

NEWS AND VIEWS IN ENGLISH * FROM THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

the messenger

CZK 20

volume 14, number 2, autumn '14



editorial

Dear Readers,

I hope you will enjoy this issue, as ever.

It is a special issue, as for the first time The Messenger is filled almost entirely with the work of students. Most of the contributions are the result of work in our regular classes, namely those of Lucie Podroužková, Ailsa Randall, Jaroslav Suchý and Jiří Šalamoun.

There is also a very interesting interview with Joanna Falkowska in this issue. The interview was conducted by Světlana Hanušova and asks many interesting questions about Poznaň and Ms. Falkowska's field of study.

If you feel inspired by any of the articles, poems, or whatever else, please feel free to contact us at gabriela.oaklandova@gmail.com. You might like to send us your comments or suggestions for articles, or, indeed, the articles themselves.

You might also consider your own involvement in the running of this magazine, as from the next semester you will be able to sign up for The Messenger as one of your optional subjects.

*Your Editor
Gabriela Oaklandová*

in this issue

Editorial.....	2
Interview: Interview with Joanna Falkowska by Světlana Hanušová.....	4
Methodology Pages: Homework by Ondřej Špaček.....	7
Methodology Pages: Fryšták by Pavel Smrčiak.....	9
Culture Pages: American Exceptionalism by Daniel Schneider.....	10
Translation Pages: Ted' jsem tady by Gabriela Sládková.....	11
Stories: A Story by Veronika Machová.....	17
Stories: Inceptum finis est by Marek Hlaváč.....	20
Poetry Pages: Poetry in eMotion by Marie Šimáková and Adam Zeisek.....	24
Poetry Pages: Exaggerate by Ondřej Čada.....	25
Poetry Pages: I Am July 2014 by Jaroslav Suchý.....	25
Poetry Pages: Ode to Roy, I need to tell you that ..., ILY & IMY, The Robber Grows in You by Kamil Patrick Ivan.....	26

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the messenger

volume 14 number 2

published semi-annually

date of issue: 2014

deadline for submission for the next issue: 15 October 2015

publisher: Masarykova univerzita, I 00216224

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Ev. č. MK ČR E 15006, ISSN 1214-6676

publishing house: Tiskárna KNOPP, ern ice 24, 549 01 Nové M sto nad Metují

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interview

Interview with Joanna Falkowska Světlna Hanušová

Joanna Falkowska is a young lady who stayed at the English Department in Brno for a semester. She teaches English as a foreign language to Deaf¹ Poles. Last year she began her Ph.D. studies at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, in the city of Poznań. During her stay at Masaryk University, she observed classes at the English Department as well as conducting classes for Deaf Czech students at the Teiresias Centre.

SH: Joanna, you are a doctoral student at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Can you tell us more about your home institution?

JF: Adam Mickiewicz University is one of the major Polish universities. The Faculty of English, where I conduct my research, is the largest centre of English studies in Europe. Many significant scholars work there. It is a great pleasure and honour to have colleagues that you actually look up to. Apart from being a research centre, the faculty runs B.A., M.A., Ph.D. and post-graduate programmes as well as organizing conferences and conducting scholarly events for the general public. This year we celebrated the 111th anniversary of English studies in Poznań. As you may imagine, the beginnings were modest - history did not deal kindly with our nation. However, when the situation

¹ Please note the word "Deaf" is written with a capital D. It refers to the linguistic and cultural community of people who see (I crossed out "their" because, theoretically, a hearing person can also be called Deaf if accepted by the community) deafness as a different experience rather than a disability.

stabilized a bit in the sixties, Professor Jacek Fisiak became its head. Since then, the School of English has been flourishing. In 2005 Professor Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kolaczyk was elected the new head and she has carried on the great work of her predecessor. The School of English was transformed into the Faculty of English and is still going strong.

SH: I was in Poznań a few years ago and I was really surprised how large the School of English was. Later it was even transformed into a faculty, which I find really interesting. How is the faculty organized? Are there departments specializing in particular fields? And does the faculty specialize in anything? Do you only educate philologists or also teachers of English?

JF: Indeed, we are big. We could probably conduct a separate interview on our structure and organization. Let's try to keep it short, sharp and sweet, though. From the point of view of research, the faculty is divided into separate departments. For example, I am a member of the Department of Applied English Linguistics and Language Teaching. At the same time, all departments must co-operate in terms of teaching, so we remain very flexible. As far as study programmes are concerned, there are various specializations. For example, you can choose from academic English, translation, conference interpreting, Celtic studies, South African studies, teacher training and culture studies. This is not an exhaustive list.

SH: What is your PhD topic and what was your main motivation for pursuing it?

JF: I study the acquisition of English as a foreign language in users of Deaf sign language, and I would like to help the students reach their full potential.

Currently, we know very little about how foreign languages should be taught effectively to the Deaf. My interest in this topic originated from my hands-on experience in teaching Deaf adults. I use Polish Sign Language in my lessons and it turns out that there are not too many avid linguists who would be fluent signers. This made me want to get back to academia and begin my doctoral studies.

SH: Indeed it is a very interesting topic. I can imagine it must be very challenging to find ways to research it and produce results that are academically sound and at the same time beneficial for practice.

JF: Yes, it is not easy from a methodological point of view. Polish Sign Language has not been fully described yet. Besides, the onset of first language acquisition is different in many Deaf individuals. There are many variables that may confound the results because the group is not homogeneous. All this makes it difficult to control studies conducted with Deaf participants. You also need to bear in mind that there is still a big group of scholars claiming that good research is quantitative research. However, Deaf participants, as a group, tend to escape the categories of conventional SLA research. So how do you conduct a study that is academically sound and at the same time brings something good directly to the teachers? In particular we are in great need of effective teaching methods for this group of students. We are currently at the stage when many teachers from Deaf schools experiment on their students throughout the school year. Researchers are the ones who should be conducting experiments, not teachers. We need to remember that experiments have a tendency to fail.

SH: It must also be quite difficult to find advisors who understand research in applied linguistics and the specifics of teaching English as a foreign language to the Deaf.

JF: This is true. There are not too many scholars who do the same type of research as I do. Among them, there are even fewer who know Polish Sign Language or any other sign language. Sometimes you “feel” something and want to discuss it, and then there is no one to discuss it with. Of course, sometimes it is discouraging, but it is also quite exciting. The great explorers didn’t have any maps when they set out on their expeditions, either.

SH: That’s right, your research topic does look like a great exploration. And what has brought you to Brno?

JF: Masaryk University hosts the Support Centre for Students with Special Needs, which offers a very high quality of services to MU students. Many of the solutions that the Teiresias Centre employs as basic support for Masaryk University students remain beyond the reach of students from other European universities. The work of the Centre is really impressive. I wanted to experience it and have a closer look. Besides, certain colleagues at MU are doing research in my field of studies. It is very enriching, and convenient, to meet every day with people who work in the same domain. Whenever you come up with an idea, you can simply discuss it over morning coffee. This is definitely something that I will miss after my return to Poland.

SH: Have you found any similarities between the department in Brno and the Faculty of English in Poznań?

JF: Yes, I have. The Department has some very devoted staff, who simply like what they do, and many students visibly

take pleasure in pursuing their studies. It is very heartening to see that. We are not going downhill, as some prophets of doom would argue when discussing the level of today's education and students' approach to tertiary education.

SH: Is there anything that has surprised you in any way in Brno?

JF: I fell in love with this place at a very early stage of my stay and I am still stunned by its beauty. I had not expected this. I am a pretty visual person and I take pleasure in pure observation, so you may imagine how delightful it is for me simply to roam the city and appreciate its architecture.

SH: I've heard about your reading groups in Poznań. Can you tell us about the groups?

JF: Even today, when I browsed through our faculty website I saw that the headlines involved mostly news concerning the schedule of current reading group meetings. This shows how often they convene. Students who like a particular field of study have an opportunity to delve into the domain of their interest besides attending their regular classes. You do not necessarily have to attend all of the group meetings throughout the whole year, as meetings usually have an open character. Currently you may choose from fourteen different clubs - for instance, the History of English Language club, the Book Lovers among Students club, the Translation club, the Culture Vultures, the Language&Gender&Sexuality club, etc. All of them have their own style and they cater for the needs of different participants.

SH: And do students get credits for participating in the groups or do they just participate out of interest?

JF: No, they do not get any credits for it.

I imagine that sometimes the teacher might recognize a student's extracurricular activity in the compulsory course that they take, but otherwise, these reading groups are based on voluntary participation.

SH: Which reading groups did you attend as a student? And do you also act as a moderator of one?

