

A stylized illustration featuring a person standing on a yellow, textured path that leads from the bottom left towards the center. The path is set against a dark blue background with wavy lines representing water. In the upper right, there are large, billowing pink clouds. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blue, yellow, and pink.

# Beletrina

## Foreign Rights List **2022**

[www.beletrina.com](http://www.beletrina.com)



## Foreign Rights List 2022

- Gabriela Babnik *A Silence Full of the Wind* 4
- Mitja Čander *Blind Man* 6
- Alojz Ihan *Power(less)* 8
- Drago Jančar *And Love Itself* 10
- Drago Jančar *I Saw Her That Night* 12
- Samira Kentrić *Balkanalia (Growing Up in Times of Transition)* 14
- Lojze Kovačič *Newcomers* 16
- Lojze Kovačič *Crystalline Time* 18
- Jela Krečič *The Book of Others* 20
- Mojca Kumerdej *The Harvest of Chronos* 22
- Feri Lainšček *A Herder of Hens* 24
- Katarina Marinčič *The Woman With a Silver Eye* 26
- Ana Marwan *Cocooned* 28
- Katja Perat *The Masochist* 30
- Ana Schnabl *Tide* 32
- Ana Schnabl *The Masterpiece* 34
- Marko Sosič *Ballerina, Ballerina* 36
- Irena Svetek *White Wolf* 38
- Irena Svetek *Little Red Riding Hood* 40
- Dušan Šarotar *Billiards at the Hotel Dobray* 42
- Suzana Tratnik *A Pontoon Bridge* 44
- Goran Vojnović *Đorđić Is Back* 46
- Goran Vojnović *The Fig Tree* 48
- Vitomil Zupan *Minuet for Guitar (in twenty-five shots)* 50
- Vitomil Zupan *Levitan (A Novel or Maybe Not)* 52
- Bronja Žakelj *Whites Wash at Ninety* 54



## **Gabriela Babnik**

### ***A Silence Full of the Wind***

*Tišina, polna vetra*  
novel  
2022  
448 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world

Jeanne Duval and Charles Baudelaire first met in 1842. Their relationship lasted some twenty years, during which time the poet wrote a number of the most famous poems in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. James MacManus, in his book *Black Venus*, notes that nearly all of Baudelaire's biographers have condemned Duval as the person who ruined the great poet's life. Among other things, she is accused of cheating on him with his friends, squandering his money, and supplying him with opium. Gabriela Babnik's novel ***A Silence Full of the Wind***, however, is no mere repetition of established biography. While we do, certainly, find here scenes from a passionate relationship, the February Revolution of 1848, and Jeanne Duval's testimony at court, the archaic origins of racism and anti-Blackness are also carefully reflected in the novel. No longer does Duval represent some hallucinatory sexual force; no longer is she a Creole (probably from Haiti), the bastard daughter of a Black female slave and a white plantation owner; rather, the novel deconstructs the poet's relationship to the muse. The Black female, one of the most fertile sources of poetic creativity, is no longer a now indifferent, now ready-for-anything, now submissive woman who inspires the phantasmagorical impulses of the French male, but what we see instead in this novel is a genuine encounter between two characters. Their relationship, which undergoes an interesting twist at the end, is presented as a kind of power play. The novel explores the history of the period, the influence of photography on the depiction of the female nude, hot-air ballooning, Haussmann's renovation of Paris, the status of the poet in an urban environment, the history of silence, the aesthetic of the colonial imagination, and, especially, the gender and class differences between Charles Baudelaire and Jeanne Duval.



### Praise for *Dry Season*:

***Dry Season* is a colourful tapestry, interwoven with elements of two different worlds, two completely different lives. It is much more than just a story of an unusual relationship between an older white woman and a young African man, both burdened with post-traumatic experiences. It is a mature, critical and inimitable writing with a global insight into the African society of today.**

– Librarian's Comments, International Dublin Literary Award 2017

### Praise for *Intimately*:

**Babnik's latest novel concerns itself with intersections between sexuality, gender and race. Her work distinguishes itself by its intellectual courage, nuanced and finely-wrought stylistic approaches, intricate composition, acute political awareness and – perhaps surprisingly – humour.**

– Dr Ranka Primorac, Lecturer in English at the University of Southampton and an Associate of the Department of African Languages and Cultures at SOAS, London

### Praise for *Three Deaths*:

***Three Deaths* is a meditation on important and often not only concealed but unarticulated themes that Gabriela Babnik manages to address in a unique way, so characteristic of her writing, which she after initial examination, without a trace of moralisation, leaves to the reader for their own understanding.**

– Radio Slovenia

### About the author:

**Gabriela Babnik** (1979) is a writer, literary critic and translator, who lives between Ljubljana and Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. Her book reviews and articles on literary works appear regularly in the Slovene periodical press. Her first novel, *Cotton Skin* (*Koža iz bombaža*, 2007), received the Best Debut Award of the Slovenian Book Fair. This was followed by the novels *In the Tall Grass* (*V visoki travi*, 2009), *Dry Season* (*Sušna doba*, 2012), *Intimately* (*Intimno*, 2015), and *Three Deaths* (*Tri smrti*, 2019), with three of these titles garnering nominations for the Kresnik Award for best Slovenian novel of the year. In 2013, she was awarded the European Union Prize for Literature for *Dry Season*, which has been translated into more than ten languages, and that same year she also received the Stritar Prize for her literary criticism. Babnik has translated several literary works by African authors and also writes radio plays.

**“Charles once asked if she knew where migratory birds went to die. At the time she answered him with a bashful smile, but now things were more or less clear.”**





## Mitja Čander *Blind Man*

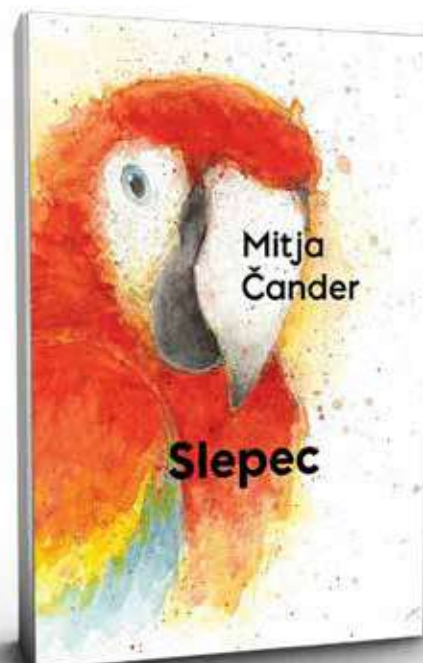
The main character, and narrator, in *Blind Man* is a successful book editor and critic who has had problems with his eyesight since birth. Despite this, he has never had much to do with the visually impaired community and doesn't really feel like he is one of them. But when he is offered a chance to enter the world of politics, he is "blinded" by the lure of power, and this easy-going, level-headed husband and soon-to-be father gradually turns into a self-absorbed careerist.

The author, without pontificating and with a measured dose of humour, paints a critical, unsparing portrait of a small European country and through it a convincing satire on the psychological state of contemporary European society. What, or who, do we still believe in today, and who should we trust? Politicians, apparatchiks, the media? The bureaucratic system? Greater and lesser luminaries? Empty pledges, absurd situations?

Speeches laden with buzzwords and grandiose promises break down the flimsy façade, as the protagonist's own insecurity suggests that things are not always what they seem. In the end, social blindness is worse than any physical impairment, and worst of all is to be blinded by your own ego.

