistant, ancillary worker, warehouse worker, editor and driver). He is the author of the collections of short stories *Napíšu Pavle* (I Will Write to Pavla, 2013), *Ohromně vtipná videa* (Very Funny Videos, 2014), *Američané jedí kaktusy* (The Americans eat cactuses, 2017). The novel *Cobainovi žáci* (Cobain's Disciples, 2017), has become a best-seller. His newest published work in Czech Republic and in Poland is a horror called *Mainstream*.

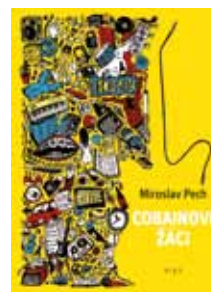


FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

"Today I found out you are only now growing an auricle. How many times have I wondered if you might be hearing what mum and I are saying. I wondered this without it ever occurring to me that you don't actually have ears yet. In the afternoon I needed to take out some money. I checked how much

I had left on my account and despite the frost that has been all around these last few days I was sweating. My money from the jobcentre hadn't yet arrived. I clenched my fists as I left, only to realize as I did so, that I was doing something you can now do too."

PREVIOUS BOOK FROM THE AUTHOR



Cobain's Disciples is a novel about a "lost generation for the 21st century". If you thought that life would be rosy, with unlimited possibilities for the youth after the fall of communism, you're way off the mark.

Otec u porodu

August 2018

188 pages

RIGHTS

Argo

Poland (Stara szkola)

English sample, German sample

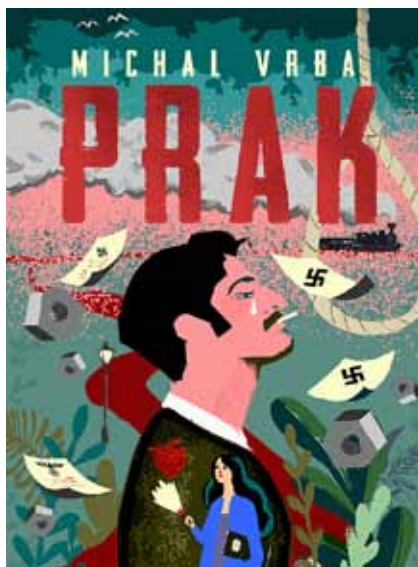
Michal Vrba

THE SLINGSHOT

THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED CZECH DEBUT, COMBINING THE COMPELLING THEME OF THE OCCUPATION, LITERARY TALENT AND AN ABILITY TO NARRATE A GRIPPING TALE.

The psychological novel *The Slingshot*, set in the period of the German occupation, narrates the tale of a journalist who sold himself to the Nazi powers and subsequently decided to compensate for his failures by committing a brutal, radical act which could lead to his execution. However, it is far from certain as to whether this flash of resistance will help him clear his name after the war. In the second part, we follow the destiny of fifteen-year-old Alena, who at the beginning of the 1960s discovers the journalist's memoirs in a forest chalet by the Hamry reservoir.

What was his fate? What relationship does her mother have to this man? And above all – why does the mere mention of him drive the Communist apparatchik who is spending the night with both women at the chalet into such a fit of rage? This thrilling debut by Michal Vrba is breathtaking reading, full of reversals and unexpected revelations, whilst at the same time a disturbing testimony on how the age we live in warps human characters, and of how complicated it is to reconcile oneself with one's own conscience and remain morally pure.



Michal Vrba (b. 1976) originates from a small village in East Bohemia. He teaches social sciences at a secondary school in Ústí nad Labem. He has been writing since his childhood, mostly short stories. In 2014 he wrote *Hontolini, the Strange Tales of a Baker and Occasional Agent*. *The Slingshot* is his first longer text.



PRESS VOICES

“A refined tale of good and evil, of fear, guilt, crime and punishment, of cowardice and courage, collaboration and betrayal, as well as the manipulation of people in the name of politics. It could easily become the theme for a commercial film.”

– Tvar

“Thematically ambitious work: a thrilling tale, fully imbued with the weight of history, situated in the period of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and then later in the year 1960. This is a debut worthy of attention.”

– Lidové noviny

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

“In that expanse of peculiar time, I could see throughout the silent and unnaturally fast projectile. I saw its entire trajectory as it flew, side on, through the air, heading straight below his chin, and I saw it land, on the throat of the man before me, releasing all its crushing energy. It came to an almost complete halt. And then it fell onto the steps as if Herman had dropped it in an absence of mind.

The sight of Glocke himself was no less impressive. His head jerked back, just as I'd seen it with Horst. His hand,

instead of going for the hidden gun, carried on up to his neck, joined at once by his other hand. His leather briefcase went tumbling down the steps. His sturdy military legs came unstuck, but still managed, unguided by their master, to complete the shaky descent to the landing where they lost their momentum. It was like watching a ghost. There, at the instant when he tripped, almost beside me, perhaps only a couple of metres away, stood Herman Glocke miraculously arrested in space. The man who had promised to see me dead...”

Prak

December 2016

188 pages

RIGHTS

Argo

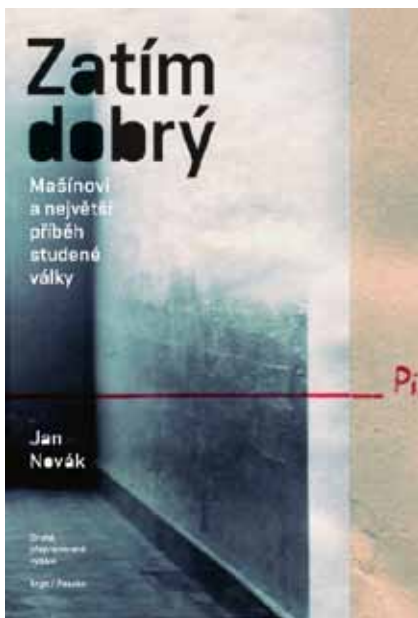
English sample

Jan Novák

SO FAR SO GOOD

A MASTERPIECE. NOVÁK HAS SEIZED THE MOST POWERFUL MATERIAL SINCE 1945 THAT CZECH HISTORY OFFERS.

The true story of three young Czech men whose daring exploits of anti-Communist resistance and 1953 flight to West Berlin set off the largest manhunt in the history of the Eastern Bloc. To this day, whether the Mašín brothers were heroes or murderers is a point of contention that continues to divide the country. A touchy,



MAGNESIA LITERA –
BOOK OF THE YEAR
(2004)

–
JOSEF ŠKVORECKÝ
AWARD (2007)

CARL SANDBURG
AWARD FOR CHICAGO
AUTHORS

–
FRIENDS OF
LITERATURE AWARD

sophisticated portrait of several extraordinary personalities – including father Mašín: soldier, legionnaire and one of the “Three Kings” of the Protectorate period, his wife Zdena, mother-in-law Emma, daughter Nenda, sons Josef and Ctirad Mašín as well as their friends and collaborators. The captivating and dramatic story of five youngsters armed with pistols facing a 20-thousand-strong army of East German Volkspolizei unfolds like a western. *So Far So Good* was awarded the Magnesia Litera as the Czech Book of the year 2004, became a best-seller and has been in print ever since.

Jan Novák (b. 1953), novelist, dramatist, scriptwriter, translator. He emigrated in 1969 and lived in Chicago from 1970 to 2008; he now lives in Prague, though he often returns to America. His books include *On the Far Side of the Pond*, *Grandpa*, *So Far, So Good*, *Commies*, *Crooks*, *Gypsies*, *Spooks & Poets*, *The Grand Life*, *Willy's Dream Kit*, *Striptease Chicago* and have been translated into several languages. Jan Novák has also co-authored the autobiography of Miloš Forman, *The Turnaround*, which was translated into 21 languages, and a graphic novel *Zátopek* with the illustrator Jaromír 99, which was published in German, French, Spanish and Portuguese. He is the recipient of major literary prizes including the Magnesia Litera for Book of the Year (2004) and the Josef Škvorecký Award (2007), as well as the Carl Sandburg Award for Chicago authors, and the Friends of Literature Award.