JF: Personally, I used to pick different subjects, according to what interested me at any given time - particular presentations, talks or film sessions. We also run Friday talks where faculty members present their research ideas and open lectures that cover themes that may be interesting for the general public. The variety of extracurricular activities is really big. Currently I am not moderating a reading group of my own. One year before enrolling on the Ph.D. programme I set up a small company. When I was accepted, I decided to keep on operating it. This means that I am not that flexible time-wise, and so I prefer to run one-off events, such as open lectures or workshops.

SH: At the moment we have a contract with your university which allows short stays for academics. If we decided to make an Erasmus+ agreement to enable our students to spend a semester abroad, what do you think would be attractive for students from Poznań about studying in Brno?

JF: You have a great selection of classes that tackle specific domains in language teaching. This, I think, would be very appealing to our future teachers. Some of the classes that I have attended here are very practical. For example, students can discuss the use of literature in an EFL class, which is not so straightforward at first sight. They may attend classes covering the question of how music can be used to the benefit of language

learners, or how dyslexic students should be taught. As far as the city is concerned, Brno is vibrant with events. There are many students here and the atmosphere is very joyful. I bet our students would quickly come to love it.

SH: And is there anything that our students should not miss if they travel to Poznań?

JF: I guess we have already given the gist of what the faculty has to offer. With regards to the city itself, it is full of local festivals, so there is always something going on. There are periods that may be of particular interest to cinema- and theatre-goers, music fans as well as modern art enthusiasts. As a visitor, you must definitely see the Poznań goats at our Renaissance town hall, eat St Martin's Croissant and go to a Lech Poznań football match at our stadium. I personally also like to take my guests to the Palm House and show them around some interesting museums and beautiful pieces of architecture. Besides, Poznań is fairly central, so it is easy to arrange short excursions around Poland from there. Your students will not be bored, of that I am sure, but let them taste the place for themselves.



methodology pages

Homework
Ondřej Špaček

In my class of Practical and Professional English, the students were asked to pick an article based on something practical for their teaching and to present it to the class. They could choose one of the topics on the British Council Methodology pages, but were free to explore other resources as well. At the end of the semester, after having seen all the presentations, they were asked to critically evaluate both the original article and the presentation itself. Ondrej chose to write about the presentation on homework and I hope you will find it both interesting and inspirational with regard to some different approaches to setting homework. - Ailsa Marion Randall

In their presentation Iva Egertová, Edita Kovalová and Kateřina Sochorová (Egertová, Kovalová, & Sochorová, 2014) evaluated an article by Steve Darn dealing with the topic of homework (Darn, 2007). The article offers a good overview of the reasons why homework is assigned and of principles of effective homework. Also, different types of homework are discussed. The starting point of the article is the assertion that even though homework is a time-consuming activity, its value is not questioned. The assertion is based on the fact that little has been published on the topic in ELT literature. The article references all the key texts available on the issue to date, leaving out only Epstein and Voorhis' article (Epstein & van Voorhis, 2001), which, however, does not deal with the phenomenon of homework in ELT specifically. Hence, the introductory proposition seems to be valid. Darn first describes homework

from the perspective of the teacher, examining the reasons why it is assigned. Then, he proceeds to look at homework through the eyes of the learner. A key link between the two perspectives is the question of feedback. Darn argues that feedback should be useful for the learner, stressing the fact that if it is useful, it is motivating. Unfortunately, the category of usefulness is not properly defined and the question not further pursued. Egertová, Kovalová and Sochorová followed the structure of the article and listed the effective homework principles. Two of Darn's ideas were not mentioned - the fact that learners' individual learning styles should be taken into account and the importance of coordinating the homework load with teachers of other subjects. To me, this seems unfortunate, as I find Darn's idea of a homework diary kept by the learners and checked by their teachers illuminating. In the following part of the text, Darn offers an overview of homework types without providing the reader with examples of specific tasks. Unfortunately, the presentation was limited to rephrasing the article, offering almost no examples either. Critically, Darn's article lacks a conclusion. The part which carries the name only offers a shallow argument on the connection between homework and the internet. No real conclusion was provided in the presentation either. To conclude, both the article and the presentation examine an important topic and offer a limited number of ideas for working with homework in ELT. The specificity of the ideas is, however, lacking.

List of references

Darn, S. (2007). Homework. Retrieved January 16, 2015, from TeachingEnglish: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/homework>

Egertová, I., Kovalová, E., & Sochorová, K. (2014, December). Homework. Brno.

Epstein, J. L., & van Voorhis, F. L. (2001). More than minutes: Teachers' roles in designing homework. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(3), pp. 181-193.



Fryšták Pavel Smrčiak

We can still clearly remember our very first Fryšták experience, despite it being many months since the welcoming committee read our names on the list. Like many others, we were annoyed, distrustful, and upset by the fact that none of us could find any information about the course, but little did we know that it was all a part of a grand, thoroughly designed scheme to greatly amplify our experience. And honestly, it could not have worked any better.

At the end of the course we all knew that everything the teachers told us about the unforgettable, unique, and special week was true, perhaps with the exception of it being as exclusive as they claimed. But that very little smear became the promise of an entirely new experience later...

Having survived our first Fryšták, we decided, after countless hours of contemplating the risks, to enrol again, but this time as assistants. Truthfully, most of us had next to no idea what we were signing up for, but that could not stir our determination to feel the atmosphere again. Naturally, though, there was a lot of work to be done first.

Organising a course such as this one requires a lot of devotion and responsibility, which was a source of discomfort for some of us. Luckily, we quickly learned that the teachers were just as supportive and friendly as we remembered them, and what had looked like hours of insufferable toil turned into a pretty pleasant group activity.

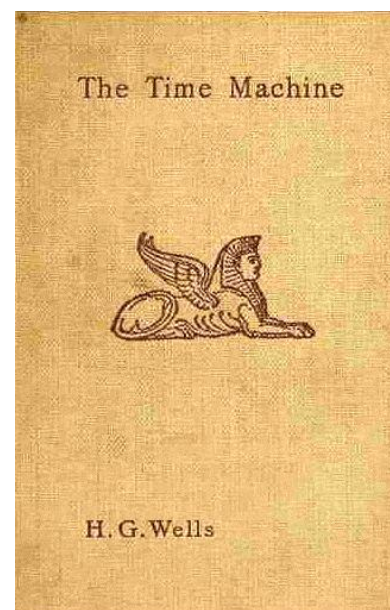
The course itself was no different; compared to those of the participants, our days were a little less dynamic due to us leading sessions, but that was a small price to pay for the chance to witness the professionals practising the arcane and mysterious art of teaching.

Evenings, however, were something different entirely.

Many of the participants knowingly ignored the obviously irrefutable importance of sleep and even went as far as to perceive nights solely as a chance to party with their new friends. Naturally, we assistants responsibly joined them with utter delight. And it is a good thing we did, because while memories will eventually dissolve into nothingness, friendships can prevail forever.

Just about the only downside of our decision to relive long-past days is that we had to relive the feelings of separation at the end, even though they did not hit us as hard as they used to. Still, those who claimed not to have shed a tear had most likely had the providence to bring tissues, or sunglasses.

And the only regret we have? Well obviously, many regret their innate inability to manipulate the time-space continuum in a manner that would allow them to create a time loop capable of replaying that one week over and over again; we merely regret the severe shortage of dark matter required for construction of a time machine.



culture pages

Cultural Differences between the USA and the Czech Republic: American Exceptionalism

Daniel Schneider

There are many differences between the cultures of the Czech Republic and the United States of America. Most students in high school can tell you quite a few but we won't deal with any of the obvious ones. Let's look at an interesting cultural difference, the feeling towards one's country. The vast majority of Czech and American people love their country. However, if we look deeper into this issue, there are some stark differences due to the history of both countries.

First off, a highly visible difference that anyone who has been to America on certain holidays like 4th July or Memorial Day will have surely seen: thousands of American flags being flown. The streets are lined with American flags and individuals put up flags outside of their homes; some people keep them up all year round. There is even a holiday called Flag Day. Moreover, almost every clothing shop in America has something which has an American flag on it. Even Czech shops sell clothes or items with American flags. These articles of clothing are worn by Americans every day, and not only tourists. This in no way means that Americans are more patriotic but rather that Americans are more likely to show their patriotism. I have seen the Czech flag displayed around town during sports competitions or in front of government buildings and some schools, but not to the same extent as in America.

There is a mental difference in how we feel about our country, too. As there aren't many Americans living in our area, I have been asked to give many

presentations about America to different schools. The most frequently asked question which I receive from Czech students is whether I would like to go back to America. They seem surprised that I'm satisfied living in the Czech Republic and that I actually enjoy living here. Almost all of the students would like to travel to America and a lot of them would like to stay there to work. There is a noticeable pessimism about the quality of life in the Czech Republic and the feeling that Americans have a better life. In contrast, I was fortunate enough to give a presentation to American students about the Czech Republic. They were excited to hear about the Czech Republic but they had no interest in ever living in the Czech Republic.