*Slepec*  
novel  
2019  
304 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Albania (Qendra)  
UK (Istros Books)



***Blind Man* is a superb Gogolian novel about the current state of Slovenian – and European – society**

**“Why be afraid of what’s in store when I know it will end in darkness anyway?”**

**Praise for *Blind Man*:**

**This story of a visually impaired book editor drawn into politics and seduced by ambition and the corruption of power is an insightful satire on contemporary Slovenia and by extension the world of politics and the media beyond. It transcends borders with its topical resonance.** – *The New European*

**What makes this book more interesting than the standard satire on national failings is the perspective of a man with poor vision. Čander uses this both as a symbol for overall, metaphorical vision (and its ultimate severe limitations) as well as showing a man struggling outside his comfort zone because of his poor sight, a symbol for not trying to do more than you are capable of. As he says at the end I see everything. However, as the old saying has it, here are none so blind as those who will not see.**

– *The Modern Novel*

**A work that slices into the issues of contemporary society, its guiding principles and dominant trends.**

– *Primorski dnevnik*

**Čander has written an excellent story while treating the issue of blindness on the personal and social levels and seasoned the whole thing with a witty mirroring of the social reality.**

– *AirBeletrina*

**Nominations:**

- World Literature Today’s 100 Notable Translations of 2021

**About the author:**

For decades, **Mitja Čander** (1974) has been one of the most influential figures in Slovenia’s literary and publishing world – even though his literary debut, *Blind Man (Slepec)*, appeared only in 2019. An editor and literary critic, the co-founder and director of Beletrina Academic Press, essayist, screenwriter, dramaturge, columnist, and candidate for national chess master, Čander has accomplished many things in his career and taken a leading role in a number of major projects, such as Maribor – The European Capital of Culture (2012). Since 1992, he has published many articles and essays on Slovenian and world literature and received numerous awards for his work. A wide-ranging intellectual, he is a regular participant in discussions that reach far beyond the cultural sphere, so it was only a matter of time (and genre) before he tried his hand at writing fiction.



## Alojz Ihan *Power(less)*

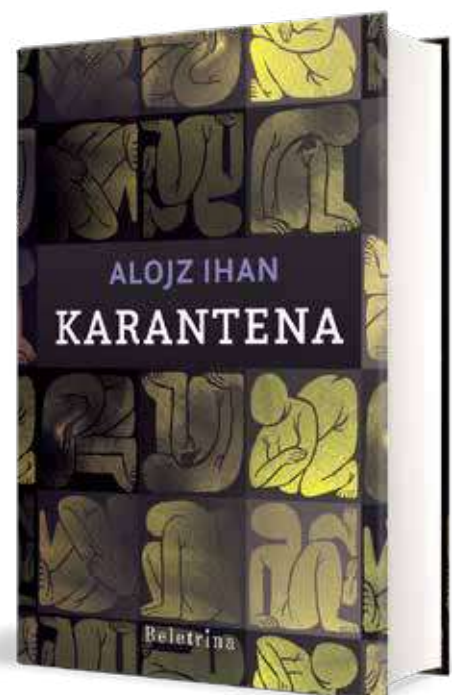
*(Ne)moč*  
novel  
2022  
324 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world

The novel coronavirus Covid-19 spreads from China and grows into a pandemic. Powerless, humanity faces what becomes, world wars excluded, the most expensive social upheaval in history. Could anyone, before the appearance of the miniscule virus, have thought of a reason for the whole world to suddenly stop travelling, for tourism, sports, events, the entire hospitality industry, parties, to all shut down?

Paradoxically, the pandemic causes a small group of people who up until then had few decision-making powers – microbiologists, epidemiologists, specialists in infectious diseases – to suddenly have a decisive say in social and economic decisions with consequences reaching into tens, hundreds of billions.

**Power(less)** turns the spotlight on the people who, out of total anonymity, step into the foreground and become a symbol of immense power. New tycoons, new mafia and new methods of corruption are juxtaposed with a paean of powerlessness and the admission of (own) human weakness, through which people recognise each other as tragic players in the same drama. They see in each other beings similar to themselves, beings that need urgent help if we want the miracle that once began with the incarnation to continue, even if after our own demise.



**I enjoy the breadth of his thoughts and reflections that spread from our intimate chords to broad social and cultural horizons. – Miran Možina**



## About the author:

**Alojz Ihan** (1961) is a renowned doctor, specialist in clinical microbiology, Chair and regular professor at the Department of Microbiology and Immunology of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ljubljana and Head of Department for Immunology at the Faculty's Institute for Microbiology. He began working at the Institute a year after graduating and received his PhD in Medicine in 1993. Prior to this, he also worked for two years in the National Institute for Cancer Research in Genoa and after his doctorate held a research fellowship in the United States. Beside his professional, educational and research work, he also pursues his literary interests. He was editor of literary journals *Problemi*, *Literatura* and *Sodobnost* as well as the book series *Aleph*. He has published six collections of poetry, three novels, three books of essays, and two books on popular science. He has received numerous awards for his literary work, among others the Prešeren Fund Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievements.



## **Drago Jančar** ***And Love Itself***

After the occupation of Yugoslavia by German forces in 1941, the Slovenian city of Maribor, historically a German-speaking town with a large German minority, is annexed to the Third Reich. In the city renamed Marburg an der Drau, neighbours and friends are torn apart and a resistance movement is organised in the surrounding hills.

The three characters at the heart of the novel, Valentin, a partisan resistance fighter, his girlfriend Sonja, and the SS officer Ludwig, once called Ludek, each try in their own way to defend their love from the senselessness of evil and the downfall of human dignity. The war upsets their perceptions of the world and of themselves and inevitably breaks their lives apart.

***And Love Itself***, the title taken from Lord Byron's *So We'll Go No More a Roving*, is an astonishing tale of the will and resilience of the human spirit, set against the backdrop of historical coincidences and tragedy. Jančar poses complex questions and exposes the essential dilemmas faced by modern man, all in his characteristic expansive style, interspersed with extraordinary lyrical inserts.

***In ljubezen tudi***

novel

2017

352 pages

Slovenian language

### **Rights sold**

Austria (Paul Zsolnay Verlag)  
Bulgaria (Matcom)  
Croatia (Meandar Media)  
Czech Republic (Albatros Media)  
France (Phébus)  
Israel (Lesabooks)  
Italy (La nave di Teseo)  
Netherlands (Querido)  
North Macedonia (Ars Lamina)  
Poland (Sedno)  
Romania (Editura Univers)  
Serbia (Arhipelag)  
Ukraine (Dukh i Litera)



### Praise for *And Love Itself*:

***And Love Itself* is not, as the title may suggest, a love story, nor is it a historical novel, it is first and foremost a novel about love. More than the story and the fate of a love and more than a story about war, in which love found itself, it is a novel of the solitary effort of an individual of how to protect this love and preserve it in spite of it all. – Delo**

**A superb novel, both sensual and serious.**

– *Le Figaro magazine*

**Drago Jančar, one of the best European novelists, blends an important time in history with a history of a love to form the anatomy of horror. – Transfuge**

**Drago Jančar is a born storyteller.**

– *L'Hebdoscope*

**A history of the entire 20th century. – Il Piccolo**

**In his new novel, Jančar paints an immense historical fresco. – Il Giornale**

### Awards and nominations:

- Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2018
- Longlisted for Europese Literatuurprijs 2020

### About the author:

As a novelist, short-story writer, playwright, and essayist, **Drago Jančar** (1948) is a central figure in contemporary Slovenian literature. His writing has revealed an artistic ability to formulate and express ideas that reach far beyond the spiritual and cultural sphere of his native country, making him the most translated Slovenian writer ever. His novels, essays and short stories have been translated into 33 languages and published in Europe, Asia and the Americas. His dramas have also been staged by a number of foreign theatres, while at home they are frequently considered the highlights of the Slovenian theatrical season.

**A striking novel about the power of love by likely the greatest living Slovenian writer, recipient of a record-breaking 4th Kresnik Award for best novel of the year**



## Drago Jančar *I Saw Her That Night*

Five stories of life in the Balkans before and during World War II intersect around memories of Veronika, a beautiful, headstrong woman who disappeared one night in the company of anti-German partisans. As a Serbian cavalryman lies captured and defeated, he dreams of the woman with whom he had an affair seven years ago. In an opulent manor house in Slovenia, a mother and her housekeeper reminisce about an absent daughter. A German military doctor receives a letter enquiring about a woman whose hand he once held. And Ivan, a workman at the manor house, unlocks the mystery of a missing woman with his mem-

ory of a stolen moment. Each recollection in *I Saw Her That Night* provides a different view of Veronika and of the troubled times in which she lived.