PRESS VOICES

“This is a contemporary thriller and the hard-to-believe actions of these people bring to mind the Northern sagas or Homer, which feature similar heroes. But in contrast to legends and myths, these were all actual people.”

– Josef Škvorecký

“A novel of action, full of strong, uncommon emotion and logical, natural pathos. Everything races quickly toward the end. The means of presentation are so expressive that we get the feeling we may be overhearing the words of the characters themselves.”

– MF Dnes

Pavel Renčín

TRAPPED

CHILLING HORROR INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS. THE WORST THINGS DESCRIBED ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE; REALITY IS FAR WORSE THAN WHAT PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO INVENT.

Trapped is a shadowy thriller in a style which is in desperately short supply on the Czech literary scene. Readers will feel their blood run cold when they consider that this terrible story is inspired by actual events from the Šumava border re-



AERONAUTILUS PRIZE –
BEST CZECH BOOK
–
ACADEMY OF SFFH –
BEST BOOK

gion. You immerse yourself in the stifling atmosphere of isolation, untamed nature and evil, which defies human comprehension. When reading you may recall the name of Stephen King, whose works the novel resembles in terms of its genre.

The novel is split into two plot lines. In the first, we meet the protagonist, a university lecturer, Martin, who is struggling with bouts of memory loss and nightmares. The second thread deals with a girl, Marie, who, in another age (under the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia), is with her parents as they set out to make their escape across the border to Germany. The fairy-tale trip to the Bohemian Forest that they promised her soon turns into a nightmare in which the girl becomes trapped for years to come. A gloomy spine-chiller that is certainly not for the faint-hearted, interwoven with brutality, torment and hopelessness.

Pavel Renčín (b. 1977) appeared on the Czech literary scene as a disruptive wave within the mainstream. His debut was the short story *The Creator* in 1999, which won him a number of awards in literary competitions. Since then his name has regularly appeared in prestigious anthologies of the fantasy genre. His works, *No Fairy tale* (2004) *The Name of the Ship* (2007), *Labyrinth* (2008), primarily cover urban fantasy and magic realism. His fantasy trilogy *Urban Wars* was nominated for the Academy of SFFH (Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror) award, and was awarded the Aeronautilus prize in the category of best Czech book. In 2009 a selection of Renčín's best short stories was published in the compendium *Concrete, Bones and Dreams*. *Trapped* was awarded by the Academy of SFFH the best book in 2015.



PRESS VOICES

"A chilling horror about the genuine sadist who is recorded as the most prolific murderer in Czechoslovakia. Renčín has endeavoured to produce a horror story similar to works by British, American and, above all, Scandinavian authors."

– *Krajské listy*

"*Trapped* is a horror story. A superb horror! Chilling, eerie and darker than the bottom of the Black Lake of Šumava. *Trapped* by Pavel Renčín is an unprecedentedly raw and dark tale on the Czech scene."

– *Blesk*

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

"The wait was killing her, but there was nothing else she could do. She walked up and down the barn, running her fingers for perhaps the hundredth time round the wooden box her head was locked inside. She wondered if she could smash it open by running full tilt at the wall. How likely

was it that she might break her neck? Should she risk it? She experimented by banging the box against the wall, but it hurt like hell and the wood gave no sign of yielding. It was oak, soundly nailed and screwed together; Schabe had taken great pains with its construction."

Vězněná

October 2015

236 pages

RIGHTS

Argo

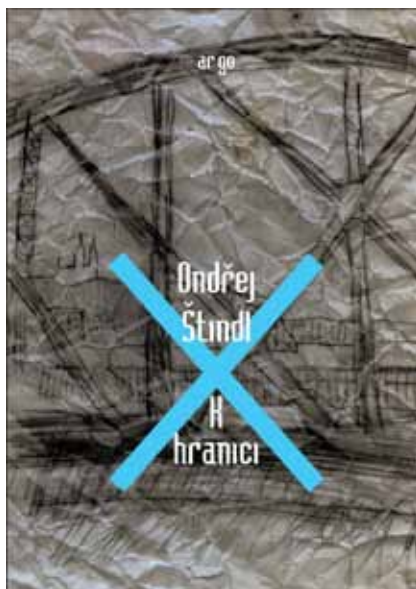
English sample

Ondřej Štindl

TO THE FRONTIER

THIS NOVEL SKIPS FROM HISTORICAL (AND PSYCHOLOGICAL) PROSE TO APOCALYPTIC SCI-FI WITH MAGICAL ELEMENTS; IT DEMANDS THE VORACIOUS READING OF ITS REPLETE HISTORY.

Ondřej Štindl's second novel probes liminal experience in three loosely interconnected stories, or novellas, that span the period from the end of WWII to the 1970s, taking us from the wild plains of Siberia to the subdued greyness of the communist Prague. The triptych of stories makes up an ambitious novel that is based on clashes of individuals with power that transcends them. Inevitably, all of them lose but in their loss, they find what frontier stands for — the liminal experience, the possibility to make a step beyond and to enjoy, albeit for a short moment, the moment of freedom. Štindl blends the personal with the public, and poignantly portrays individual destinies upon a background of historical events, in which he combines a love story with a bildungsroman, myth and a gunslinging tale. *To the Frontier* explores what it meant to take action during periods when it was simpler to be passive rather than fight against injustices. This marvellous novel demands the voracious reading.



Ondřej Štindl (b. 1966) is a film and music critic, renowned journalist and Radio 1 DJ. He made his debut in 2012 with the title *Mondschein*, a sinister post-apocalyptic vision accompanied with illustrations by Josef Bolf. In his texts, like those of other members of the revolutionary generation, the starting points and legacy of the Velvet Revolution are an ever-present given. Reconciliation with the Czech post-war history, above all the period of normalisation, is reflected also in his artistic work, most pronouncedly in the film *Walking Too Fast* for which Štindl wrote the screenplay and won a Czech Lion award. Popular crime series *Shadow of the Ferns* has earned him the second one.



PRESS VOICES

“Štindl is a superb narrator with an unmistakable style, which is perfectly suited to the story being told. His writing is on the first impression detached, in places laconic, and free of moralising or an attempt to explain. His novel *To the Frontier* is an excellent and powerful book.”

— *Reflex*

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

— *Hospodářské noviny*

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

“They were approaching the town from the west. Through the fabric of his uniform and the armour plating he was aware of the engine's vibration; its exhaust fumes smelled good - sweetish and comforting. He settled back comfortably and half-closed his eyes against the intense sunlight, his ears filled with the pounding of all that horse power. They knew how to make engines, the Germans did. Now they were pressing after them. To finish them off. Through the screen of smoke

Stěpan was assailed by other smells of that spring, blossom and decay, the chaos of a world in which the girdle of war had started to give. That world was rising to its feet, feeble and slightly giddy, slowly gathering its strength to hare off after some new dream or chimera. But Stěpan stays put, not stirring, he's where he belongs, nodding off on the tank's front plate. The end of a branch of lilac in bloom brushed across his face. There are so many lilacs at this spot. Odd, that.”

Ladislav Čumba

WITTGENSTEIN'S BOOK OF FACTS

BIOGRAPHY WRITTEN IN A READABLE LITERARY FORM WITH HUMOUR AND SUBTLETY. AWARDED THE MILOSLAV ŠVANDRLÍK AWARD FOR THE BEST HUMORISTIC BOOK OF THE YEAR.

Ladislav Čumba's literary text explores the story of Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. The son of a Kladno steelmaker, one of the richest people in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose mother Poldi is still remembered by residents of Kladno, he turned his back on that enormous wealth. He became a gardener and, after a colourful journey, a philosophy teacher at Cambridge. This story of the Czech traces in the family and life of the philosopher Wittgenstein is a testimony to the tenacity of both capitalists and writers, to intransigence and tolerance, to arts patronage and the power of the spoken and written word. It also takes in eminent artists of the period, in many cases family friends, like Rilke, Trakl, Klimt, Brahms, Hindemith and Ravel. The book is underscored with top-quality graphic design (Jan Čumlivski) that is attractive to users and naturally complements the textual collage with a pictorial collage.