There is a popular belief held by Americans concerning so-called American Exceptionalism. American Exceptionalism is the belief that America is the greatest country ever in the history of the world and that we are born with inherent advantages that no other country possesses. The ability to rise out of poverty or to improve your life gives Americans hope and pride. President Obama has spoken about it, as well as our former President. However, this is a double-edged sword. Sometimes, American Exceptionalism is used as an excuse to not improve the country because it is already perfect. This overconfidence can also rub some people the wrong way. I "suffer" from this belief, but without it I would never have taken the opportunity to come to the Czech Republic. I can't put it any better than Charles Lindbergh, who said, "I don't believe in taking unnecessary risks, but a life without risk isn't worth living." This belief gives me the optimism to overcome anything that may happen.

For the most part, I think the Czech Republic should take a cue from America

and Czechs should show pride in their country. I am truly grateful to live in such a wonderful country. I just wish everyone appreciated it as much as I do.

If you are interested, here is some further reading:

<http://blog.gmfus.org/2012/11/02/an-americans-view-of-national-identity-and-patriotism-in-europe/>.



translation pages

Ted' jsem tady

Gabriela Sládková

This Is Where I Am, by Karen Campbell (2013), was one of my favourite books of 2013. Set in Scotland, it tells the story of a Somali asylum seeker and his daughter who are living in Glasgow. It is both amusing and eye-opening and I would highly recommend it. In our literary translation course, the students were asked to translate a short excerpt from the book, and you can now enjoy Gabriela Sládková's translation below.

- Ailsa Marion Randall

Zpátky ve škole. Nejdřív vás dostane ten smrad. Pak gumová, pištivá ozvěna, která je přehlušena nápořem zvuku, když zazvoní. Nad hlavou se z vrzání židlí odstrkovaných od lavic stane dupot přezutých chodidel. Sestra vede školu jako generál - venkovní boty jsou zakázány. Hlavně od té doby, co položili to nové lino. Rebečina ruka se lepí na moji. Oběma se nám trochu potí dlaně.

„Vážně, není to žádný problém.“

Lara, naše známá místní školní psycholožka, by se ve škole stejně zastavovala. „Do Southbanku musím až na jedenáctou.“ Gill pro nás vyhradila místnost - za mě by se jí říkalo „ošetřovna“, ale vlastně je to příjemná odpočívárna. Mají tu modrý gauč, dvě zelené židle, nízké stolky, košík s hračkami pro malé děti a váhu, takovou tu starou, na které člověk stojí a vyvažuje se zátěžemi. Jeden ze stolků je prostřen jakoby k jídlu, ale na místě prostírání leží hromádka čtvrtek papíru a příbor zastupují pastelky, kterých v plastovém kelímku čeká ještě víc.

„Jé! Že to vypadá moc pěkně?“

Rebecca se na mě rychle podívá a potom kývne směrem k Laře.

„Kreslíš ráda, Rebecca?“

„Ano.“

„Já taky. Co kdybychom si trošku zakreslily, aby si Debi mohla dát čaj? Možná by ti i přinesla džus, že jo, Debi?“

Už jsme mluvily o tom, jak to provedeme. Dám Laře deset nebo patnáct minut o samotě. Popovídá si s Rebeccou, posoudí její jazykové schopnosti a schopnost důvěry. Uvidí, jak vnímavá je, když mluví s někým cizím. Potom uvidíme, jak to půjde, a zachováme se podle toho. Lařina formulace, ne moje.

„Jasně,“ odpovím. „Budu pryč jenom na minutku. Chceš jablkový nebo pomerančový?“

„Pomeranč.“

Dám si ruce v bok a nasadím formální přízvuk. „Pardon? A co kouzelné slovíčko?“

Rebecca se zakření. „Pomerančový, prosím.“

„Hmm. No vidíš.“

Rebecca se vesele odporoučí a já se odporoučím plná obav. Vyzvednu jí v automatu džus, sednu si na lavičku na chodbě. Poskakuje mi žaludek. Je to jako bych moc zlobila a teď čekám, až mě zavolá říd'á. Až na to, že říd'á je teď moje malá sestra. Která se bojí penízků. Vážně. Když jsme byly malé, přilepila jsem si peníze ke klíče pokoje, aby tam nechodila. Bojí se jenom skutečných, měděných mincí. Tvrdí, že jsou „plné špíny“. Zajímalo by mě, co by o tom řekla Lara... Otevřou se dveře. Není to ona. Odpočítám si prsty. Potom je propletu. Potom udělám ten pohyb jako při přebírání, otočím je naruby a zatřepu jimi. Máma mě kdysi učila básničku o odpočítávání prstů.

To je táta, (chytíme se za palec)

to je máma (za ukazováček),

to je dědek (za prostředníček),

to je bába (za prsteníček)

to je vnouček, malý klouček (za malíček)

Uměla ještě jinou, kdy mě vzala za ruku a držela ji dlaní vzhůru. Prsty chodila v maličkých kruzích:

Vařila myšička kašičku na zeleném rendlíčku

tomu dala, tomu víc...

Spousta smíchu, když mi nakonec rukou zaběhla rychle pod paži a lechtala a lechtala, a já jsem pištěla: Přestaň! Nepřestávej!

Moje dítě by se učilo tyhle říkanky. Možná by ho to naučila moje máma. A je to tu znovu, ostré pálivé trhnutí, ta oslepující migréna v bříše, ta bolest, která rozděluje páteř, dokud morek není tak vláknitý a vyschlý jako rozštěpený bambus. Je jedno, jak odhodlaně člověk zapírá, jak moc trvá na tom, že to není pravda, je to tak. Byla jsi mámou a už nejsi. Byla jsi dítětem a už nejsi. Byla jsi něčí ženou a to je taky pryč, a - s jistotou valícího se přílivu - zatraceně nic s tím nenaděláš.

„Debi? Můžu s tebou na minutku mluvit?“

Lara a její dlouhé fialkové nehty se objeví ve veřejích. Klidná obočí, rty rovné jako pohrabáč. Srdce mi sklouzne z jedné strany na druhou. Na co přišla? Člověk slyší hrůzné příběhy o tom, co se děje v táborech - útoky, sexuální obtěžování - dokonce i dětem. Snažím se o takových věcech nečíst, ale jsou zákeřné, vklouznou do zorného pole, když čtete noviny nebo se díváte na zprávy, a než se nadějete, vidíte odporného tlustého chlapa, jak tvrdí, že sex s „neviňátky“ léčí AIDS. Netuším, jestli děláme správně. Antropologové by mě nařkli z prosazování mých vlastních, západních hodnot, tvrdili by, že naše náklonnost k psychoblabolům nás převrací naruby a brzdí nás v hojení. Možná by stačily Abdiho pampelišky a Rebečino zahradničení.

Je ještě malá.

Prudké stažení svalů. Mám ji ráda. Není to mateřská láska, to si uvědomuji,

ale je silná a ochranná a převažuje tuhle směšnou potřebu vědět.

„Laro. Slíbila jsi, že na ni půjdeš zlehka. Říkala jsi, že si jen popovídáte.“

„Však ano.“ Vyjde ze dveří na chodbu.

„Je v pořádku?“

„Je úplně v klidu. Hraje si s panenkou. Jenom jsem si říkala, že bys možná měla vidět její kresby. Podívej.“

Jsou to tři rozdílné obrázky: na jednom je Rebecca ve svých růžových holinkách (a mává všema třema rukama), potom je tu obvyklý obrázek s maminkou, tatínkem a malou holčičkou, kteří jsou v bezpečí uvnitř velkého kruhu. Obě ženské figurky, velká i malá, mají na sobě trojúhelníkové sukne a mají příjemně kulaté hlavy. Rebecca kreslí velmi pozorně, už jsem si toho všimla. Vybírá si barvy, dává si na čas. Vidala jsem podobné obrázky v práci, když nám místní školní psychologové přišli povykládat o tom, co dělají.

„Dobře,“ řekne Lara. „Ptala jsem se jí, co dělá nejraději.“

„Nosí holinky?“

„O holinkách byla rozhodně řeč. Ale taky ráda zahradničí a hraje si ve školce. A fouká kytky? Nevím, co myslí foukáním, ale podívej: na prvním obrázku drží v ruce kytku.“

Takže to není třetí ruka.