A quietly impressive tale of one unusual woman during World War II in the Balkans, masterfully told by the leading Slovenian writer.

### *To noč sem jo videl*

novel

2010

189 pages

Slovenian language

### **Rights sold**

Albania (Dituria)  
Argentina (Bärenhaus)  
Austria (Folio Verlag)  
Azerbaijan (Fabula)  
Bulgaria (Alterra)  
Croatia (Meandar Media)  
Czech Republic (Albatros Media)  
Denmark (Jensen & Dalgaard)  
Egypt (Sefsafa)  
Finland (Mansarda)  
France (Phébus)  
Greece (Kastaniotis)  
Hungary (L'Harmattan)  
India/Malayalam (Green Books)  
Israel (Lesa Books)  
Italy (Comunicarte)  
Lithuania (Briedis)  
Netherlands (Querido)  
North Macedonia (Esra)  
Norway (H. Aschehoug & Co.)  
Poland (Czarne)  
Romania (Casa Cărții de Știință)  
Russia (Rudomino)  
Serbia (Arhipelag)  
Turkey (Dedalus)  
Ukraine (Vydavnytstvo XXI)  
USA (Dalkey Archive Press)





### **Praise for *I Saw Her That Night*:**

**Friendship and betrayal, hope and guilt and the torment of remembering are Jančar's themes. His liquid balancing of illusion and reality sustains this kaleidoscopic, communal war novel, which moves relentlessly towards an obvious yet symbolic act of violence.**

– *Irish Times*

**The economy with which Jančar creates memorable characters and moments while never letting the reader forget the war, the tumult of Yugoslavia, or the incursion of communism is astonishing, especially compared with the U.S. vogue for mammoth tomes of modest scope.**

– *Kirkus Reviews*

**Indeed, more than enthusiasm, it is love at first sight [...] No verbose or florid passages, nor any affected and virtuoso attempts; Jančar hones his style, rids it of anything superfluous, making it into an efficient weapon for defying reality. [...] I was captivated by the out-of-breath rhythm of this Slovenian writer.**

– *Charlie Hebdo*

**Jančar writes powerful, complex stories with an unostentatious assurance, and has a gravity which makes the tricks of more self-consciously modern writers look cheap [...] Whether they are psychological studies or parables, Jančar reports these episodes with a fine structural balance and, though at times clearly conversing with his literary antecedents, he wears his reading lightly [...] Throughout his stories, Jančar examines the nature of witness, personal, historical and authorial.** – *Times Literary Supplement*

### **Awards:**

- Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2011
- Prix du meilleur livre étranger 2014
- Kresnik Award for best novel of the decade 2020

### **About the author:**

As a novelist, short-story writer, playwright, and essayist, **Drago Jančar** (1948) is a central figure in contemporary Slovenian literature. His writing has revealed an artistic ability to formulate and express ideas that reach far beyond the spiritual and cultural sphere of his native country, making him the most translated Slovenian writer ever. His novels, essays and short stories have been translated into 33 languages and published in Europe, Asia and the Americas. His dramas have also been staged by a number of foreign theatres, while at home they are frequently considered the highlights of the Slovenian theatrical season.

***I Saw Her That Night* is Jančar's ninth novel, relatively short, yet it affords one of the finest literary texts about Slovenians entangled in World War II and in interactions among themselves.** – *Delo*



## **Samira Kentrić**

### ***Balkanalia*** (*Growing Up in Times of Transition*)

***Balkanalia, Growing Up in Times of Transition*** is an autobiographical graphic novel. The author, an artist, is the daughter of a shepherd and a carpet weaver who traded their rural Bosnian, Muslim surroundings for an urban Slovenian, Catholic setting and became internal migrants in a country that celebrated the working class above all. Kentrić's beautifully illustrated coming-of-age story follows the daughter of an immigrant working class family during the bloody break-up of socialist Yugoslavia. In this story, nothing is ordinary in an ordinary child's life. The girl's homeland falls apart, yet its remains are the only solid elements of a future worth striving for. The words of the immigrant child make it obvious that her sense of belonging is not tied to place. She belongs to people, ideas and ideals, so home can be anywhere... or nowhere.

**Two media, separate but whole, intrinsically joined and enriching each other. A story of horizons, war, home, principles and family, told in an original and honest voice.**

- A personal tale of growing up similar to the one told by Marjane Satrapi in *Persepolis*
- Fantastic moments in real situations with a careful eye for detail as found in the works of Shaun Tan
- Bearing witness and telling the story as meticulously as Joe Sacco
- Fragmented approach to storytelling through intimate individual portrayals that in the end make a whole like in Maira Kalman's *The Principles of Uncertainty*
- Family traumas turned into works of art and animals as metaphors of human condition as in the works of Art Spiegelman
- Innovative and daring, with an abundance of new approaches like Christoph Niemann

***Balkanalijske (odraščanje v času tranzicije)***

graphic novel

2015

150 pages

Slovenian language

**Rights sold**

Bulgaria (Paradox)

Germany (Jacoby & Stuart)

Ukraine (Vydavnytsvo)

### Praise for *Balkanalia*:

**The author weaves the internal world with real events, family history with national history, realism, surrealism, symbolism, popular culture, celebrities, and various ideologies, using all this to create a bizarre collage full of unusual figures. The narration is driven by numerous intentional paradoxes, fun excesses, brutal passages, unerotic nudity and oxymora.**

– Mladina

**In *Balkanalia*, we are mostly faced by sepia-hued full-page illustrations complemented by brief written notes. These, however, are not merely there to illustrate the illustrations, as the illustrations don't just illustrate the text – each medium has a voice of its own and speaks of what it's able to. We must not forget, after all, that this is an intimate autobiography with a social focus.** – Koridor

### Awards:

- MGIP International Book Award 2015
- German Academy for Children's and Young Adult Literature Book of the Month February 2022

### About the author:

**Samira Kentrić** (1976) is a visual artist, illustrator and performer. She has illustrated several books of humanist thinkers and depicted news concerning international affairs, about the Middle East, the Obama phenomenon and the process of EU integration, as well as religious conflicts and social issues. Her work has been published in Slovenia, the Netherlands and in the USA, and she has performed and exhibited in various cities across Europe. Her speciality is editorial illustration – i.e. the visual rendering of political commentary – and she is known for fusing public, political discourse with the intimate sphere of our everyday lives. In 2010, one such Kentrić work was included in the prestigious American Illustration Catalog, and she has since then published two acclaimed graphic novels: *Balkanalia* (*Balkanalijske*, 2015) and *Letter to Adna* (*Pismo Adni*, 2016).





## Lojze Kovačič *Newcomers*

This three-part autobiographical series begins in 1938 with the expulsion of the Kovačič family from their home in Switzerland and their settlement in the father's home country of Slovenia, then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It is narrated by a ten-year-old boy, a perennial outsider, a boy who never fits in, either in Switzerland or Slovenia and is viewed with suspicion by adults and peers alike. The work includes haunting, deeply thought-provoking descriptions of this isolation as seen through the eyes of the child – in many ways a naïve boy, yet one who was forced to become an adult at an early age.

**Newcomers** is Kovačič's central work on the vortex of World War II and the post-war period, covering all the political, ideological and social conflicts of the 20th century and standing as a tragic chronicle of the recent past. A canonical, extensive and difficult autobiographical work, it is considered a literary masterpiece of the 20th century and often compared to the oeuvres of popular modern authors such as Elena Ferrante and Karl Ove Knausgård, as well as classic authors like Nabokov and Tolstoy.