MILOSLAV ŠVANDRLÍK
AWARD FOR THE BEST
HUMORISTIC BOOK OF
THE YEAR



Ladislav Čumba (b. 1976) is a teacher of Czech for foreigners. He is a member of the editorial board of the magazine Babylon, a founder of the civic association Skutečnost, a moderator at musical festivals, an author of song text, a mini-opera librettist, an occasional playwright, amateur actor and scriptwriter and the author of a mini-opera trilogy. Biography was awarded the Miloslav Švandrlík Award for the best humoristic book of the year and short-listed for the F. X. Šalda Award as the most serious one at the same time.



PRESS VOICES

"A member of a family and a distinguished personality who left an indelible imprint on the march of history."

— Lidovky.cz



"This is not a philosophical work, an attack on Wittgenstein's ideological world, a discussion or a polemic. Čumba is concerned with an investigation into the background, both real and hypothetical, in which Wittgenstein grew up. He is following in the footsteps of all kinds of experiments and postmodern actors, from Jarry, through Queneau and Perec to Ouředník and Brikcius. And to a certain extent also Wittgenstein himself."

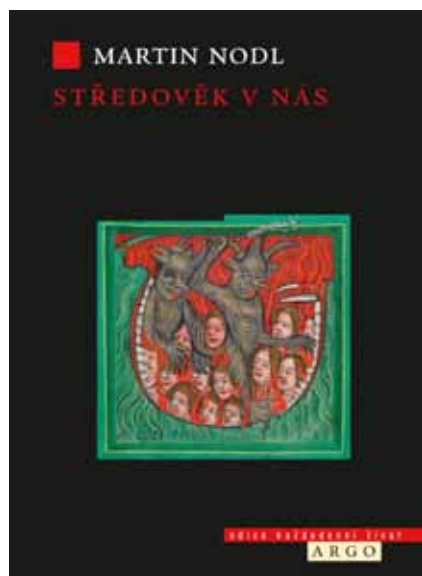
— Týdeník Rozhlas

Martin Nodl

THE MEDIEVAL IN US

ENTERTAINING AND INSTRUCTIVE READING, WHICH PROVIDES AN INSIGHT INTO THE COMPLEX THEME OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

In his book, the author contemplates the merely superficial modernity of today's world. In ten mutually linked essays, he attempts to show that pre-modern man is present within us in virtually every manifestation of everyday behaviour. Almost everything in our "modern" world has pre-modern roots. The pre-modern world, identified in this book with the late



Middle Ages, is not the world around us. The world around us has changed irrevocably. However, to this day the pre-modern world remains deep within us. Nevertheless, *The Medieval in Us* is not a guide on how to resolve the problems of the modern world. It would, however, undoubtedly like to present a challenge to our conception of historical experience. The book has been nominated for the Magnesia Litera prize for non-fiction.

Martin Nodl (b. 1968) works at the Centre for Medieval Studies and lectures at the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University. He focuses on the history of the late Middle Ages, the history of mentalities and the history of historiography. To date, he has published three monographs. Together with František Šmahel, he has prepared for publication the books *Medieval Czech Man* (2002) and *Festivals, Ceremonies and Rituals of the Late Middle Ages* (2014). In addition, he is the author of the book of fables for children *Why the Stars Fall: Fables, Legends and Fairy Tales* (2014).



PRESS VOICES

"*The Medieval in Us*, in comparison with works of historians such as Vlastimil Vondruška: Nodl is an academic who successfully avoids simplification and idealisation."

— *Finmag*

"The historiography of everyday life and historical anthropology that Nodl methodically draws upon do not present history as merely dates and kings and battles. On the contrary, he shows a history of men, women and children from various social strata, including their everyday trials and tribulations."

— *Tvar*



Václava Janděčková

FALSE FRONTIERS

OPERATION KÁMEN. VICTIMS AND INSTIGATORS OF THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL CRIMES OF THE STATE SECURITY 1948–1951.

The author's profound interest and personal involvement in the fate of those involved and their individual stories makes this historical study a literary gem. *False Frontiers: Stories from Operation Kámen, (1948–1951)* unmasks illegal State Security activities of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which were hitherto practically unknown. Using ten distinctive examples, she tells the stories of the participants, describing the background to the malicious crimes that involved laying traps for previously selected victims who had been goaded into escaping from Czechoslovakia. State Security thought up Operation

Kámen in order to interrogate sought-after individuals at bogus German customs posts in fictitious American military counter-espionage offices. With this incriminating material, those who thought they had actually crossed the Czechoslovak state frontier were then arrested for "illegally crossing the frontier". There were not a chance occurrences, but were part of a systematic procedure practised by the state security apparatus, which was covertly breaking its own laws. State Security agents did not hesitate to make use of criminal methods to consolidate totalitarian power and to identify the various forms of dissent against the new regime. The author aims to present the sophistication that came to be standard procedure in the planning behind state security work. Although this was the most secret repressive campaign of the Communist regime, Janděčková reveals new victims and perpetrators, outlines the development of Operation Kámen in time and space, and presents a range of reasons for its use. The extensive illustrations indicate the broad source base of an official and private nature. Previously unpublished archive material is compared to later direct testimony from witnesses, enabling the author to present in an entirely new light the secret police's reasoning and procedures during the opaque post-1948 period of turbulent change.

Václava Janděčková (*1974) is a member of the International PEN Club (Czech Centre) and a graduate in international relations. Her research interests focus on the unexplored subjects of the history of post-1948 Czechoslovakia, on which she has already written several monographs: *KÁMEN. Testimony of a chief protagonist in the "false frontiers" operation at Všeruby in the Domažlice region* (2013); *Three men against totalitarianism: Resistance fighter Ota Tulačka, RAF pilot Josef Hýbler and American diplomat Walter Birge in their fight against the StB, 1950–1951* (2015). For her latest book *The Jan Masaryk Case: Confession to murder and the secret StB reinvestigation, 1950–1951* (2014) she received the Egon Erwin Kisch Special International Award. The real-life events described in *Kámen a Falešné hranice* were adapted as a theatre performance entitled *Operation KAMEN* and staged by Sächsische Staatstheater in Dresden.



PRESS VOICES

"Václava Janděčková has filled in almost all the blanks in OPERATION KÁMEN that had not previously been explored, which makes her monograph an excellent probe into StB mysteries and methods, while presenting a very topical challenge to the present-day younger generation, which is unaware of its activities and "working" methods."

— klubknihomolu.cz



Falešné hranice

March 2018

398 pages

RIGHTS

Argo

English sample

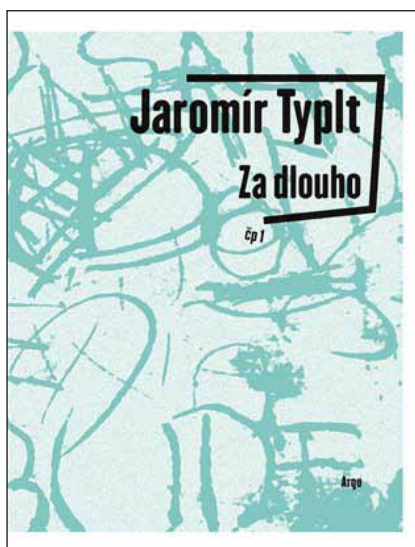
Jaromír Typlt

IN A LONG WHILE

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINCTIVE AUTHORS OF THE YOUNG GENERATION. THE MOST EPIC OF TYPLT'S TEXTS.

The situations and words in Jaromír Typlt's collection are vague, threatening and seemingly void. The poetry collection *Za dlouho* (In a Long While) is self-deprecating and self-observing, informed by the au-

thor's journey through experiments with words, sounds and images, which Typlt has undertaken since the 1990s. Perhaps the most private author's collection, particularly economical with words and style in contrast to the previous ones, but perhaps this is just an experiment on himself: both allow him to make experimental findings. The poet focuses primarily on imagery, which is of decisive importance for him. He keeps an eye on himself as he designs structures, while allowing us into his game, where he lets us take the roles of witnesses to the birth, struggle and dissolution of stories and worlds. In his texts he is also seeking, but never groping his way: he always knows where he wants to get to, but he does not yet know by what means he will manage to do so. His texts continually wander, relocate and reconstruct. Typlt's poetry is not motionless; it attempts to be something agile within the written word, i.e. within something permanently fixed.