„Pak jsem se jí ptala, jestli mi umí říct, kdo všechno je její rodina a ona nakreslila tohle. To je maminka a tatínek a Rebecca. V kruhu.“

„To jsem pochopila.“

„Řekla mi všechna jména, když na ně ukazovala. Myslím si správně, že Aabo znamená tatínek?“

„Ano.“

„Fajn. Pak jsem se jí ptala, jestli má ještě jinou rodinu a ona nakreslila tohle.“

Modrou pastelkou je znovu nakreslen kruh. V něm je tatínek, maminka a

Rebecca. Velká ženská postava má na sobě žlutou sukni, malá modrou. Nad nimi je další kruh a v něm malá postavička, jenom jedna. Nejdřív mě napadne, že Rebecca nakreslila postavu ve slunci, ale kruh je zelený, ne oranžový nebo červený.

„Ptala jsem se jí, kdo to je, a ona řekla, že „mimi“. Ptala jsem se, proč je na obloze, a ona odpověděla, že tam bydlí. Potom na ten stejný papír nakreslila tohle.“ Lara ukáže na červený kruh se dvěma dalšími postavami. Mají u pasu trojúhelník a krátké nohy. Jedna z nich má na hlavě mrak bláznivých vlasů a druhá zvláštní baňatou čepici.

„A tohle jsou?“

„Teta Coutssová a...“ dotkne se té bláznivě kudrnaté. „Debba.“

Takový hřejivý, hojivý pocit.

Zakulacuje ostré úhly svých ramen, loktů, kolen. Obměkčuje všechny moje ztvrdlé a bolavé a nešťastné části - takhle bych se cítila, kdyby fungovaly Abdiho nafukovací pilulky. Naplněná hřejivým, lehkým vzduchem. Trošičku do smíchu, trošičku do pláče.

„Myslím, že ty tvoje vlasy vážně vystihla,“ podotkne Lara.

„Ha ha.“ Ale jsem ráda, od bříšek prstů na nohou (podle Rebecy jich mám sedm) až po poslední nepoddajný drátovitý vlas.

„No. Tady jsem asi přestřelila, ale zdálo se mi, že bych takovou příležitost neměla prošvihnout. Tak jsem se jí zeptala, proč je to miminko na obloze. Říká...že je v nebi?“

Přikývnu. „Abdi měl syna, který zemřel. Ale neměla jsem tušení, že o tom Rebecca ví. Myslím, že umřel předtím, než se narodila.“

„Dobře. A potom - a musíš mi věřit, Debi, šla jsem na to opatrně, jenom jsem ji popostrčila - jsem se jí zeptala, jestli zná ještě někoho, kdo bydlí v nebi.“

„A?“

„Neodpověděla mi.“

„A to nás přivádí kam?“

„K mojí další otázce. Kde bydlí maminka?“

„A na to ses zeptala?“

„Ještě ne. Chtěla jsem, abys byla u toho.“

Vrátíme se do té jasně vymalované místnosti. Rebecca vyskočí, když mě vidí. Vrhne se mi rukama kolem nohou, čelem vrazí do břicha. Kudrnaté vlasy unikají z úhledných copánků, které jí Abdi učesal, a já laskám vzpurné prstýnky, přetáčím je v prstech, nahoru a dolů jako hebké, jemné hedvábí. Její dech je chvěním v mém břiše. Mohla bych jeden pramínek odstříhnout a schovat si ho. Kdo by se to dozvěděl? Uslyším Lařino zakašlání.

Navzájem se propustíme.

„Tady máš džus, šmudlipesku.“

„Kuju.“

„Zrovna jsem se dívala na tvoje krásné obrázky. Tohle jsem já?“

„Ano.“ Rebecca se stydí, slámku v mezeře mezi zuby.

„Myslíš, že bych si měla nabarvit vlasy na zeleno?“

„Ano!“ To ji rozradostní, přikyvuje tak prudce, že džus vylije.

Mlasknu. „A proto, Laro, jí říkáme šmudlipesek.“

„Ukázala jsem Debi tvoje obrázky, Rebecca, a moc se jí líbil tenhle, s maminkou, tatínkem a Rebeccou. Že jo, Debi?“ Lara sjede svými pěknými nehty po Rebečiných obrázcích, které teď leží na primární červené a žluté, ve kterých je stůl vyveden.

„Jasně.“ Záchvěv paniky. Na tohle mě nenachystala. Mám se připojit, sama pokládat otázky? Naštěstí ale Lara pokračuje sama a já můžu počkat na okraji, ani hodný ani zlý policajt. Neutrální. Necítím se neutrálně. Cítím se zle.

„Tak, Rebecca. Říkala jsi, že mimi žije v nebi, vid?“

„Ano.“

„A kde bydlíš ty?“

„V bytě.“ Rebecca se zamračí přímo na mě, potom skloní oči. Vypadá unaveně. Nebo nervózně, možná? Podvedeně? Do hajzlu, chci, aby věděla, že tohle je v pohodě, je to bezpečné, ale ani sama to nevím. Můj hlas zazní pronikavěji než jsem měla v úmyslu. „Šikovná holka! Je to až úplně nahoře, vid? Vidiš odtud park a spoustu domů, že?“

MLU-VÍM TAK-HLE a každá falešně veselá slabika září skrze můj falešně veselý úsměv.

„Takže, když jsi až úplně nahoře,“ pokračuje Lara, „znamená to, že bydlíš na obloze, Rebecca?“

„Ne. V bytě.“ Její drobná hlava se kýve od Lary ke mně, k Laře, ke mně, v nejistotě nad tím, kdo bere vážně tyhle pitomé otázky. Ona tedy rozhodně ne.

„Kdo ještě bydlí v bytě?“ ptá se Lara vytrvale.

„Aabo.“

„Ty a Aabo. A kde bydlí maminka?“

Třese se jí spodní ret. „To by stačilo,“ začnu říkat, ale Rebecca mě přehluší.

„V táboře.“

„V táboře? To je taky na obloze?“

„Ne!“ vykřikne a chňapne po dalších listech papíru. Na jeden z nich načmárá osamělou postavičku ve žluté sukni a jasně červené slunce s laserovými paprsky, které šlehají ven z obrázku. Jejich rozzlobená rudost překrývá všechno, a tenhle obrázek není ani zdaleka úhledný. Je plný divokých čar a zubatých lomů.

„Bude jí moc horko.“

„Je tam velké horko?“

„Ano! Aabo ji zanechal!“

„Pšš, Rebecca.“ Snažím se ji vzít na klín, ale nechce se nechat držet. Vyškubne se mi a dál zasazuje dalšímu papíru zuřivé rýhy a škrábance.

Lara zvedne ruku odborníka, která říká, moment, tohle je v pořádku. Říká,

nechme Rebeccu vyplnit tenhle prostor. Říká, jsem narcistka a věnuji příliš času svým nehtům. Ruku pod bradou. Rebecca je pozorována. Mám chuť dát psycholožce facku.

„Zlí chlapi ji bouchli a Aabo ji zanechal.“

„Ach zlatíčko, já vím, já vím.“

Do háje s Larou. Jsem na kolenou a natahuji se po Rebečině čmárající ruce. Co mám říct?

Co mám říct, že by ho taky zabili? Že se nemohl vrátit, protože musel chránit Rebeccu? Jistě. Pojdme ji naplnit tou stejnou vinou, kterou každý den polyká Abdi. To pomůže.

„Bouchli ji na hlavu. Podívej, Debbo. Podívej!“

Předloží mi svůj obrázek. Nechci se dívat. Teď je na něm pět, ne, šest postav. Dav tří pohromadě: jedna leží na zemi a všude se valí krev, ostatní dvě nad ní stojí s rukama navíc, možná jsou to hole nebo pistole. Zbývající skupina dvou postaviček a...nevím - stolu? krabice? je na okraji papíru. Krabicovitá postava má čtyři nohy a trojúhelník na jednom konci.

„Co je tohle, zlato?“

„Kůň.“

Tohle se shoduje s tím, co mi řekl Abdi. Nákladáky vážně přepadli muži na koních. Přinutím se prozkoumat ty čmáranice podrobněji. Na téhle straně netryská krev. Je to tady hlavně žluté. Jedna z postav je přehozená přes figuru koně. Máme tady trojúhelník místo nohou, ohnutou čáru zad a dvě rovné paže vedoucí směrem ven. Hlava není kulatá, ale oválná, a leží rovnoběžně se hřbetem koně. Poslední postava má obě ruce zvednuté a z nich se zvedá úzká vlnitá čára. Vrhnu pohled na Laru. Promluví potichu, přes hřbet ruky.

„Myslím, že bychom měly kontaktovat Freedom from Torture. Mají specialisty na práci s dětmi...“

Přemýšlím, co mi uniká. Ano,

Rebecca je rozrušená, ale to je z naší zjevné, pomalé hlouposti. Je jako praskající roznětka, nekřičí ani nepláče, není netečná. Pokračuje v kreslení, dokola obtahuje obrysy koně a dvou postav u něj. Pečlivě si vymění žlutou pastelku za hnědou a začne koně vybarvovat.