**Prišleki**  
autobiographical novel  
1984  
1093 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Croatia (Alfa)  
France (Editions du Seuil)  
Italy (La nave di Teseo)  
Netherlands (van Genneep)  
Spain (Ediciones Siruela)  
USA (Archipelago Books)



**Chosen as the best Slovenian  
novel of the 20th century by  
Slovenian literary critics in a 2000  
survey**



### Praise for *Newcomers*:

**Lojze Kovačič is probably the most important Yugoslav writer you've never heard of. And probably one of a handful of the most important Yugoslav prose writers and novelists, period. ... [He] is one of the most important writers of our time, one who confirms our world in both text and deed.**

– writer *Miljenko Jergović* for Croatian daily *Jutarnji list*

***Newcomers* is an emblem of what memory — personal memory, political memory, a place's memory — can create from erasure ... Curiously hypnotic. Between the fetishized ordinariness of Karl Ove Knausgård and the theater of Elena Ferrante, Kovačič unfurls a ream of anecdotes and character descriptions, rambling, yet tightly told chronology of his family's undeserved perdition as they descend deeper and deeper into moral and literal penury.**

– *Los Angeles Review of Books*

**... this work achieves the panoramic effects of H.G. Adler's Shoah trilogy by way of Joycean stream of consciousness.** – *Wall Street Journal*

**A powerful chronicle of conflict and upheaval within both a family and a country, as told, and experienced, by a young, engaging, clear-sighted boy ... Kovačič skillfully depicts a tough, nomadic, hand-to-mouth existence in a city gripped by ethnic tension, rampant nationalism and the threat of war ... This fine novel is not only accessible, but deeply memorable.** – *Star Tribune*

### Awards:

- Župančič Award, the highest recognition of the City of Ljubljana for outstanding creations in the field of art and culture, 1986

### About the author:

**Lojze Kovačič** (1928–2004) has established himself as a powerful Slovenian voice in the modern literary canon. His works articulate the limits of the human condition in an introspective and highly philosophical manner, whilst also exploring morality and existential topics such as life and death, displacement and exile, dream and reality. Although born in Switzerland, Kovačič was exiled to Ljubljana, Slovenia with his German mother and Slovenian father in 1938. As the acclaimed recipient of the Prešeren Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement, in 1973 and a three-time winner of the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year in 1991, 2004 and 2016 – the latter being the Silver Kresnik Award – Kovačič was an accomplished author of both children's and adult fiction who left behind a luminescent literary legacy and has been compared to great Central European writers such as Danilo Kiš, Sándor Márai, Imre Kertész and Ismail Kadare.

**The greatest Slovenian writer of the 20th century.**

– *Kresnik Award jury*



## Lojze Kovačič *Crystalline Time*

Kovačič wrote ***Crystalline Time*** in the years before Slovenian independence, when disease pushed him to the brink “between the illusion of death and the illusion of life”. Bedridden, Kovačič would note down his emotions daily, and, as the scope of these notes grew, they evolved into the writer’s confrontation with himself, a recapitulation of his experiences and an insightful self-reflection. Kovačič returns to the past that he had captured in his earlier works through the eyes of a boy and a young man, this time seeing it from the palimpsestic perspective of a mature, wise man at the end of his life.

*Crystalline Time* is thus a mosaic-like autobiographical novel of extended reflections on events and people that shaped the author and his work, as well as essayistic sections, anecdotes and critical portraits of contemporaries. According to the author, the novel is a “document of the soul”, in which he confronts the present while examining different periods of his life. At once a candid personal testament and a literary masterpiece of the highest order, it explores universal themes of death, faith and religion, love in all its forms, and writing as “the only excuse for living”.

*Kristalni čas*  
novel  
1990  
358 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Croatia (Meandar Media)  
Czech Republic (Kniha Zlin)



**The greatest Slovenian writer of  
the 20th century.** – Kresnik Award jury

### Praise for *Crystalline Time*:

**Kovačič's artistic reflections on himself and the human condition in general, on love as a determinant and a source of constant fervour, on authors, their conscience and imperfections, on their limitations and failures to portray themselves and those around them, his reflections on the sanctity of intimacy in a communal context, on freedom and on dogma, as well as restrained views on mystical transcendence – suffuse the novel in countless masterful and poetic fragments with tremendous force.**

– 1991 Kresnik Award jury

***Crystalline Time* is a literary masterpiece and Kovačič is Slovenia's most significant author of the 20th century.**

– Tina Vrščaj, Slovenian literary critic and member of the Silver Kresnik Award Jury

**Slovenian literature reached its peak with Kovačič's Proustian project, and together with *Newcomers* and *Five Fragments*, *Crystalline Time* is its most powerful literary epitome.**

– Tomo Virk, Slovenian literary historian and essayist

**Autobiographical prose is rarely as well written – in this novel, Lojze Kovačič is a master of his craft. ... *Crystalline Time* is a tribute to writing, to personal battles, memories and courage to reveal your personal growth to readers. But also, above all, to the author himself. Who allowed all his stars to shine and all his abysses to open. Exquisite.** – *Konteksti*

### Awards:

- Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 1991
- Silver Kresnik Award 2016 for best Slovenian novel of the last 25 years

### About the author:

**Lojze Kovačič** (1928–2004) has established himself as a powerful Slovenian voice in the modern literary canon. His works articulate the limits of the human condition in an introspective and highly philosophical manner, whilst also exploring morality and existential topics such as life and death, displacement and exile, dream and reality. Although born in Switzerland, Kovačič was exiled to Ljubljana, Slovenia with his German mother and Slovenian father in 1938. As the acclaimed recipient of the Prešeren Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement, in 1973 and a three-time winner of the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year in 1991, 2004 and 2016 – the latter being the Silver Kresnik Award – Kovačič was an accomplished author of both children's and adult fiction who left behind a luminescent literary legacy and has been compared to great Central European writers such as Danilo Kiš, Sándor Márai, Imre Kertész and Ismail Kadare.

**Recipient of the prestigious Silver Kresnik Award – the best novel to win the Kresnik Award in its first 25 years (1991 – 2016)**



## **Jela Krečič** ***The Book of Others***

***Knjiga drugih***  
novel  
2018  
330 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world

Following her hugely popular debut, *None Like Her*, Jela Krečič returns with ***The Book of Others***: a novel dedicated to the books that nobody reads. At the centre of it is just such a book; nobody knows what it is about or who wrote it, yet it affects the lives of numerous characters.

The fates of the novel's individual protagonists, residents of Ljubljana from various generations and backgrounds, intertwine around a mysterious book that they pass on to each other, with the narrative following the character who has the book at any given moment. In the budding love story of Tine, a student, and Ana, an actress, the book plays an important role as a physical object of connection. In another story, dedicated to Heda, a young lecturer at the university, the book is the reason Heda meets an older woman, Veronika, and their accidental meeting grows into a very real friendship. At the same time, Heda begins corresponding with an acquaintance, Ariel, and their letters soon become intimate and more gradually, erotic. The book also marks the lives of the Kaprič family where the father's redundancy almost leads to a breakdown of family ties. The novel, written with humour, ends with the book eventually returning to its rightful owner – only to reveal that he does not recognise it either.





### Praise for *The Book of Others*:

**After her first novel, Jela Krečič has taken a step forward in the psychological mapping of the characters. If she confined herself to superficial analysis in her first work, her second delves more intensively into the depths of the individual and their relationships with others.**

– *Radio Slovenia*

***The Book of Others* brings us interesting stories of people of various generations and profiles, from teenagers to retirees, all of which are – in addition to the mysterious book that nobody has read but they keep passing on to each other – connected by the town they live in, Ljubljana, that Jela Krečič has cleverly woven into the novel.** – *Svet 24*

***The Book of Others* is a more ambitious project as I try to unfold an entire palette of destinies in an urban community, from a sweaty student ‘falling in love’ with a mature woman who had given up on love, to the unconventional friendship between a younger woman and an older one, to a family trying to deal with parents who have lost their jobs.**

– *Jela Krečič in an interview for Delo*

**We could say that my characters are victims of my own ‘homebody’ existence, more or less limited to a single corner of the world, and this is why I make an effort to make their destinies as exciting, or at least as entertaining, as possible.** – *Jela Krečič in an interview for Bukla*

### About the author:

**Jela Krečič Žižek** (1979) is a Slovenian journalist, columnist and philosopher. She writes for the largest national daily Delo, where she notably published an exclusive interview with Julian Assange in 2013. Her philosophical research focuses on films, TV series and aesthetics, and she has conducted several studies on these topics. She has also co-edited a number of anthologies on contemporary TV series and on German American film director Ernst Lubitsch. One of her essays was published in the English anthology *Lubitsch Can't Wait* (Columbia University Press, 2014). *None Like Her* (*Ni druge*, 2015), her literary debut, sold out quickly after publication and was very well received in the media. Her second novel *The Book of Others* (*Knjiga drugih*) was published in 2018.