Jaromír Typlt (b. 1973) is a poet, performer, essayist, and art theorist specializing in art brut. In the 1990s his poetry was influenced by a surrealist understanding of the imagination. In latest years he has increasingly moved beyond the field of literature towards live performance, music, and the visual arts. *In a Long While* is definitely one of the most remarkable poems written in Czech over the recent years.



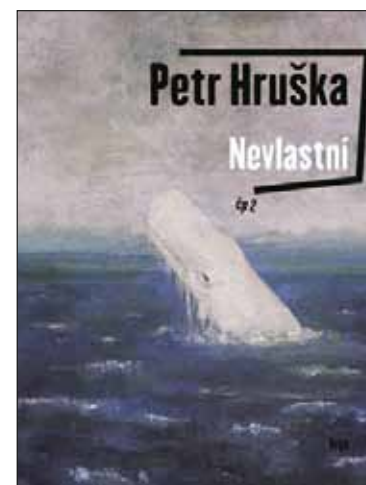
Petr Hruška

NOT MY OWN

THE OWNER OF THE STATE LITERATURE PRIZE. A STORY OF FUTILITY AND THE DESIRE TO CONFRONT FUTILITY.

A collection of poems by Petr Hruška: as always we find a civil, economical and apparently simple description of situations where everything happens at a depth, under the surface of inconspicuous-seeming situations. Hruška often needs banality as a starting point for seeking and guess-

ing the mysteries and hidden meanings that determine human behaviour. *Not My Own* brings together poems about the literary figure of Adam, inspired by the poet's stepson, but these are not records of ordinary everyday events: Hruška's poems always depict emerging affinity or disaffection, i.e. the defining dimensions of human experience. Each one of us can then become that "not my own". Besides, the name Adam also points to the biblical context, the expulsion from heaven and the endless quest to regain it. Perhaps that is why the episodes in the poems do not have cheap punchlines and dénouements, but urgent internal drama. Just as in real-life situations we cannot instantly see the entire story so much as the long-term action whose meaning will only be revealed as time goes by.



Petr Hruška (b. 1964) is a poet and literary historian. He also writes essays and short prose works. In 2013 he received the State Literature Prize for his poetry collection *Darmata* (2012). He has been involved in a number of scholarly works. His last specialist book to date is the monograph *Někde tady: Český básník Karel Šiktanc* (Somewhere Here: The Czech Poet Karel Šiktanc, 2010). He lives in Ostrava.



Za dlouho		October 2016	48 pages
RIGHTS	Argo	Germany (Hochroth)	English sample

Nevlastní		May 2017	56 pages
RIGHTS	Argo	Germany (Edition Azur), Croatia (Umjetnička organizacija Artikulacije)	English sample

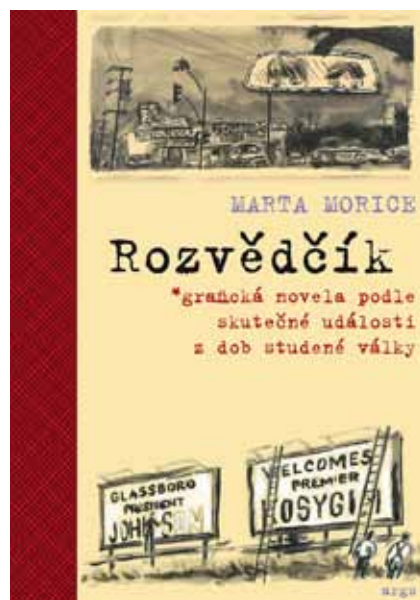
Marta Morice

SECRET AGENT

THIS BIOGRAPHY OF A CZECH SECRET AGENT AND DIPLOMAT LOOKS AT THE OVERARCHING AND PERSONAL HISTORIES OF THE COLD WAR THROUGH THE LENS OF A GRAPHIC NOVEL.

This comic book was written and illustrated by Marta Morice, an artist who has been living in France for many years. It is based on real events of the Cold War, focusing on the backstage that was inaccessible to the public and has since been forgotten. Although after November 1989 the protagonist, socialist spy Miroslav Polreich, the author's uncle, joined the new, non-communist Czech (oslovak) diplomatic services, he operated in the background there as well. Earlier, in the 1960s, he worked in the foreign department of the Czech secret service – and is one of only a few who has no reason to be ashamed of it. A key event took place in June 1967, when an important Soviet-USA summit was held in Glassboro, USA, dealing with disarmament for the very first time. Polreich, an inconspicuous man at the Czech embassy in the US, with good contacts to, both, the CIA and Soviet diplomats, had an important role during its preparation. Morice follows her uncle from his childhood, to joining the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1947, until his change of allegiance after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. She uses typewritten script and a yellow-hued

background, evoking the days of the plot perfectly. Like *Alan's War* by Emmanuel Guibert, *Secret Agent* also shows how important a small, personal history can be in the scheme of global history.



Marta Morice (b. 1971) is a painter and photographer, who has lived in Brittany since the late 1990s. She studied in Brno at the Masaryk University's Faculty of Education and then at the University of Technology's Faculty of Fine Arts. Her paintings often stem from photographs and explore social themes. *Rozvědčík* (Secret Agent, 2017) is Marta Morice's first comics.



PRESS VOICES

“Morice constructs her comics intelligently to increase the suspense.”

— iLiteratura



Jan Novák, Jaromír 99

ZÁTOPEK

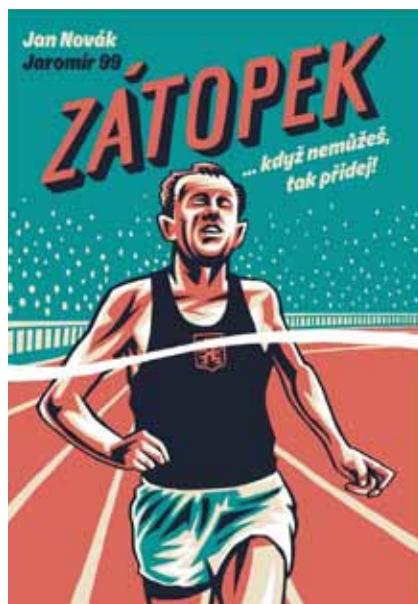
THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF THE SHARPLY CHISELLED FACES AND TENSE MUSCLES CAPTURES THE PAIN AND EFFORT WHICH SPORT AND LIFE REQUIRE.

A graphic novel about the life of one of the most famous Czech athletes, Emil Zátopek – considered by many to be the greatest runner of all time. Zátopek used to say that the threshold of pain and suffering is what separates the boys from the men. Pushing the limits of the body is what made him a phenomenal runner and one of the most famous athletes. When he won the 10km race at the 1948 Olympic Games in London and finished second on the 5km track, he didn't consider it a great achievement. At the next Olympics in Helsinki he won three gold medals and became a legend, but he also achieved a more important victory – he stood up to the Communist regime by insisting that his colleague, Stanislav Jungwirth, who was originally banned from travelling to Helsinki for political reasons, be allowed to compete. This graphic novel written by Jan Novák and illustrated by Jaromír 99 looks at Zátopek's greatest achievements as well as his relationship with the love of his life, Dana Zátopková. The three-colour concept reflects the printing technique used for posters and matches labels at the time.

PRESS VOICES

"The comic portrays Zátopek as a hero and a role-model and also hints at his weaknesses. A man who is successful due to his will but is simultaneously walking a tightrope above an abyss; his Czech cunning helps him keep his balance."

— *Respekt*



Jan Novák (b. 1953), novelist, dramatist, scriptwriter, translator. He emigrated in 1969 and now lives in Prague, though he often returns to America. His books have been translated into several languages. He is the recipient of major literary prizes including the Magnesia Litera for a book of the year (2004) and the Josef Škvorecký Award (2007), as well as the Carl Sandburg Award for Chicago authors, and the Friends of Literature Award.