„Laro, podívej.“ Ukážu na první skupinu třech postav, tu, kde tryská krev.

„To není ta žena ve žluté sukni. Rebecco. Becky, zlato. Ukaž mi na obrázku mámu.“

S důrazem ukáže na postavu na koni.

„Takhle jsi viděla mámu? Bylo to na koni nebo na zemi?“

„Na koni,“ odpoví pevně, bez náznaku pochyb. „A ten chlap mlátil mámu na hlavu a kůň bežel a bežel pryč.“

Nesetřesete ten pocit naléhavosti a hrůzy.

Sedíte za stolem a poklepáváte na klávesnici. Paní Casciová projde kolem na cestě na oběd; všimnete si, že si nezamkla kancelář. Gamu je za dvěma prázdnými stoly zaměstnaná rušným rozhovorem s unaveným, uplakaným mužem. Taky vypadá utahaně.

Nesetřesete ten pocit naléhavosti a hrůzy.

Komentář k překladu

K překladu textu jsem používala dvojjazyčné slovníky AJ-CZ, výkladový slovník angličtiny a internetový slovník Scots-English.

Při překladu dialogů jsem se snažila primárně o vytvoření zdání přirozeného jazyka, proto zde je větší odklon od původního textu. Pokoušela jsem se představit si, jaký jazyk používají čeští rodilí mluvčí při hovoru s dětmi, a při lpění na co nejpřesnějším překladu by tohoto efektu nebylo možné dosáhnout.

Ve vyprávění Debory, které je místy knižní až básnické, jsem naopak zachovávala co nejvíce ze zdrojového textu, tedy i (pro běžnou angličtinu) neobvyklý slovosled a slovní zásobu místy odlišnou od slovní zásoby mluveného jazyka („primární červená a žlutá“).

V textu se nevyskytuje fonologický přepis skotského přízvuku a Deborah používá Scots minimálně („wee“, „heidie“, „greet“), necítla jsem tedy potřebu využívat specifickou vrstvu jazyka pro tuto zvláštnost textu, i když v kontextu celé knihy by to samozřejmě nutně bylo.

Skloňování **jmen** jsem se snažila vyřešit tak, aby byla zachována původní jména, ale zároveň aby zapadala do českého textu. Čeština přiřazuje většinu cizích jmen k vlastním deklinačním paradigmátům, takže jsem v zájmu čitelnosti textu skloňovala jména Lara, Rebecca i zdobnělinu Debba podle vzoru „žena“. Uvažovala jsem o změně jména Rebecca na Rebeka, ale nakonec jsem od tohoto řešení ustoupila, protože si myslím, že jméno je sklonné bez problémů i v původní podobě, vzhledem k tomu, že zdvojené c není třeba v daných pádech měnit na k, a kdybych jméno pozměnila, vznikla by různost v obecném překladu jmen.

Naopak jsem změnila zdobnělinu Debs, která je v angličtině systémová - její tvoření je analogické ke tvoření zdobnělin dalších jmen („Ems“ pro „Emily“, „Pheeb“ pro „Phoebe“ atd.) - na Debi, pro kterou platí tato charakteristika v češtině. Podoba jména Becky (i když se zde vyskytuje alternace cc-ck nepřírozená pro češtinu) v podstatě odpovídá těmto požadavkům také, nechala jsem ji proto v původní podobě.

Největším problémem pro mě představovalo užití druhé osoby ve vyprávěcí rovině („First the smell gets you.“ apod.). Není vždy úplně jasné, proč je tato forma použita a v jakém

významu. Podle mého názoru se jednotlivá užití významově liší a není tedy možné je přeložit jednotně.

V tomto úseku textu jsem rozlišila tři podoby „you“ ve vyprávění:

a. obecná („You hear stories...“)

b. obračející se k narativnímu adresátovi/čtenáři ve snaze vtáhnout jej do situace („You cannot shake the sense of urgency and dread“)

c. vztahující se pouze k Deboře

Některé instance „you“ oscilují mezi a a b („First the smell gets you.“), další mezi b a c („You cannot shake the sense...“).

V případě nejasnosti jsem se snažila o co nejpřirozenější/nejlépe vyjádřitelnou formulaci. Protože v českém textu je neobvyklé používat 2.os.sg při oslovení nespécifikovaného narativního adresáta, zvolila jsem v prvních dvou případech opisné „Člověk...“ a formu 2.os.pl. Tato řešení se však zdála jako nevhodná v okamžiku, kdy Deborah jednoznačně mluví o sobě („You were a mum...“), proto jsem v tomto případě použila formu 2.os.sg.

Oslovení **mucky pup** je v angličtině běžné a bylo by proto dobré jej nahradit běžným oslovením podobného významu v češtině (např. „šmudlo“). Ale vzhledem k tomu, že toto oslovení je tematizováno dříve v textu knihy - Abdi hledá „mucky pup“ ve slovníku, dozví se, že „pup“ je štěně, a podivuje se nad tím, že ve školce říkají jeho dceři jménem pro zvíře - toto řešení není možné, protože by způsobilo problém pro překlad zmíněné pasáže. V češtině se nabízí ještě oslovení „prasátko“, to si ale i ve zdobnělé podobě ponechává pejorativní konotace a obávala jsem se, že by v psaném textu v tomto významu nefungovalo. Zvolila jsem proto novotvar, který zachovává všechny části původního výrazu (a způsobuje hypoteticky pouze minimální změnu ve zmíněné pasáži, která v textu předchází) a zároveň je v češtině jasně pochopitelný a uvěřitelný.

Co se týče říkanek, pro druhou z nich se v češtině nabízí analogické „Vařila myšička kašičku“, kde se vyskytuje jak krouživý pohyb v dlani dítěte, tak lechtání na konci. Nebyla jsem bohužel schopná najít podobně vhodné říkadlo pro nahrazení prvního z nich, a musela jsem proto změnit celý úsek věty - z „dělání věžičky“ se stalo „odpočítávání prstů“. I toto říkadlo je obecně známé.

V řeči Rebecy se jako problematické ukazuje „dětské“ časování sloves a komolení slov. Tyto v angličtině běžné jevy jsem se snažila nahradit podobnými tendencemi v u českých dětí, avšak jedná se o pasáže, se kterými jsem pravděpodobně nejméně spokojená.

Freedom from Torture je skutečná organizace, název proto zůstává nepřeložen.

Campbell, Karen. *This Is Where I Am*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Print.



stories

A Story

Veronika Machová

They are just another perverse couple who want to outrage the calm people of our village. I can't imagine which is actually worse - the fact that he is forty years old and she just nineteen or that they live together without the blessing of a local priest. One thing I must tell you: when I was young, there was nothing like this. People had to stick to their rules and be responsible for their actions. I know that people tend to enjoy forbidden fruit and they love adventure, but once, when I pushed an apple from a forbidden garden into my mouth, Dad's cane explained to me what was right.

The punishing of children is totally right! They need to know their borders. While my father was beating me he tried to explain to me that he was doing it to make me understand that I had done something bad, and as it was hurting him, I had to feel the pain too.

I was kind of a calm child. My father used to beat me only about twice a week. This was the result of my childish games. He used to hate watching my childlike ruminating. I wasn't allowed to say anything when he came home from work. He was a really serious man in our village; therefore his family had to behave like that as well.

I had to grow up quickly, sooner than my classmates. They could play and act up whenever they wanted to. My father used to say that one day I would be the most respected man in the village, just as he was now. So he paid a lot of tutors to give me lessons on how to become a gentleman, how to manage finances, to give me a moral philosophy and allow me to understand the most religious seminars at our monastery.

I am very grateful to him. I can see that I am definitely better than others and I must set an example to people from the village. Somebody must. The huge burden is now mine.

I can't accept this. Look at them, the fornicators! They will see what I am able to do. "Hello, Mrs. Beaux."

"Good morning, Mr. Blanc," she answered.

"What beautiful weather it is!" I replied politely.

She smiled and said to me: "It is indeed."

And now the couple was walking towards us. And our conversation got stuck and we started to stare at them. Mrs. Beaux's mouth opened a little.

"It is indeed..." I said.

The couple seemed happy. He was holding her hand with tenderness and passion. She kept smiling at him. She had such glittering teeth. And her eyes flashed and sparkled. And her neck... oh that neck. It was so thin and feminine. It was autumn, early autumn, but I could see a piece of her skin. It seemed warm to me, and soft too. The part of her skin was her... "Oh dear Lord!" I screamed aloud. Mrs. Beaux twitched and stared at me with shock in her eyes.

Those thoughts! Those thoughts!

The couple stopped in front of us and the women asked me: "Are you okay?"