### Nominations:

- Longlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2019



## **Mojca Kumerdej** ***The Harvest of Chronos***

***The Harvest of Chronos*** looks at Central Europe, the Inner Austrian lands, modern-day Slovenian territory, an area plagued by ceaseless battles for supremacy between the Protestant political elite and the ruling Catholic Habsburg Monarchy. The battles for supremacy are fought among the rulers and between the rulers and the people. In this epic saga, history and fiction intertwine in wavelike fashion, producing a colourful portrait of the Renaissance, permeated by humanist attempts to resurrect antiquity through art, new scientific findings, and spirited philosophical and theological debates. This was a time of intrigues, accusations of heresy, political betrayal and burnings at the stake, an age that produced executioners, scapegoats brought to the sacrificial altar in the name of God, the sovereign or the common good, and extraordinary individuals who dared to oppose the dominant beliefs of the masses and believe in a new order.

In a language that is deliciously rich and slightly elevated, at times deliberately archaic but always imbued with humour, the novel tackles superstition, false beliefs and selective memory as well as the questions of God, of being and of nothingness.

***Kronosova žetev***  
novel  
2016  
409 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Bulgaria (Paradox)  
Croatia (Fraktura)  
Germany (Wallstein Verlag)  
Serbia (Geopoetika)  
UK (Istros Books)



**Thanks to its originality, its conceptual and linguistic complexity, *The Harvest of Chronos* is without parallel in contemporary Slovenian literature. – Delo**

### Praise for *The Harvest of Chronos*:

**While exploring aggressive tactics used by the Catholic Church in their campaign against Protestantism in a studious manner and with special attention to detail, Mojca Kumerdej doesn't fail – by way of metafictional jumps into the future – to establish correlations with current events or at the very least allude to history repeating itself. – *Radio Slovenia***

**The novel handles historical material with awareness and gives it a postmodern treatment, which comes with a great deal of temporal and spiritual distance, treating it with both empathy and irony. What's more, the book brandishes significant philosophical examinations of fundamental humanist issues – of being, of time, of nothingness, of God. This is the novel's core. – *LUD Literatura***

**Mojca Kumerdej wrote a superb historical novel that raises the philosophical question of meaning, engages the reader and demands many leaps of thought. Despite its length, it is never boring and continues to captivate, enlighten, and delight with linguistic cleverness and artistry. – *Peripetije***

**Slovenian writers are fond of delving into documents of times past and cloaking their findings in literary interpretations of historical events. But the majority of them go only as far back as our recent and not-so-distant past, in the best case to the beginnings of the 20th century, and fewer venture further back in time. Mojca Kumerdej makes a significantly bigger step here and goes back to the early modern era, 16th century to be exact, where she explores some of the primal patterns and origins of modernity – in particular modern, contemporary Slovenians. After reading *The Harvest of Chronos*, perhaps this isn't just a humorous oxymoron. – *Dnevnik***

### Awards and nominations:

- Prešeren Fund Award 2017
- Kritiško sito Award for best book of the year 2017
- Shortlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2017
- Longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award 2019

### About the author:

**Mojca Kumerdej** (1964) is an award-winning writer and philosopher. She also works as a critic, covering dance, performance and intermedia arts. Her first novel, *Baptism above Triglav* (*Krst nad Triglavom*, 2001), was an ironic look at Slovenian cultural and literary traditions. Her two collections of short prose, *Fragma* (2003) and *Dark Matter* (*Temna snov*, 2011), show an utterly original world, one that derives from the inner corners of contemporary society. Her latest novel, *The Harvest of Chronos* (*Kronosova žetev*, 2016) is a picturesque portrait of the 16th century, which won her the Kritiško sito Award for best book of the year awarded by the Slovenian Literary Critics' Association and the Prešeren Fund Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement, and was also shortlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year. Her prose has been translated into over ten languages and included in various anthologies at home and abroad.





## **Feri Lainšček** ***A Herder of Hens***

Feri Lainšček was born on 5 October 1959 to Terezija (Trejzka) and Štefan (Pištek) in the village of Dolenci in Goričko, a hilly part of Prekmurje, the farthest and most special corner of Slovenia, near the Hungarian border. The house he was born in was the poorest around and the child was unexpected; at 39 and 44 his mother and father were considered well on their way to old age. The boy's sister, who was called Little Trejzka, was 18 by the time of his birth and had already left the house. The child didn't even have a name for a while and in the end he was named by the local priest when the father went to register him for baptism. Local people said that nothing more than a herder of hens could become of the boy as there were no cattle or other animals in the household. Despite knowing that the boy grew into something much more, we still worry for him and fear for his life as we read.

***A Herder of Hens*** is a book a writer writes only once in his lifetime. By using the method of Jung's active imagination the author returns to his childhood and transforms it into a unique creative process. But more than autofiction, the novel has a tight-knit structure and pace that builds a suspenseful and electrifying portrait of a singular childhood that at first seems to offer the protagonist almost no chance of and at life. Of particular value are also metaphorical and symbolic language, which, intertwined with folk traditions and mythical archetypes, form a sweeping and powerful work of literature.

24

***Kurji pastir***

novel

2020

308 pages

Slovenian language

**Rights sold**

Italy (Bottega Errante)



**“I can step into my childhood any time and any place. I didn't become a writer because I did a lot of reading, but because I did a lot of listening. Today I know that stories are the most important thing in the world.” – Feri Lainšček**



### Praise for *A Herder of Hens*:

Yes, in *A Herder of Hens*, Feri Lainšček is (again) a magical realist. Not just because he creates a world that is bigger than life, that is incredible, mystical, and poetic, but because this is how this world seems from a distance. When you are in the middle of what is happening, when you are in the middle of the book, it does not seem that way at all. When you fall into *A Herder of Hens*, when you are pulled in by the magic of the words (even if that sounds like a cliché), everything seems quite logical and right. [...] Along with the novel *The Woman Carried in by the Fog*, I place [this work] at the very top of Feri Lainšček's novelistic oeuvre.

– Večer

The scenes he describes are not big heroic stories, but ones that are not often told, which are special because of the way memory processes them. What we have here is a genuine nostalgia and a description of the closeness between two people who had to create a life for themselves almost from scratch. [...] [The author] allows us to enter the intimate cosmos of his parents (as well as the wider family and the village community), but he never gives too much away. He achieves this reach from the particular to the general by looking at “everything that is” with a calm, distanced eye, thus creating a very subtle portrait – a portrait of “his own becoming”. – *AirBeletrina*

The autofictional narrative, then, primarily brings us the story of the writer's parents – his mother no longer young, his father with eyes fixed on a better life – but through the well-chosen symbolic language it also sketches out the wider community of the family and village.