Jaromír 99 (b. 1963), singer, songwriter, visual artist. Along with the writer Jaroslav Rudiš, Jaromír 99 is the author of the comic book trilogy *Alois Nebel* which was made into a successful movie in 2011 and received the award for the best-animated feature film from the European Film Academy in 2012. His comic book adaptation of Franz Kafka's novel *The Castle* was nominated for the Will Eisner Award 2014 at San Diego's Comic-Con International.



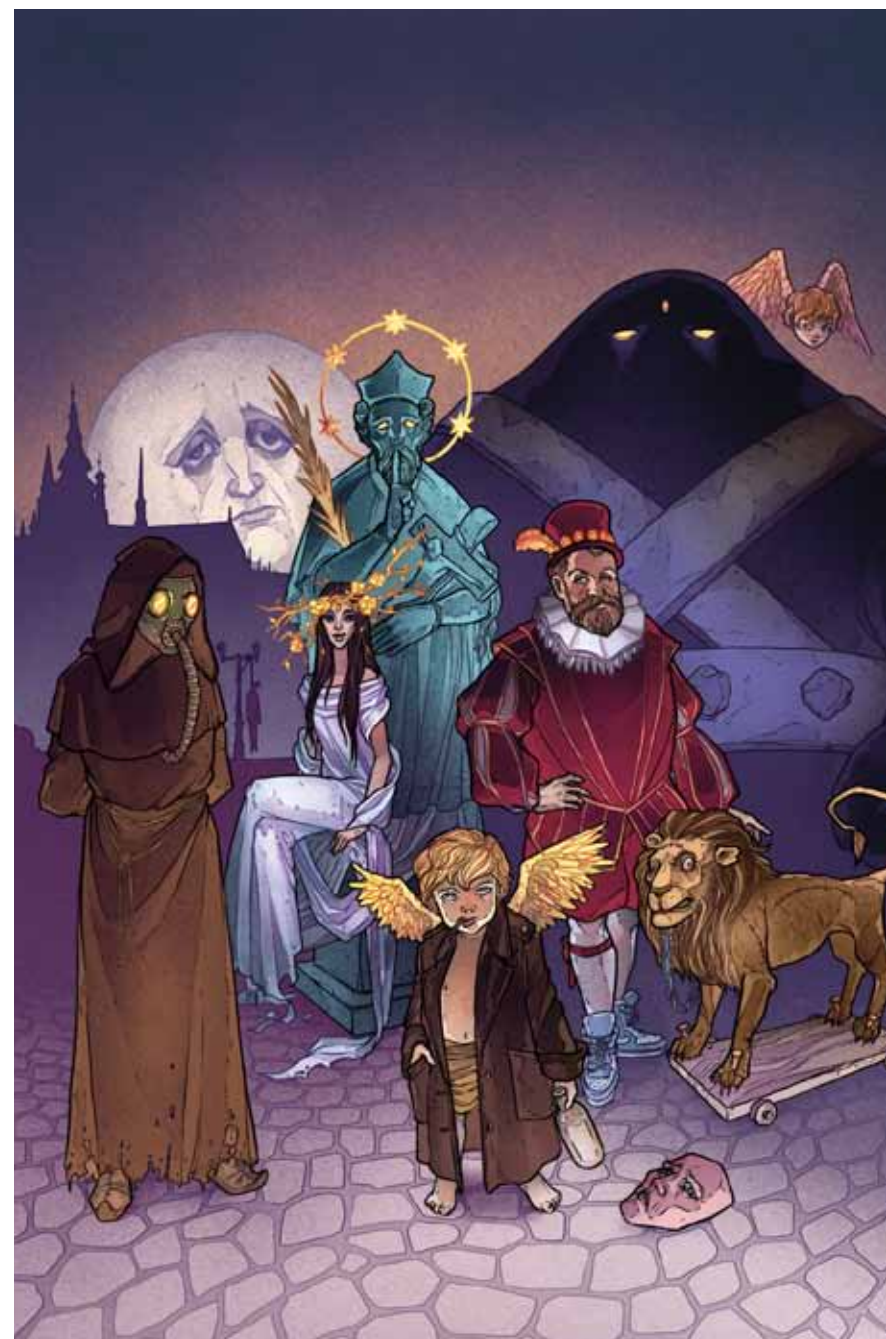
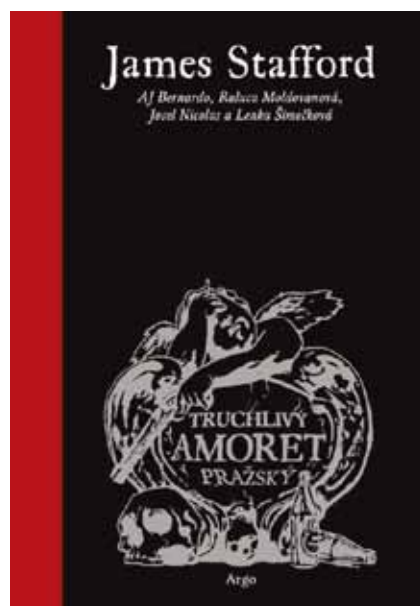
James Stafford, AJ Bernardo, Raluca Moldovan, Lenka Šimečková, Josel Nicolas

THE SORROWFUL PUTTO OF PRAGUE

A BEGUILING, DARK AND CHARMING SET OF SHORT TALES THAT BLEND BLACK HUMOUR, TRAGEDY, MELANCHOLY, HOPE AND BEAUTY TOGETHER WHILST HITTING EVERY NOTE PERFECTLY.

This collection of stories about 'Xavier of the Sorrowful Snows' has won acclaim from such diverse sources as Hollywood and comic legend Samuel L. Jackson, to the Guardian newspaper and the cream of the Czech print and broadcast press. Xavier is a contradictory hero: a baroque angel born into the Renaissance; a being with the face of a child and the bitter wisdom of an old man; a tender lover, a fierce fighter and a hopeless drunk. Above all, he's a devoted, if reluctant, defender of Prague. The individual chapters of his adventure take us back to the times of emperor Rudolf or the Baroque era, as well as to the present day; featuring tales of the political purges of the 1950s and the secret police of the "normalisation" period. Characters include the famous Golem (as you've never seen him before), a zombie version of a Czech patron saint, corrupt Prague taxi drivers and miraculous visions of the talking head of St. Adalbert in the middle of the working class Žižkov district of Prague. In short, *The Sorrowful Putto of Prague* offers such a bizarre mix of historical realia, fantastic tales, the genius loci of Prague, black humour (both typically British and

typically Czech) and pop-culture references that after reading it you'll will never quite see the City of a Hundred Spires the same way again.



PRESS VOICES

“Just read the DOPE ASS “The Sorrowful Putto of Prague”... check it out... you’re in for a treat!”
– Samuel L. Jackson, *twitter.com*

“...[an] atmospheric webcomic steeped in Czech history and folklore...”
– *The Guardian (UK)*

“The author’s fantasy knows no bounds and he has a very fertile imagination.”
– *MF Dnes*

“... the mix of stories exude both charm, great characters and have a beguiling and haunting charm and it’s well worth your time to have a read...”
– John Freeman, *downthetubes.net*



James Stafford is a Welsh writer and journalist currently living in the Czech Republic (via London, Cardiff and Dublin). James’ first foray into comics, *The Sorrowful Putto of Prague*, has won a cult following online and its fans include Hollywood legend and comic fanatic Samuel L. Jackson. James writes on a variety of topics as a ghostwriter and regularly dabbles in sports journalism – with experience in major UK and Irish national and local newspapers. He is currently working on a full-length graphic novel as well as a follow-up to *The Sorrowful Putto of Prague*.

AJ Bernardo from the Pacific archipelago has been working as a comic book artist for close to a decade now, but still, struggles to apply shadows on the face of infants. He’s never held a cigarette, enjoys the occasional drunken night or two, and his given name means ‘Angel’.