She touched my arm. She had satin gloves and the satin just slipped down from my arm. Her partner or whatever he was looked worried too. I must look like a freak! Mrs. Beaux still couldn't say a word.

I looked at the man and said: "I am sorry for scaring you, but I..."

I looked at her again. She was like an angel. "I..." Now I couldn't say a word either. Mrs. Beaux, me and the awful couple were like the worst dream I had

ever had.

I just slid my hand easily into my left-hand pocket and said: "I just realized that I left my keys in the lock." I pretended to look for them.

"Oh, now I understand!" said Mrs. Beaux. "Nobody wants a thief in their house," she told the couple with relief. The couple were surprised but they were smiling too.

"I have to go. Please excuse me." I needed to vanish, now!

That was my life: strict rules and a cold expression on my face. But it was a kind of self-protection. If you want to give orders, you must keep a distance. My hands were shaking and sweaty now. Once again, I didn't have things under control.

Then I calmed myself and went home. It was early morning and I knew precisely that the whole day was waiting; all duties had to be fulfilled.

My house is a dark sort of place. Here we find ancient furniture, a sumptuous chandelier in the living room, my dad's trophies, including a wild boar hanging from the side of a fireplace. The whole house is so enormous, there is space enough for five families. But I do not have any family. I am alone, with my life under control.

I noticed that my housemaid was not there. She must have gone out to fetch ingredients for dinner. I shuffled around for a while and I saw her purse. I have never gone through her stuff; she is my soul mate and I have no reason to suspect her of any impropriety. But after the morning incident I was slightly uneasy that the worm in my head had started to bite into my customary ruminating. I drew nearer and nearer to the leather couch where was her purse

lying, till I was holding it.

Now I had to authorize myself to look inside it. I was just trying to protect the village, my housemaid too.

I put my right hand inside, holding the purse in my left. A diary was the first thing to stick in my hand. I took it out. The diary was quite huge. It had a brown leather cover and I was about to open it. But then I noticed a postcard inside the purse. My gaze attached to it. I sat down and put the diary down next to me on the couch. Then, feeling strange, I took it out of the purse.

The postcard was from Switzerland, from friend of my housemaid, I supposed. But the whole text was full of love, and in every sentence were words like love, darling, ardour and, the worst one, love-making. The more I read, the more annoyed I became.

This can't be true! I stood up with a vein powerfully pulsing in the middle of my forehead. That insidious, perverse, prurient woman! She is having an affair with another woman! That cannot be true!

I decided to make a speech in the local church due to these incidents. I did not want to wait; I went to the local church.

There was nobody inside. I went on in. I could see every saintly martyr staring at me, fellow feeling in his eyes. They were crying for me, for my hypocrisy and lies.

Lies? But they would never understand it. Nobody is innocent and without sin. Some doomed martyr had to hide a secret from the world. But when we know what we are capable of, we must protect others from it.

"Oh, dear Mr. Blanc." Our priest, thank God.

"Good forenoon, dear Father Jung," I

said with unfeigned delight. Father Jung is my patron; he brought me up with my father. I am grateful to him for everything.

"I came here to make a speech in two hours in the third Mass, dear Father Jung." I supposed that Father Jung had a breath-taking speech prepared but he was always so generous to me, I did not expect a rejection.

Father Jung just smiled and nodded his head in agreement. So now I had two hours. I would impress them, I would, I had to. The village would be pure again.

Today was different; my speech had to be more clear and direct.

As people flooded in, I was sitting in the first pew, my hands intertwined in a sign of God's will, my eyes closed.

Some people greeted me. I did not know who so I just nodded in return."

"Dear citizens," I began. "My speech won't be the same as before; this speech will not be focused on Christian teaching but on daily temptation." I knew exactly what I had to talk about.

"This morning," I began, and then I saw her. Her eyes and her soft lips. I could not continue. She was there to tell them. But she did not use to come here, to our church. People were staring at me, me at her and her at me. But worse still, he was with her too, his eyes full of rage!

"People, my... people." I had to continue, I could not let my whole life go to hell. It would definitely be better to be in hell if the people found out about it. But they hadn't, and I had to protect myself.

"I must say that we all have something to hide."

She was looking daggers at me and waiting.

"I have just uncovered a traitor in our village. She is here with us and she knows that she can't hide any more. She

is a prostitute.” I needed to be careful: she might run away and never come back. But she did not do this. She was just as she had been a second before. But I did not get it... Was she prepared to risk her life? Everyone believed me, due to my status here.

People were in outrage. Everybody spoke loudly with their neighbours. It was more like a market place than a house of God. I was hanging on to the pulpit and my hands were sweating and shaking. Every cell in my body was ready to let the bitch be burned. She had seduced me! That was all her fault!

Afterwards she stood up and came nearer and nearer. When she reached me, I knew that was over now. He was with her.

“Ladies and gentleman,” she began. “I would like to tell you who this guy is. I would like to tell about your ruler here!” She was speaking with total confidence.

“Mr. Blanc has a huge secret, my friends: he is a murderer.”

I knew that I was running at her but other people caught me and I was totally furious. My face was full of anger, my hands were shaking and I was screaming, “You bitch, you will be burned in hell!” or something similar.

She continued and told them about my secret chamber, full of... my own darkness.

The chamber was in my house and I used to lead girls and boys there due to my twisted side - the side that needed to be hidden from the eyes of people in the village. People would not understand it, and nor would my father. He had his secrets too. He used to beat my mother and was very cruel. It is all his fault that I have become a monster like this. But I could not help myself. I have a double personality. One side, the perfect one, always polite and courteous and the other one, the dark one, full of

perversion and violence.

And I saw my housemaid there. She was calm but her hands were shaking a little. I just closed my eyes and let the crowd do what they wanted to. I felt them put handcuffs on my hands. I did not resist. I supposed it was my destiny - to pay for my mistakes and hope for a better next life. All people are cruel; everybody who does something with a smile is hiding something behind it. Nobody can be nice just for nothing. That was my case; I wanted to be an example of a perfect man, a perfect human with good manners. But the kinder I was to people, the more I tried to help them, the more I longed for salvation from this inhuman behaviour. I had to let my darkness out by killing depraved people.



In inceptum finis est

Marek Hlaváč

My name is Přebík and this is just a story of an ordinary chronicler in an extraordinary situation not dissimilar to the ancient titanic battles, my story. It was a very cold November morning and the monastery had just started to buzz with activity.

“Master! Master!” Sounded from the stony hallway.

No response.

“MASTER!!!” Mathias almost yelled. What inappropriate behaviour for a scriptorium!

“What is it, brother?” Lord, was I tired that ominous day! Sleep was a rare commodity back then. Well, it still is, but that seems to be just one of little conveniences of old age: one does not need to sleep as much as one used to.

“HE’s returned it again!” Mathias exhaled, knowing the pain his words would bring to me.

“What? Again?! His Majesty will be the end of me! Pray, what has he changed this time?”

Without a word the young novice handed the newest version of the chronicle to me. Just one look sufficed for me to realise that I should question what has not been changed. Mathias was considerate enough to leave me with my burden alone.

Writing had been my dream since childhood. My father and his associate would discuss the works of an Italian writer, Dante was his name, and the reverence with which they spoke about him was intoxicating to me. I, too, wanted to be discussed in this manner amongst men of education and intelligence. Now I know it was just a childish longing. However, my whole life and education was aimed at writing in pursuit of this gullible dream. It was not until I got older that truth became my

goal. In this world full of uncertainties the truth was my only friend and anchor. All the same, my task now was to write something as distant from the truth as heaven is from sinners. This travesty was far from being a regular chronicle. It was just glorification and an insult to common sense! Only how could I glorify someone like HIM?

The Emperor Charles, being the fourth to go by this name, had the image of a strong, kind, older man who rebuilt the whole empire and ensured stability after his father’s knightly demise. Little did people know that he had a darker self. Killing sprees of *iudae* were just his murderous daily bread. His killings were even more appalling because he did not hate Jews in particular. He did it only for their money. After a Jew died he could sell his property to Christian citizens of that city and gain a lot of gold. Despicable man!

It would probably be all the same to me if one of my best friends was not a Jew himself. Mordechai ben Hillel was a very educated and wise man. I used to take advice from him whenever possible, but now he and his family were in terrible danger after what had happened in Frankfurt.

And there I sat in the scriptorium, all alone, waiting for a sign, a miracle or in essence anything of help at all. Without any warning whatsoever I heard a very decent cough. “Ehm.”

Startled I looked across the shadowy room, with its one small window lit by feeble candlelight. At first I thought my ageing eyes were deceiving me, but there it was. An apparition hovering in the air. Seeing the holy figure, I threw myself on a ground.

“You must be the miracle I prayed to the Lord for. Were you sent here to guide me, oh Holy One?!”