– *Dnevnik*

### Nominations:

- Shortlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2021

### About the author:

**Feri Lainšček** (1959) is one of the most popular and prolific Slovenian authors, his books regularly top bestseller lists and garner critical praise at the same time. In addition to his many novels, he also writes poetry, short stories, screenplays, children's books, puppet and radio plays, as well as song lyrics. Four of his novels were made into very successful feature films, with one of them, *Rooster's Breakfast* (*Petelinji zajtrk*), becoming one of the most successful Slovenian films ever. Lainšček's works have been published in over 10 languages and he was twice the recipient of the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year, in 1992 for *Instead of Whom Does the Flower Bloom* (*Namesto koga roža cveti*) and in 2007 for the novel *Muriša*. He also received the Prešeren Fund Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement, for *The Woman Carried in by the Fog* (*Ki jo je megla prinesla*, 1993) and the Večernica Award for best Slovenian young adult work for *Little Thoughts* (*Misljice*, 2000).

Feri Lainšček's literature is like a dandelion flower that spreads its seeds of knowledge about what modern literature can do – with its charm and its didactic power, the modest search for the other, the overhearing of simple speech – and thus creates new meaning. – Ignacija J. Fridl, Slovenian literary historian



## **Katarina Marinčič** ***The Woman With a Silver Eye***

**Ženska s srebrnim očesom**  
novel  
2022  
220 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world

One summer Saturday, Danijel, a man in his early fifties, cycles up a mountain pass. In the mountain hut where he stays the night he manages – at least so he believes - to establish a genuine connection with the locals. Their encounter is like he likes things to be, he enjoys observing people, thinking about them, he also likes a chat but at all times makes sure he keeps his distance as contemplative solitude is for him one of the essences of his cycling trips. The following day, on Sunday afternoon, the area around the pass is struck by a storm. Danijel is absolutely sure that just moments before the storm he had been talking to an elderly woman. During the storm the woman disappears. He inquires worriedly about her with the locals but they insist that there had never been an elderly woman.

Searching for ‘the lady that vanishes’ pushes Danijel into a solitude very different from his usual dreaminess: more demanding, deeper, more mysterious, humbling and at the same time elevating. The question of whose feelings he can rely on becomes more than merely an issue of tangibility.

**I don't think it's important that I am liked by everyone. What is important, however, is that, to use Balzac's phrase, the *ingenious reader*, even if with lesser affection, reads my book and follows it.**

– from an interview with Katarina Marinčič

## About the author:

**Katarina Marinčič** (1968) is a writer, literary historian and translator. She is the author of novels *Tereza*, *Rose Garden* (*Rožni vrt*), *Disguised Harmony* (*Prikrita harmonija* – winner of the 2002 Kresnik Award for best Slovenian novel of the year) and *According to Them* (*Po njihovih besedah* – winner of the 2015 Kritiško Sito Award for best book of the year) and a collection of short stories *About Three* (*O treh* – winner of the 2007 Fabula Award for the best short story collection). The novel *Disguised Harmony* has been published in German, the novel *According to Them* in Romanian, and the collection of stories *About Three* in Macedonian and French. She has also contributed numerous forewords to Slovene publications of French classics and has translated from the French into Slovene Paul Veyne's work *When Our World Became Christian: 312 - 394* and Marcel Proust's collection of early work *Pleasures and Days*.

## **Ana Marwan** ***Cocooned***

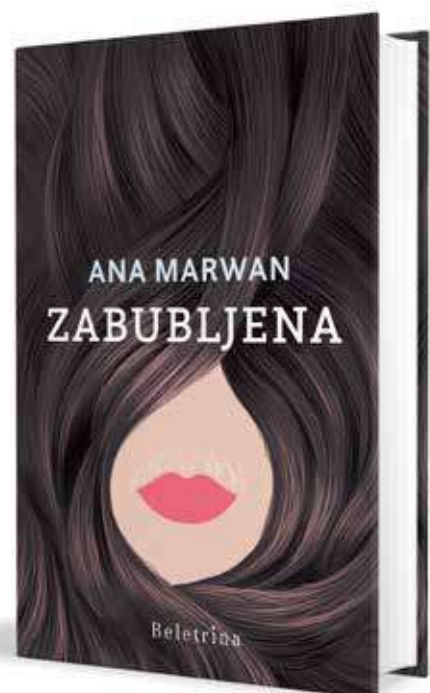
Rita is developing slowly and is not sure into what. Carefully, she observes her social environment, where she is trying to find her place. Her gaze comes to rest on Mr Jež, who she thinks might be of help to her. She observes and dissects him. What she doesn't see in real life, she fills in with her imagination, but it soon becomes hard to separate the two. At first, Jež resists her vivisection, but slowly it comes to suit him more and more, thinks Rita. Writing about Jež is a task that she completes conscientiously. Who has given her this task remains unclear for quite some time, as does the question of whether she is employed at the institution where she observes Jež, or a patient there. Ministry departments change into hospital wards and back again. Like Rita herself they lack a clear outline, a visible meaning. But Rita's eye is sharp and clear when she casts it on the world, on the people around her and the connections between them, which become increasingly interwoven and eventually unravel.

***Zabubljena***  
novel  
2021  
212 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Austria (Otto Müller Verlag)

**A special characteristic of this novel lies in the way it is written, playing with the roots of words and their structural derivations, and its postmodernist style that is sometimes reminiscent of the surrealism of André Breton.**

– Radio Slovenia





### Praise for *Cocooned*:

We are led through the story of the pedantic Mr Jež, who may be fabricated, real or adapted, by the narrator Rita. And with regard to her, we do not know what the aim of her writing is – it seems to have been ordered, but by whom? For Rita slowly reveals more and becomes increasingly verbose, using Mr Jež as a resource for her narrative, which she is creating for her own freedom. The mysterious narrator cunningly leads us through a labyrinth where perhaps the Minotaur is lurking, or perhaps where there is only a door that leads somewhere. It is a bold, unconventional novel, which looks to postmodernist procedures, but twists them in its own way, and in doing so shows a great feeling for word play, ironic jibes and, above all, semantic openness. In spite of its elusive story, the novel is a subtle study of relationships and habits, wishes and regrets – of all that other people do to us. *Cocooned* is a surprising work, worthy of our attention; you will become cocooned in it with particular delight. – *Bukla*

It is worth drawing attention to the fact that the author cultivates affinity with certain poetics, because the novel *Cocooned* is an enigmatic book. It is not only that Ana Marwan relies upon a dialectic approach to the world, meaning that she studies the contradictory forces of the real and the imaginary, but also that she seeks a complete transformation of the hitherto known and seen [...] We may get the feeling that there resonates throughout the novel a literary tradition – either modernist because

of the language used, or postmodernist because of its metafictionality – but ultimately in *Cocooned* there is a blending of two qualities: metafiction, which is self-referential, and a critical stance towards the world, which in some places is layered with sarcasm and astringent irony, and the novel is happening here and now, at moments even in the near future. The psychological subtlety that shatters the essayistic passages, also implies traces of diary entries and fragments, thanks to which the narrative, at least in the first part, comes across as authentic and natural, but above all the novel is a fragmentary jigsaw puzzle, perhaps a poem, where the pieces fit together according to an allusive principle. – *Delo*

### About the author:

After studying Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, **Ana Marwan** (1980) moved to Vienna in 2005, where she won the Schreiben zwischen den Kulturen (Writing between cultures) literary prize in 2008. In recent years, she has devoted herself entirely to writing short stories, novels and poetry in German and Slovenian. Her debut novel *Der Kreis des Weberknechts* was published by Otto Müller Verlag in 2019. *Cocooned* (*Zabubljena*) is her second novel but her first written in Slovenian.

### Awards:

- Kritisško sito Award for best book of the year 2022

**Ana Marwan – recipient of the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize 2022**



## **Katja Perat** ***The Masochist***

*Why would people trouble themselves with the facts, when fiction is so much more enticing?*

Designed as a historical novel, set at the end of the 19th century, ***The Masochist*** forges an intimate portrait of a young, tenacious woman who, in uncertain times of intricate political, social and cultural turbulences chose an uncertain path – the only path that could lead her to freedom. On Christmas Eve 1874, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whom history would remember as the most famous masochist, left his home in Bruck an der Mur in Austria for the unknown. The novel surmises that he didn't come back alone but brought with him a new family member: a tiny red-haired girl who he found in the forests around Lemberg (today known as Lviv). *The Masochist* is the story of Nadezhda Moser, the woman this little girl becomes, a fictional character who forces her way into the company of the most prominent historical figures of the time.