Raluca Moldovan loves art and synthpop and claims that drawing is her only real qualification. Raluca’s early involvement with *The Sorrowful Putto of Prague* came after she responded to a request for an artist for the comic on a fansite of British rock band The Cure. She lives in the seaside town of Constanta, Romania.

Lenka Šimečková is one of the Czech Republic’s rising young comic stars. A much-in-demand artist already boasting an impressive portfolio of work - her picturesque gothic artwork has won her a cult following. Hailing from Vimperk, Lenka studied at The University of West Bohemia.

Josel Nicolas is from Batangas City, a small port town south of Manila in the Philippines. A full-time artist, Josel’s early comic inspiration came from Batman and Judge Dredd. Away from The Putto he produces ‘Windmills’ - an ongoing autobiographical comic and edits various comic anthologies in the Philippines aimed at children and adults.



ONDŘEJ NEZBEDA, TOMÁŠ HODAN &
PETRA SOUKUPOVÁ, KAREL OSOHA,
TOMÁŠ KUČEROVSKÝ & PETRA
JOSEFINA STIBITZOVÁ

TOTAL DEPLOYMENT

THE TRUE STORIES OF THREE WOMEN, OF DIFFERENT AGES AND NATIONALITIES, WHOSE LIVES WERE AFFECTED BY WORK CAMPS DURING WORLD WAR II.

'*Totální nasazení*' (total deployment) or 'Totaleinsatz' in German, was a term for forced labour during the World War II German occupation of Czechoslovakia. This comics, by three pairs of authors and illustrators, presents distinct stories about three women. Helena, Jarmila and Franciska's lives are connected by forced labour. Helena, who was born into a Czech Jewish family in Ukraine, escapes from a labour camp and is constantly on the run. Jarmila signs up to work for the Nazis voluntarily – as she was cooperating with the resistance movement, she hopes that she can hide there from the Gestapo. Franciska was born shortly before the end of the war to a Polish mother and Czech father who fell in love in a labour camp in Germany. After the war ends, she spends most of her childhood in Communist orphanages. The different styles of the three artists complement the stories. Karel Osoha's illustrations shift abruptly between cold muted browns and purples when Helena is on the run, and brighter colours as she recalls her life before the war. Tomáš Kučerovský's dynamic use of close-ups and text-less panels add a new dimension to Jarmila's story, which

readers can find familiar. Petra Josefina Stibitzová's fragile, almost child-like pencil and crayon drawings reflect Franciska's parentless childhood. This comic book is produced in cooperation with Post Bellum, an organisation which aims to increase public knowledge of Czech 20th Century history.



Ondřej Nezbeda (b. 1979) is a journalist and author. From 2007–2014, he was an editor of the weekly magazine *Respekt*. Nezbeda has also worked as a meteorological observer, hospice carer and television dramaturge. In 2016, he published his first book, *Průvodce smrtelníka* (A Mortal's Guide), about hospice care, which won the Magnesia Litera Award for Discovery of the Year.

Tomáš Hodan (b. 1980) is a screenwriter and director. In 2002 he graduated from the Zlín Film School and since then has written and directed a number of award-winning short and feature-length films. As a documentary filmmaker, he has filmed in Angola, Afghanistan, Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cyprus. Since 2014, he has been writing scripts for the popular satirical series, *Kancelář Blaník* (Blaník Office), loosely inspired by the British comedy series *The Thick of It*.

Petra Soukupová (b. 1982) is a prose writer, screenwriter and dramaturge. Soukupová's bestselling books have received a number of awards and have been translated into seven languages. Preparations are underway for a film based on her short story, *Na krátko* (Cut Short), with a planned release date in 2018. As a screenwriter, Soukupová worked on the successful sitcom, *Comeback* (2008–2010), and the satirical series, *Kosmo* (2016). Her books have sold close to 90,000 copies.



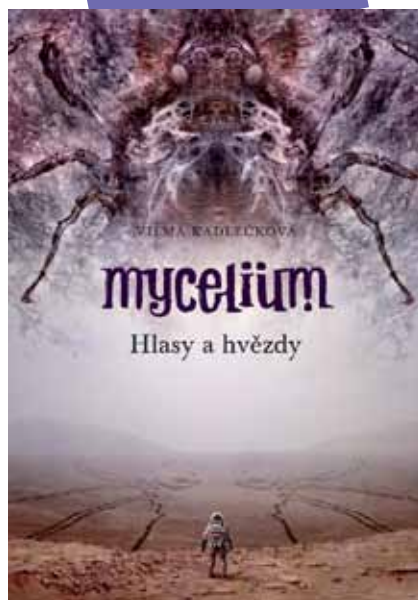
Vilma Kadlečková

MYCELIUM SERIES

MYCELIUM PRESENTS READERS WITH AN “INTERPLANETARY AND INTER-CIVILISATIONAL THRILLER” ALSO ACCESSIBLE TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT SCI-FI ENTHUSIASTS.

The plot takes place on our planet a few centuries from now, where humans have survived only due to the technological achievements of the Össeans, an ancient theocratic alien civilisation. The two groups co-exist on Earth; however, the Össeans 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.

ACADEMY OF SFFH -
BOOK OF THE YEAR
—
BEST ORIGINAL CZECH
AND SLOVAK BOOK



Vilma Kadlečková (b. 1971) has written the comprehensive pentalogy *Mycelium*, which is a distinct highpoint of contemporary science fiction. The majority of her works belong to the “*Legends of Argenite*” cycle. These are tales on the boundary of science fiction and fantasy (‘science fantasy’, ‘psychotronic science fiction’), mapping the future history of the universe, which is similar to to to ours, but which contains “argenite”: a fictional mineral serving as a source of energy with psychotronic powers. For the first part of her Mycelium saga, Vilma Kadlečková received the Book of the Year award from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror, and the Best Original Czech and Slovak Book of the Year 2013.



PRESS VOICES

“Kadlečková enthusiastically enters into the minds of her heroes; at key moments she literally grills them before the eyes of the reader. As if you were watching a scene from a Quentin Tarantino film. When reading you will struggle to catch your breath and experience an intensive feeling of empathy with the book’s heroes. And all this despite the fact that you will not encounter an unequivocally positive character.”

— *Reflex*

FROM THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION

“You don’t know how to kill,” said Össean. “You would be glad to avoid it. You are agreeing to it now because you think that when my back is turned you can ask those two for help. You think that if you confide in them, that will rid you of your responsibility. But be aware of the fact that if you warn them, you will lose the chance to discreetly carry out what you have to. You will not be rid of your responsibility as you hope, only the opportunity to choose. And then you will die with them.” He

fell silent. “So don’t be rash,” he added. “I’ll send you the code which allows you to bypass the ship’s safety systems. When you enter it onto the plasmodial keypad, the transfer chamber will open on both sides regardless of whether there is air in the cabin. The vacuum will pull both passengers into space. It’s a clean way of doing it. There is no dirty work afterwards – no removal of bodies or washing away blood. All we ask of you is a few minutes of inconvenience.”

Tereza Cz Dvořáková, Nikkarin,
František Týmal

HOW CINEMA WAS BORN. A TRIP INTO THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF FILM FOR EARLY AND ADVANCED READERS

THE PERFECT BOOK FOR ALL CURIOUS CHILDREN, IT COMBINES THE LATEST KNOWLEDGE OF FILM HISTORY AND EPIC LANGUAGE WITH PRACTICAL YET ALSO PLAYFUL INSTRUCTION MANUALS.

This beautiful book tells you what all had to happen before the first feature-length animated film was shot. The story from Leonardo Da Vinci to Lotte Reiniger, journeys into the archaeology of film as an homage to the epoch of the 18th and 19th century – the time of inventions and social change, without which we could hardly imagine what it is to have fun in the cinema, in front of the television, computer or with our tablets today. The book also contains an interactive section, prepared by experimental filmmaker František Týmal, with several manuals for the making of optical toys, which will show moving images that were watched by people more than a hundred years ago. The toy manuals are based on the do-it-yourself concept and can be created at home or in school. Humorous illustrations

made by leading Czech children comics author Nikkarin open the book to other pop-cultural contexts. The book is designed for inquisitive readers from 6 years of age, but also for much older ones.