“You could say that, but do not be mistaken, monk, I am not a feeble tool, I

am the heavenly prince! Tell me what is bothering you,” said the saint Wenceslaus.

“Forgive me, Your Highness, but a descendant of your blood, Charles, gave me an order I cannot possibly accomplish.” My voice was trembling with a variety of fear and devotion.

“You should not question your liege no matter what is the task with which you were bestowed,” roared the saint’s voice imperiously.

“If it were only that easy, my lord. Should I do what he is asking of me, I would lose my moral integrity and become a liar and betray my friend, breaking God’s holy commandments. The emperor is a murderer and needs me to sanctify his actions for future generations.” Never have I been more terrified in my life. Talking to the holy one in such a manner!

“You are right, lying and treason are against His biddings, but so is disobedience to your sovereign. A precarious situation indeed!” The halo above his head started to beam with blinding light, as if emphasising his thinking. “A sovereign is not a mere person, he is a symbol people need to look up to. Should you somehow expose my progeny’s misdemeanour, people would lose faith in their superiors and that cannot happen.”

“You are very wise and understand my encumbrance, but what do you propose? I beg your pardon for my insolence, but is there really a solution?”

Voices from outside got louder as more and more monks swarmed around the courtyard heading for the refectory to take their humble morning meal.

“There is a solution to your misery, monk. But beware, you might have to sacrifice yourself for a higher purpose.” The saint’s voice gained in gravity, foreboding horrors to come.

“I will do anything. My life is of no

value and I shall gladly offer it for a greater good!”

“You are so eager, although you do not know what I have in mind! Albeit your life is indeed of no importance, it is not corporal punishment you might face. Are you ready to lose your chance of salvation just as eagerly?”

If I had not been so impetuous back then, I would perhaps have sensed the light sparkle of maliciousness in his voice. Alas, being a hotspur I did not.

“Do I really have a choice?” If only I had known back then that there is always a choice!

“You must kill him!” It was as if the aura of dignity surrounding the saint vanished instantly.

The proposition shocked me so much that I could find no words. After stammering for a while, I managed to give expression to my stupor.

“Even if there was no other solution, how would that even be possible?! I am but a mere monk and he is the Holy Emperor himself! I am no legendary knight or even a sturdy Nortmannus.”

“How dare you oppose me, mortal?!” The ambience of the scriptorium changed rapidly into what I now imagine purgatory must be like. The apparition calmed and continued more dispassionately. “Even greater have been killed by the most unexpected. Remember Pyrrhus? Killed by an old woman by accident? She did not even know who she had killed until the very moment the angry Epirans boiled her alive.” Wenceslaus almost chuckled at that remark. “Or even my own death, delivered by my beloved brother!” Now the hovering spirit laughed out loud.

My thoughts were as quick as an arrow, but still chaotic. I was thinking of my horizons. Me as an assassin?

“So be it. I will welcome damnation knowing the Almighty will forgive me, for it is a greater good I seek.”

“Do not be so dramatic. Be sure God is forgiving and merciful.” A slight smile appeared on his face.

“But how should I do it? As I said, I am no assassin. I know nothing of death except for what can be read about it.”

“Then the answer is simple. Look at what you know and surely history will bring you resolution.” With these words Wenceslaus began to fade away, leaving just a faint smell of nightshades.

And indeed, I knew what had to be done.

Ophidia in herba

I was waiting in the misericord. I knew it was the safest place in the whole monastery, as the brothers no longer got much of the meat they desired. It was very dusty and the sun began to set, throwing long shadows through the bars of the one small window.

“What’s in the pouch?” asked Mathias suspiciously, holding a leather sack.

“I believe that is none of your concern, novice!” I was very impatient; no wonder, the contents of the bag could solve my problems or bring me a very painful death, or both.

“Don’t worry, master, I will not tell anyone. But you know how dangerous it is to hang around the Jewish town these days.”

“Yes, yes, I know. I am sorry to have put you through this, but it had to be done. Now be gone, I need to do one more thing.”

Mathias tried to object, but I was no longer listening. My focus was on the path on which I had set myself. I had just a few hours to get to the imperial stables. Fortunately the emperor was not consistent in choosing his servants; one of his grooms, Bagad, was of Jewish ancestry and understood what had to be done.

The empty streets of the city discomfited me greatly, as if the whole

city knew and was giving me its quite and careful blessing. It was already dark when I got to the stables. Bagad was waiting for me impatiently.

“Shalom, monk. We must act quickly. The head groom will be back to see to horses in no time!”

“Let us hope that His Majesty is as predictable as I think he is. Here it is. Mordechai sends his regards.”

“It will be done. Tomorrow the emperor rides out on a hunt, as he always does. I must go. Farewell.”

“May God watch over you, Bagad.”

“Yours or mine?”

“There is only one. By the way, how did you come up with this design?”

“I will just say that Cleopatra was a great inspiration to me.”

Bagad did not reply, just nodded and started towards the horses.

I had to be back at the monastery before morning prayers. Now it was just waiting and praying.

Finis coronat opus

It was the longest day of my life, but then it finally came. Bells were ringing rigidly. The message travelled through the land like wildfire. THE EMPEROR WAS DEAD!! The story was he fell from his horse during a hunt and broke his neck. Only three people knew he was bitten by a snake while trying to get arrows from his saddlebag. I was overjoyed and terrified. Now it was definite: I was a murderer, an assassin. There was no way back.

“You actually did it.” Wenceslaus was back with an unreadable smirk on his face.

“Yes, my lord, the good prevailed.”

“The good?!” He burst into laughter. “Good? You really still believe that what you did just now was good? You really are callow. You with all your books and knowledge believe that murder serves good?” The next wave of demonic

laughter.

“What are you saying? You you said it was for the greater good. That God will overlook the act as it serves for His greater glory, Your Majesty.” Still I did not understand what had happened.

“Your Majesty?!! You drooling fool! I am no dead king of yours! My name is Berith. I have tempted patsies like you into committing homicide for centuries and once again, I have won. No heavenly manna for you, not anymore. I will find you in purgatory, monk!” With a quiet hiss Berith disappeared, leaving only the faint smell of nightshades again.

To be honest, I had probably known the whole time. Still, the surprise was overwhelming. In the following days I kept looking over my shoulder, expecting they would come for me. They have not. And here I am, old and fragile. Dying. Waiting. I know what to expect after I die, which is probably more than other people could say about their afterlife.

And what about my deed? Did it change anything? Of course not. Once it was known it was not the fall that killed the emperor, all hell broke loose. People demanded justice, and as usual they blamed the Jews. My friend Mordechai and his family were amongst the first to disappear in the violent purges that followed.

Commentary

I believe the final version is much better than the mid-term one for several reasons. First of all, it has an ending, which is quite self-explanatory. Second, I decided to take advice and add a better motivation for Přebík, enhancing his connection with Hebrew. I also tried to even out Přebík’s ability to express himself so as to make it more stable throughout the story. I believe that would be a much bigger problem should the story be longer, which eventually I hope it will become.

The story’s villain Berith underwent some changes, too. I wanted to add just a little bit of mysticism to it, so there are hints in the story that the apparition might not be what it seems (such as the smell of nightshades after it disappears). However, I would probably need many more words to develop this character further with my current (lack of) ability as a writer, and I intend to work on this particular field of writing -character development, I mean.

One of my colleagues suggested I give a more balanced account of the behaviour of Berith throughout the story, but unfortunately I cannot do this as I want the shock of the change of a friendly apparition into a satanic being to be as great as possible.

A second colleague suggested I add more characters (or perhaps develop certain characters), and that I do agree with. Alas, again I have fought with the extent of this story so as not to overdo it, as would come naturally to me.

In future I would like to add at least twice as many pages to the story, and to develop it a little, not only in terms of characters but also in terms of action and motivations. Perhaps it would not be bad to add Charles himself in person; that could be interesting and show the reader why is it that Přebík hates him so much and fears him at the same time.

To sum up, I must say that the whole experience of writing Přebík’s story was very liberating. It was something I had wanted to do for quite a long time, and finally I made myself do it (thanks to some external pressure). Also I have more ideas to put on paper, and perhaps this new-found dedication will stick with me for a while.

poetry pages

Poetry in eMotion

Marie Šimáková and Adam Zeisek

We would like to introduce our poetry society. You may wonder how it all started. It is pretty straightforward: we got hooked on poetry while taking part in an online poetry course led by Jaroslav Suchý, in which we wrote poetry with our classmates every week for two semesters. Somebody came up with the idea of creating an online poets' society, which we liked. After some time Jaroslav asked us to join him and actually start the society we had talked about. We loved the idea and decided to start a website open to all poets who would like to join and share their poetry. We named the society Poetry in eMotion, and you can find it online at www.poetryinemotion.cz. Recently we also started a Facebook page, so you can find us even there. Anybody can register and publish their poems online. Below you can find two poems written by students of the English Department. Every month we publish a topic which the contributors can write about, or you can just publish any poem you want to. Whether you just want to enjoy good poetry or want to try writing, feel free to join us. We would love to read your poetry! :-)

Chestnut childhood

Marie Šimáková

Let me take you years ago
 When sun could shine and wind could
 blow
 When air was fresh and people lived
 when fields were full and life was a gift

 Once upon a time

 Fairy tales
 Frog was the Prince of Wales

Chestnuts - oh the great treasure
 No time, no money, nothing to measure
 such a pleasure!