This is a pseudo-autobiographical novel that returns post-postmodernism to modernism. But more than that, it is a story about the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the turn of the century that ponders the limits of women's desire and freedom against the backdrop of ethnic, class and gender tensions in an empire which hadn't yet perceived that its decline had already begun.

*The Masochist*, the first prose work by a leading Slovenian poetic voice Katja Perat, shines a spotlight on the aspirations of women in a time when they weren't at the forefront of anyone's mind.

### ***Mazohistka***

novel  
2018  
246 pages  
Slovenian language

### **Rights sold**

Italy (Volland Edizioni)  
North Macedonia (Ars Lamina)  
Serbia (Geopoetika)  
Sweden (Ramus)  
UK (Istros Books)  
Ukraine (Pinzel)



### Praise for *The Masochist*:

**In *The Masochist*, Katja Perat evokes two contrasting emotions. By reanimating a fabulous cast of real-life (and larger-than-life) characters, she mixes wry humor and dramatic escapades to create a romp through fin-de-siècle Vienna. Underneath this surface gaiety, however, the tone is poignant and rueful. We can't help but feel Nada's great frustration at her era's blindnesses — the kernel of our own gender inequality. By bringing to life the ideas that underpin much 20th-century thought, Perat helps us see their essential, grandiose deafness.** – *The Los Angeles Review of Books*

**This was a superb book. It was witty, dabbled around with an interesting part of history, told an excellent story, had a narrator who was not afraid to speak her mind and stand up for herself but, nevertheless, was not always sure where she was going or why, gave us a different perspective on a few famous people and mocked the foibles of those who thought highly of themselves, primarily men.**

– *The Modern Novel*

***The Masochist* may seem like a fun historical romp, but I found it a rich complex novel. It's full of symbolism and metaphor, plus a few twists thrown in which keep the reader guessing. It is a book that will remain with you long after reading it.** – *Bobsphere*

### Nominations:

- Longlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2019
- Longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award 2022

### About the author:

**Katja Perat** (1988) is one of the leading poetic voices of her generation. Her first poetry collection *The Best Have Fallen* (*Najboljši so padli*) came out in 2011 and received both the Best Debut Award and the Kritiško sito Award, an award bestowed by the Slovenian Literary Critics' Association for best book of the year. Her second book of poetry *Value-Added Tax* (*Davek na dodano vrednost*, 2014) was also extremely well received. Currently she is a doctoral student of comparative literature at the Washington University in St. Louis, USA. *The Masochist* (*Mazohistka*), published in 2018, is her first novel.

***The Masochist* is novel about psychoanalysis, a novel about infidelity and a novel about the Austro-Hungarian Empire just before its end.**

– from an interview with Katja Perat



## Ana Schnabl

### *Tide*

*Tide* is a psychological-crime novel. No. *Tide* is a concert with broken instruments – people – set on the stage of the Slovenian coast. With a main protagonist, the writer Dunja, shrouded in marijuana smoke, haunted by the deaths of her father and brother. With Katarina, Dunja's childhood friend, tormented by the circumstances of her life. With Kristijan, who under social pressure sculpted his body and turned off his true self. With Mirela, who in her cramped apartment holds onto Michael Jackson for all the wrong reasons. With Duška, who is not yet quite broken because she is too young, and she never knew Dražen, Dunja's brother. *Tide* is a long composition about the violence brought about by human ambivalence, limitations, impossibilities

and also – decisions. But *Tide* is not only a sad arrangement, nor is it loud, and its rhythms are not the rhythms of morality. It is permeated too by warm tones, the sounds of the sea, cicadas, the Adriatic wind and the transformation of distance, as it is freshly measured and found to be closeness.

*Plima*  
novel  
2022  
304 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world





### Praise for Ana Schnabl:

**It's a rare occasion that Slovenian is used in such a vivid manner. It's a rare occasion that a young (or any) author writing in Slovenian so thoroughly – emotionally, physically, reflexively and reflectively – grasps the time, space and spirit of a generation, while keeping their writing free of petit-bourgeois moral judgments, taboos, ideologies, fake aesthetics, clichés, redundancies and overcompensations that belong in high school, as the author is wont to say ... Schnabl, a clever student of human nature and a relentless examiner of her environment and circumstances, (almost) never exaggerates.**

– Bukla

**What sets Schnabl apart is her deliberate turn from cynicism. Thanks in part to its absence, the author's dense writing never becomes oppressive, not even when at its most candid, and dispenses commentary on controlling social practices as if it were an afterthought. – Delo**

### About the author:

**Ana Schnabl** (1985) is a writer and editor. A doctoral student of philosophy, her research focuses on feminist autobiography. She writes for several Slovenian literary journals, has collaborated with the daily Dnevnik and is the first editor of the Versopolis Review. In 2017, her short story collection *Razvezani* (*Disentangling*) received the Best Debut Award at the annual Slovenian Book Fair as well as a number of nominations for other awards. So far, she has written two novels, namely *Mojstrovina* (*The Masterpiece*) and *Plima* (*Tide*), and she is currently working on a collection of novellas about failed (fictional) female artists and a non-fiction book about mushrooms. Her first literary translation, Daisy Johnson's *Sisters*, will be published in 2022. In her spare time, she is a helicopter parent to two dogs and a cat and dreams of having a vegetable garden.



## Ana Schnabl *The Masterpiece*

The golden 1980s in the Socialist Yugoslavia were a curious time, a time when the country had undoubtedly already begun its descent into disintegration, but when the bloody years that would follow seemed inconceivable. A remarkable time of unprecedented freedom of thought and travel, a time of dissident movements and heady music and lively literary scenes. But also a time when the state still had a tight grip on the lives of its citizens, not least through its security services and its web of informants.

It is 1985 and Adam, a professor of literature at Ljubljana University, decides to try his hand at writing again after almost twenty years. Ana is the editor that receives his manuscript, 'The Masterpiece'. The protagonists' professional relationship soon crosses boundaries and they become entangled in an intense, adulterous affair. But Adam moves in dissident circles and Ana owes her coveted position as the youngest editor in the history of the biggest state publishing house to her cooperation with the dark side of the government. ***The Masterpiece*** is as much a love story that rocks the lives of the two main characters as it is a political drama that changes the map of the world.

### ***Mojstrovina***

novel

2020

217 pages

Slovenian language

### **Rights sold**

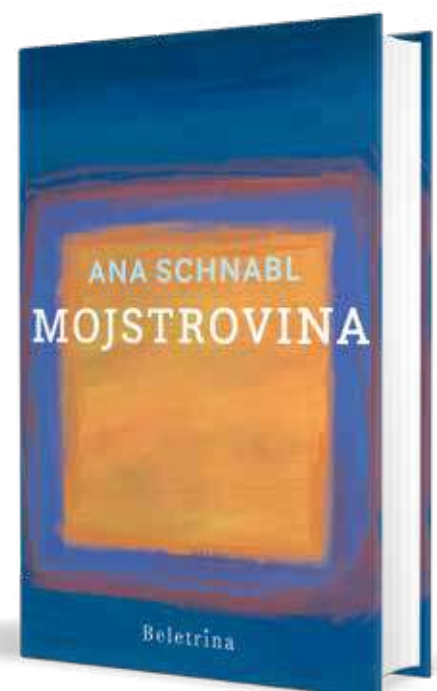
Austria (Folio Verlag)

Croatia (Artikulacije)

Italy (Bottega Errante)

Serbia (Partizanska knjiga)

UK (Istros Books)



### **Praise for *The Masterpiece*:**

**More than halfway through, the reader is suddenly struck by the realization that the book occasionally reads like the richer parts of le Carré. Even old George Smiley himself would have been happy with Adam slowly betraying his long-held beliefs and comrades, observing his fellow dissidents as “undernourished narcissists” whose conflicts exhaust him. Yet Schnabl spices her spy-novel atmosphere with more existential questions, paraphrasing Nietzsche in Adam’s conviction that “fate is just a string of repetitions with miniscule differences, repetitions which, when first struck, should have destroyed us, but didn’t.”** – *The Los Angeles Review of Books*