TWO NOMINATIONS FOR THE
GOLDEN RIBBON AWARD –
BEST CHILDREN'S BOOK (2018)



Tereza Cz Dvořáková (b. 1977) studied Film & TV Production and earned a PhD in Film Studies. She is a founder and developer of the Film Educational Department at the National Film Archive Prague and has various practical experiences in film education.

Nikkarin (b. 1987), real name Michal Menšík, is a self-taught artist. He draws and writes his original comic books and has recently emerged as a much sought-after illustrator of books and magazines for young people.

František Týmal (b. 1987) graduated from Audiovisual Studies at FAMU in 2013, specialising in creating and reflection of intermedia arts. He currently focuses on experimental filmmaking, new media and the use of moving images in visual arts and the theatre.

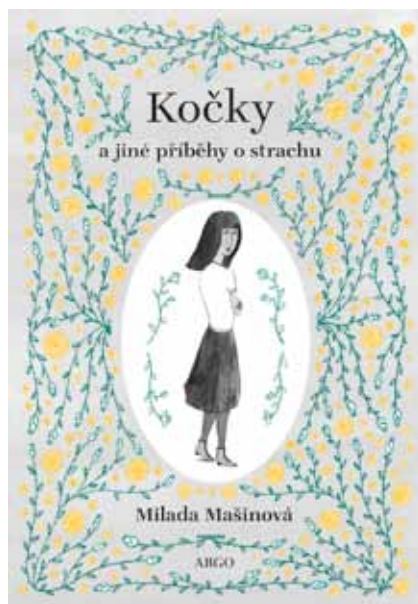


MILADA MAŠINOVÁ, PETRA JOSEFÍNA STIBITZOVÁ

CATS AND OTHER TALES OF FEAR

IMAGINATIVE BOOK FOR YOUNG READERS WHO APPRECIATE IN EQUAL MEASURE THE TEXT AND THE LIGHT AND STYLIZED ILLUSTRATIONS.

A pretty teacher, beloved by all the boys, sits down in a rollercoaster with her students – little does she know what horror awaits her... A shipwreck is floating in the middle of the ocean with a motley pair of castaways – a girl and a young man who is completely detached from reality and loses himself in pseudo-intellectual thoughts... A young maid suddenly finds herself out of work and has nowhere to go... A boy ignored by his parents doesn't know that the ocean is raging because of him. These are the situations in which the young heroes of the six short stories in this collection find themselves. The main theme is love in all its forms: siblings, parents and lovers. Jealous, selfish, posses-



sive and self-centred love. These short stories by Milada Mašínová stand out due to their exceptional, horror-like atmosphere and precise, crystal clear style. Both of these qualities infuse the stories with an atmosphere of pervasive fear, anxiety and strangeness. Illustrations by young illustrator Petra Josefína Stibitzová complement the book.

Milada Mašínová (b. 1988) studied at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (department of screenplay and dramaturgy). In 2015 she debuted with her first work in the trilogy of comic strips *Plague*, that is being adapted for the screen.



Petra Josefína Stibitzová (b. 1988) studied at the illustration and graphics studio at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, under the tutorship of Juraj Horváth and Michaela Kukovič. During her studies, she authored a number of books, but ultimately inclined towards illustrating the texts of other authors. Among her, best-known works are the children's book *Columbus the Pigeon*, or her co-operation with Milada Mašínová on the comic strip *Plague*.



PRESS VOICES

"We may speak of a kinship with classic fairy tales such as *The Little Prince* or *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, or with the wave in which Poe wrote his *The Fall of the House of Usher* or Julien Gracq his novel *The Castle of Argol*. The text is far deeper than the images, not only due to its sombre finale."

— MF Dnes

"The author excels in her singular vision – in her fictional words we find features which are familiar from romantic fiction, but these are merely cleverly utilised backdrops onto which the author sets her texts about how evil originates."

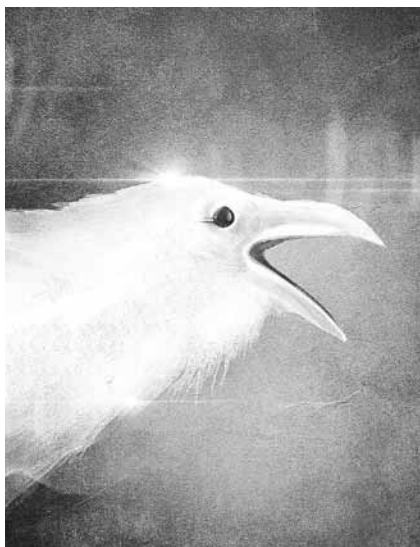
— Právo

Luisa Nováková, Pavel Trávníček

WHITE RAVENS

A SUSPENSEFUL NOVEL WITH BOTH STRONG CHARACTERS AND HEROISM, AS WELL AS ANCIENT WISDOM AND ESOTERISM STRENGTHENED BY THE AUTHOR'S ELEVATED LANGUAGE AND ORIGINAL SIMILIES.

Within the highly diversified family of fantasy genres, high-quality works aimed at teenagers only appear sporadically in the Czech context. The novel *White Ravens* can be categorized as historical fantasy, since it presents an image of a firmly established ruling hierarchy in the kingdom of Kaymeira; however, it also displays the typical literary features of works for young readers. Luisa Nováková offers them a thrilling tale about the emotional jour-



ney of two noble siblings who are waging a long and merciless struggle against their usurper stepfather. The young displaced king and his sister are forced to take refuge in the inhospitable town of Věže and negotiate with dozens of the local inhabitants. The characters that will help them through their many adventures are endowed with distinctive personalities and heroic qualities as well as ancient wisdom.

Luisa Nováková (b. 1971) lectures on Czech literature and literature for children and young people at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University, which she graduated from, as well as doing occasional illustration work and translating from Polish. For her two-volume prose debut, *Sestra volavek* (Sister of Herons) and *Kámen vládců* (Stone of the Rulers), she won a Golden Ribbon in 1998. She mainly focuses on fiction for young people and adults that draws on history, myths and folklore. She attracted attention with her novel *Krajina s jednorožcem* (Landscape with a Unicorn, 2006) and a collection of original adaptations of Polish legends *Šlépěj královny Jadwiga* (Queen Jadwiga's Footsteps, 2009), which she supplemented with her own translations of Polish folk poetry.

Pavel Trávníček (b. 1984) graduated from a graphic arts college, and yet he still feels like an eternal autodidact. He works in graphic design, typography, painting and illustration. Co-founder of the creative group MSC and the game studio ARK8 (*Coraabia* online card game), he has participated in numerous internet and television projects. He is also the co-creator of the award-winning experimental construction toy RIPO (with Jan Kysela).

PRESS VOICES

"*White Ravens* resembles epic poems of the early Middle Ages, as well as poetic illustrations of the Arthurian legends from the end of the 19th century. The heroic historical story is, however, written for perceptive contemporary readers."

– XB-1



Alena Wagnerová, Jitka Němečková

HOW MARTHA TAMED THE DRAGON

NOT A FANTASY GAME, BUT A BOOK FOR CHILDREN, THAT IN WORDS AND PICTURES BRINGS TO LIFE A UNIQUE TALE OF OVERCOMING OF EVIL WITHOUT VIOLENCE.

The renowned writer Alena Wagnerová has adapted the inspiring Provençal legend of Saint Martha. In fairy tales and legends, battling with dragons has as a rule been a matter for men, but this legend presents an exception. As recorded in the manuscript *Legenda aurea* (Golden Legend), which preserved this Provençal parable for the centuries to come, Saint Martha of Bethany overpowered the dragon Tarasque, which devoured cattle, horses and people, and destroyed fields and crops, without any weapons, using only twigs held in the shape of a cross and sweet singing, after which she tied him to her girdle and set off towards the town walls with it. The annual procession in honour of this saint has become part of UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage. However, in the story people's anger got the better of them, and they began

to throw stones at the dragon and killed him. This economical yet eloquent adaptation of the material penned by Alena Wagnerová is elevated by the drawings, whose orange light above the brown figures stimulates the goodness of the heart. After all, tolerance doesn't require a miracle.