.....

Rain drops? No, diamonds
 Brown stones? No, almonds
 Meadow? No, my realm
 Branch? No, my buddy, it's the helm!

.....

And then the voice... which really cares
 "It is raining, come upstairs,
 No magic nuts, you're not a Cinderella
 It's just some chestnuts and you need an
 umbrella"

.....

Oh my mum, I can't ... if you knew
 There's not only one prince
 There's a QUEUE!
 :D

Edinburgh

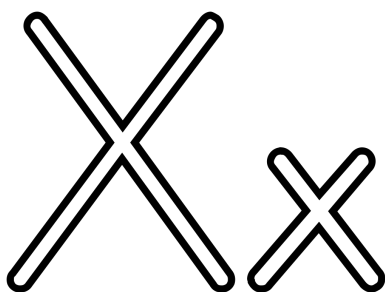
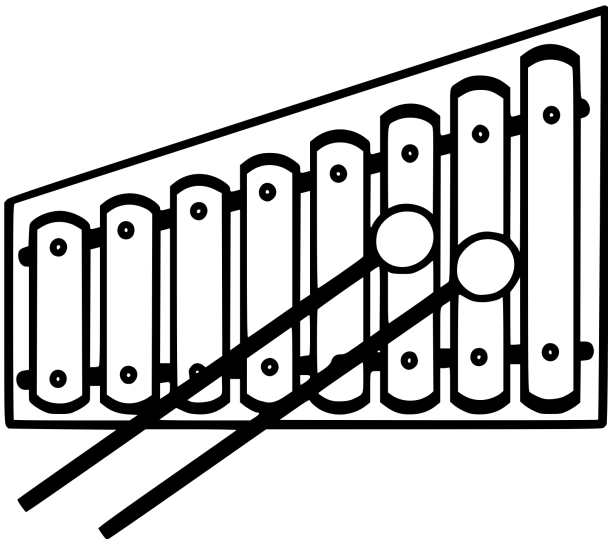
Adam Zeisek

Charming both clothed in mist and clouds
 And naked in the direct sun
 Revealing the greyish buildings,
 All ancient monuments of national pride
 Remembering Scottish heroes
 Greyish city with islands of green parks
 Tasting a wee bit of Highlands hiking
 Arthur's Seat
 Watching the sunset from Calton Hill
 Taking in the city, never having enough
 Wandering along Princes Street or the
 Royal Mile
 Soaking in the artistic atmosphere
 While visiting museums and galleries
 Or all the unique cafés always sitting in
 Discovering a different culture just to
 Find out it's not that different after all
 Yet the best of all is meeting new friends
 "Haste ye back!", one of them told me
 And haste back, aye, I will - See you
 soon!

Exaggerate

Ondřej Čada

Enormous musical instrument
 Xylophone - colorful and loud
 Angry xylophonist banging his head
 Godlike rhythm, punk is not dead
 Glockenspiel - he can play it, too
 Enchanting chords breaking through
 Rocking the stage, what a tune!
 Audience raging - "We want bassoon!"
 The bassoonist comes with trembling
 hands
 Enough to please the classical music fans



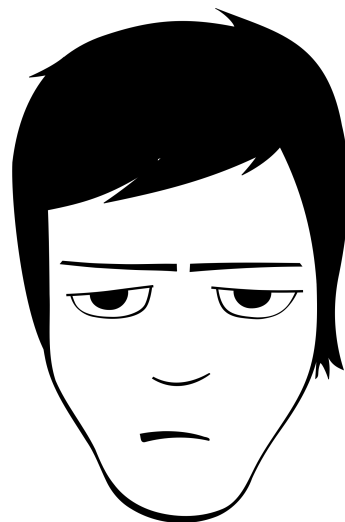
I AM July 2014

Jaroslav Suchý

"I'm nothing special, in fact I'm a bit of
 a bore"¹
 Wondering what life is good for
 Can hear the voice
 See it's all about choice
 Wanting more and more
 "I'm nothing special, in fact I'm a bit of
 a bore"¹

Pretending not to care
 Feeling the urge to share
 Wanting to embrace all of you
 Worrying it's not true
 Crying for the wasted score
 "I'm nothing special, in fact I'm a bit of
 a bore"¹

Understand you're in control of this
 I say it's you I'd like to please
 I dream we live in harmony
 Trying to manage the chores
 Hoping life's not about money
 "I'm nothing special, in fact I'm a bit of
 a bore"¹



¹ Abba: Thank You for the Music

Ode to Roy

Kamil Patrick Ivan

Roy, the smart, fit, tall college boy
 From the Department of English,
 Passed almost all his exams
 Thanks to Wiktionary.

A manic student's vacation
 Is an awesome idea.
 All days as sea pirates
 Making a night at parties.

Roy, the smart, fit, tall shindig boy,
 Fell into oblivion.
 That day he was supposed to
 Enrol in courses.

A manic student's vacation
 Turned out to be a tragedy.
 No class fits the timetable
 Except the ones at seven.

Roy, the stressed-out, tall college boy
 From the Department of English,
 Sassed the lambs hounding with prams
 On his way to school.

I need to tell you that ...

Kamil Patrick Ivan

I'm sitting in a crowded train of
 memories.

What is the next station?
 And where is the passion?
 Nowhere is there any sign of a village.
 There is a river over a strange bridge.

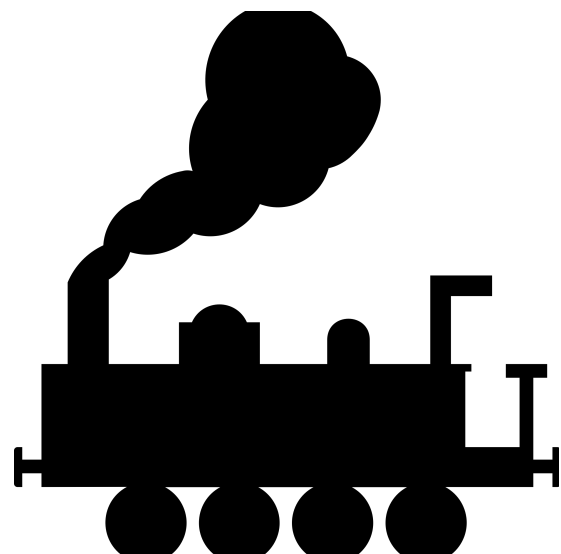
Yellow grass and purple trees
 O'er a grasp of centuries.
 Uroboros eating his body underneath.

ILY & IMY

Kamil Patrick Ivan

My dear Dew,

*I really need to touch you.
 Still, I sometimes seek some FAQ
 To discover the tyBeau,
 The ancient treasure I love to view.
 The clues you show me
 Are like leaves falling.
 An untold story
 Of a mystery.
 As the leaf is falling,
 It is whispering.
 It speaks the colour
 Of some feeling
 Hidden under cover.
 'Put it to your face
 And it will embrace
 Your ear and heart then,'
 Speaks my breath, frozen.
 The colour I feel
 Fills me with fear.
 But somehow I know
 You do not say 'no'.
 I listen to it.
 And I want to be with you;
 To tell the truth:
 I love you
 Through and through.*



The Robber Grows in You

Kamil Patrick Ivan

I
 am
 free
 again
 having
 a while
 only for
 the right
 whispering
 There isn't
 anything that
 could break it
 You've been the
 one who seeks an
 adventure and I'm
 the one who's here
 for your soft hands
 We've had moments of
 both happiness, bliss
 love and we have had
 days full of despair
 I'll be as close to
 your eyes and soul
 as you want me to
 I won't run away
 to save my life
 I will stay to
 walk with you
 through the
 large green
 forests of
 your life
 and I'll
 be here
 always
 today
 forever
 now
 Do
 I

You've just heard the words of a
 person in love with
 you
 You know there are empty promises
 you don't deserve
 and
 all I know is that I don't want
 you to lose
 me
 You know I'd do almost anything to
 make you happy. There
 forever
 is a tiny wall of bricks full of
 your memories
 and
 I know they mean the whole life to
 you. I will protect them.
 Always

**muni
PRESS**