Alena Wagnerová (b. 1936) is a Czech-German writer and columnist. Since 1969 she has lived in Saarbrücken and Prague and works as a writer, translator and publisher. She won particular acclaim for her essay about the resistance group *Předvoj*, *Neohlížej se, zkameníš* (Don't Look Back or You'll Turn to Stone, 1968), and then for the novel *Dvojitá kaple* (The Double Chapel; German 1982, Czech 1991) and biographies of Sidonie Nádherná, Milena Jesenská and Jiří Weil. In the books *Odsunuté vzpomínky* (Expelled Memories), *Neodsunuté vzpomínky* (Unexpelled Memories) and *A zapomenuti vejdemo do dějin* (And the Forgotten Will Go Down in History) she records the oral history of Sudeten Germans. She is a winner of the Pelikán 2005 and Gratias Agit 2017 awards; this is her first book for child readers.

Jitka Němečková (b. 1963) graduated from the Technical College of Graphic Arts in Prague and worked at the Pressfoto publishing company and as an advertising graphic artist at DTP studios. One of her outstanding smaller works is a cycle of illustrations for the exhibition at the Visitor Centre of the Podyjí National Park. She created a set of 30 fine press works for the Spanish publishing house Pandora, each of which contains 25 scenes summarizing the history of Andalusia (in the pipeline). She contributed illustrations to the collection of fairy tales *Vánoční kniha* (The Christmas Book, 2012) and also makes jewellery.

PRESS VOICES

"This book with illustrations by Jitka Němečková poses difficult questions. Is violence ever justified? Where does justice end and revenge begin? And how are we influenced by fear? The positive aspect of the book is that it does not obscure the complex ethical issue with easy answers."

— ego!



SELECTED BACKLIST

- Fulghum, Robert: *A Memoir of an Adventure / Vzpomínky na jedno dobrodružství*, 2013
- Fulghum, Robert: *Words I Wish I Wrote / Slova, kter jsme si přál napsat sám*, 2012
- Fulghum, Robert: *Hold Me Fast, Love Me Slow / Drž mě pevně, miluj mě zlehka*, 2011
- Fulghum, Robert: *What On Earth Have I Done? / Co jsem to proboha udělal?*, 2007
- Fulghum, Robert: *True Love / Opravdová láska*, 1997
- Fulghum, Robert: *Maybe (Maybe Not) / Možná, možná ne*, 1996
- Fulghum, Robert: *Uh-Oh / Ach jo*, 1996
- Fulghum, Robert: *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It / Už hořela, když jsem do ní lehal*, 1996
- Fulghum, Robert: *From Beginning To End – The Rituals of Our Lives / Od začátku do konce – naše životní rituály*, 1995
- Fulghum, Robert: *Third Wish (three-volume set) / Třetí přání (komplet)*, 2008
- Hakl, Emil: *The end of the world / Konec světa*, collection of short stories, 2014
- Hakl, Emil: *Beef cubes / Hovězí kostky*, collection of short stories, 2014
- Hakl, Emil: *A true story / Skutečná událost*, novel, translated into Dutch, Bulgarian, German; Magnesia Litera award – best prose, 2013
- Hakl, Emil: *Rules of ridiculous behaviour / Pravidla směšného chování*, collection of three stories, translated into Swedish, Polish, Dutch, German; Josef Škvorecký award, 2010
- Hakl, Emil: *Flight of the witch / Let čarodějnice*, novel, 2008
- Hakl, Emil: *On flying objects / O létajících objektech*, collection of short stories, 2004
- Hakl, Emil: *Of kids and parents / O rodičích a dětech*, novel, translated into Italian, Norwegian, Swedish, German, Dutch, Spanish, English, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian; Magnesia litera – best prose, 2002
- Kadlečková, Vilma: *Mycelium IV.: The sight / Mycelium IV.: Vidění*, sci-fi, 2014
- Kadlečková, Vilma: *Mycelium III.: Fall into Darkness / Mycelium III.: Pád do temnot*, sci-fi, 2014
- Kadlečková, Vilma: *Mycelium II.: Ice under the skin / Mycelium II.: Led pod kůží*, sci-fi, 2013
- Kadlečková, Vilma: *Mycelium I.: The Opening / Mycelium I*, sci-fi, 2013
- Karika, Jozef: *Black game / Černá hra*, thriller, 2016, Golden Pen award 2015
- Karika, Jozef: *The Crack / Trhlina*, 2018
- Nodl, Martin: *Why do stars fall / Proč padají hvězdy*, collection of short poems, 2014
- Nodl, Martin: *Three studies on the time of Charles IV / Tři studie o době Karla IV.*, historical essays, 2007
- Novák, Jan: *So far so good. The Mašins and the Greatest Story of the Cold War / Zatím dobrý: Mašinovi a největší příběh studené války*, 2013, Magnesia Litera – Book of the year
- Novák, Jan: *Turnaround, a co-authored autobiography of Milos Forman / Co já vím? Biografie Miloše Formana*, translated into Czech, German, French, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Dutch, Swedish, Finnish and Hungarian, 2013 (third completed issue)
- Novák, Jan: *A Life Beyond Category. An interview with John Bok / Život mimo kategorie. Rozhovor s Johnem Bokem*, 2015
- Nováková, Luisa: *Sister of Herons, Stone of the Rulers (two vol.) / Sestra volavek, Kámen vládců*, 1998
- Nováková, Luisa: *Landscape with a Unicorn / Krajina s jednorožcem*, 2006
- Nováková, Luisa: *Queen Jadwiga's Footsteps / Šlépě královny Jadwigy*, 2009
- Renčín, Pavel: *Urban wars (trilogy) / Městské války (trilogie)*, fantasy, 2008, 2009, 2001
- Štindl, Ondřej, Bolf Josef (ill.): *Mondschein / Mondschein*, dystopian fiction, 2012
- Urban, Miloš: *Urbo Kune / Urbo Kune*, sci-fi, 2015
- Urban, Miloš: *She came from the sea / Přišla z moře*, noir, 2014
- Urban, Miloš: *Praga piccola / Praga piccola*, historical tale, 2012
- Urban, Miloš: *Boletus arcanus / Boletus arcanus*, novel, 2011
- Urban, Miloš: *Lord Mord / Lord Mord*, gothic horror, translated into Spanish, German, English, Croatian, Polish, 2008
- Urban, Miloš: *Dead girls / Mrtvé holky*, collection of stories, translated into Dutch, 2007
- Urban, Miloš: *Santini's language / Santiniho jazyk*, historical crime novel, 2005
- Urban, Miloš: *The shadow of the cathedral / Stín katedrály*, crime comedy, translated into Spanish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Polish, German, Dutch, 2003
- Urban, Miloš: *The Water-Goblin / Hastrman*, green novel, translated into Spanish, 2002, Magnesia Litera award – best prose
- Urban, Miloš: *Seven churches / Sedmikostelí*, gothic horror, translated into German, Dutch, Hungarian, Spanish, Bulgarian, Russian, Polish, Slovenian, Croatian, Italian, English, French, Korean, Romanian, Serbian, Macedonian, Turkish, Egyptian, 1999
- Wagnerová, Alena: *Milena Jesenková / Milena Jesenská*, biography, 2015
- Wagnerová, Alena: *Sidonie Nádherná / Sidonie Nádherná*, biography, 2010

MINISTRY OF CULTURE 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 (up to 50% of the total cost of publishing)
- graphic design, typesetting and printing costs (up to 50% of the total cost of publishing)
- copyright costs (up to 15% of the total cost of publishing)
- promotion costs (up to 25% of the total cost of publishing)

PUBLISHERS, AGENTS AND TRANSLATORS CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR

- the translation of an excerpt of between 10–25 standard pages of text (a standard page is 1800 characters with spaces)

MAGAZINES CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR

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

DEADLINES

15th April, 15th November