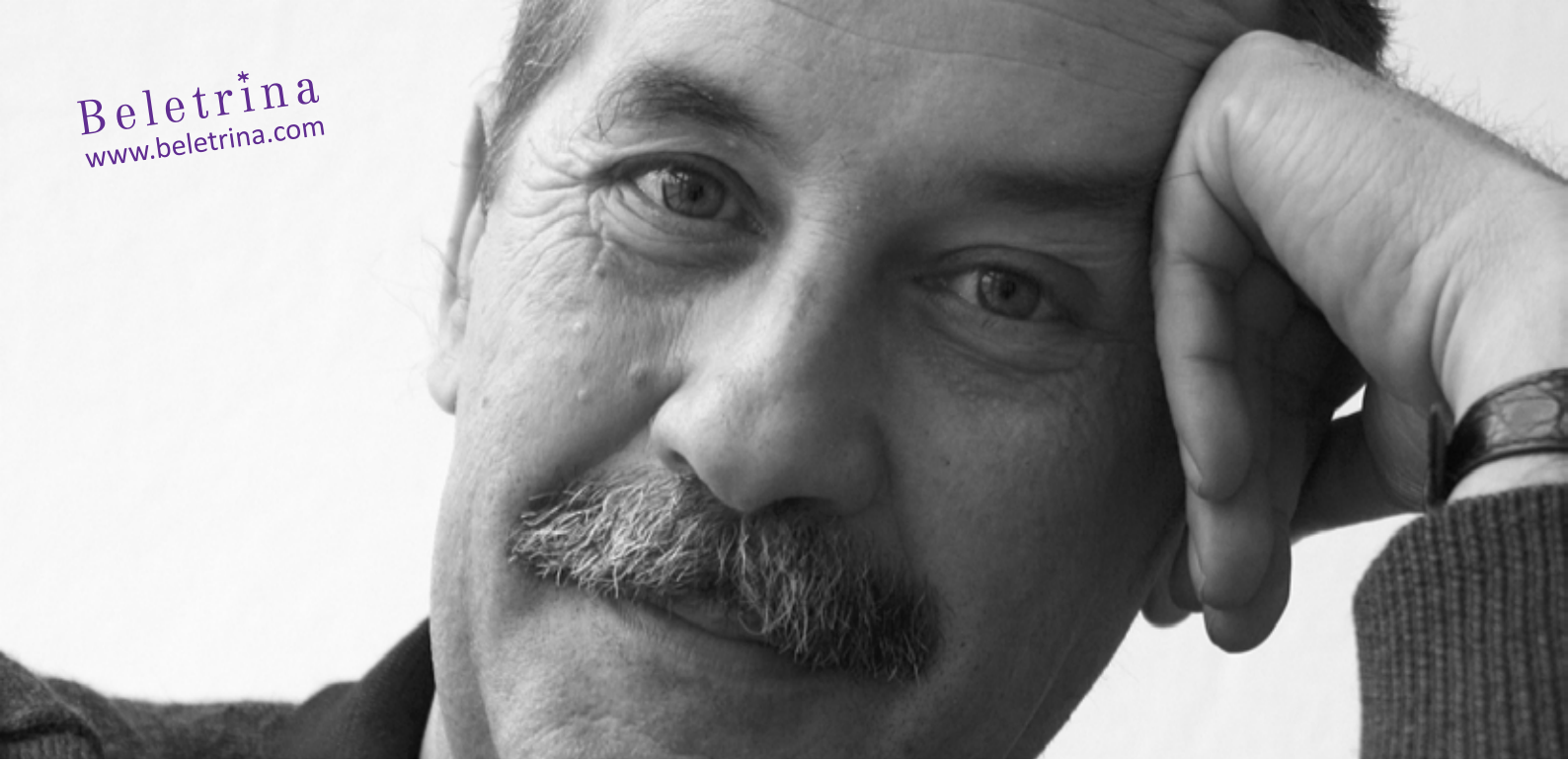
**This novel works because Schnabl is really able to get into the psychology of the four protagonists – Ana, Adam, Vera and Sergij - while at the same time throwing in the complications of both the novel and *Sofa and Vitomil*. Sofia and Vitomil are superbly portrayed. They come across as a sweet old couple, even as we know they are both working for the secret police. They are shown as low-ranking and petty – they simply longed for revolutionaries that they could expose, but in the end had to make do with a small company of men who acted suspiciously only because they were trying to conceal their homosexuality from the world – yet clearly have considerable influence, getting Ana her job and able to threaten her if she does not follow the Party line. The book may be about the novel – Adam’s novel is also called**

**Masterpiece – but ultimately it could be called *Love in a Time of Political Repression*.** – *The Modern Novel*

**What sets Schnabl apart is her deliberate turn from cynicism. Thanks in part to its absence, the author’s dense writing never becomes oppressive, not even when at its most candid, and dispenses commentary on controlling social practices as if it were an afterthought.** – *Delo*

### **About the author:**

**Ana Schnabl** (1985) is a writer and editor. A doctoral student of philosophy, her research focuses on feminist autobiography. She writes for several Slovenian literary journals, has collaborated with the *vdaily Dnevnik* and is the first editor of the *Versopolis Review*. In 2017, her short story collection *Razvezani (Disentangling)* received the Best Debut Award at the annual Slovenian Book Fair as well as a number of nominations for other awards. So far, she has written two novels, namely *Mojstrovina (The Masterpiece)* and *Plima (Tide)*, and she is currently working on a collection of novellas about failed (fictional) female artists and a non-fiction book about mushrooms. Her first literary translation, Daisy Johnson’s *Sisters*, will be published in 2022. In her spare time, she is a helicopter parent to two dogs and a cat and dreams of having a vegetable garden.



## **Marko Sosič**

### ***Ballerina, Ballerina***

Ballerina is fifteen years old. She lives with her mother, father, and brother in a small village. She loves watching the chestnut tree in their backyard because of the birds sleeping in its branches. She is fond of singing and is happy when her friend Ivan visits. But sometimes she breaks plates and glasses. And every morning she wets the bed. Ballerina is different from her peers. The short novel ***Ballerina, Ballerina*** is set in the 1960s, a period of great leaps and advances for humanity. But to Ballerina, who earned her nickname from a tendency to stand on tiptoes when distressed, the relationships between those closest to her, the light of the day and the dark of the night, the changing of the seasons and her dreams are far more important than the news that the first person has walked on the moon or the war in Vietnam has begun. Although her view of the world can seem narrow, it may be that (perhaps precisely because of that) it is much more attuned to what really matters in life. Drawing comparison to William Faulkner in its expressionistic depiction of Ballerina's interior world, this is a classic of contemporary Slovenian literature: a hugely popular exploration of a character whose world is so divorced from what we think of as reality.

***Balerina, balerina***  
novel  
1997  
132 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Argentina (Ciudad Gótica)  
Croatia (DHK)  
France (Les Editions franco-slovènes & Cie)  
Lithuania (Gelmes)  
North Macedonia (Slovo)  
Poland (Sedno)  
Russia (Lingvistika)  
Serbia (Arhipelag)  
USA (Dalkey Archive Press)



***Ballerina, Ballerina* was selected as one of the ten best Slovenian novels after 1989 and was chosen to be part of the 100 Slavic Novels project**



### **Praise for *Ballerina, Ballerina*:**

**The book's emotional strength comes not from conventional plotting, but rather from the gulf between *Ballerina*'s dispassionate narration and our own understanding of her predicament. ... [Sosič] is masterful in achieving his apparent aim: placing the reader within a totally different consciousness.** – *Publishers Weekly*

**You read this novel in one go, not because it is so short, but because the author develops the highest degree of empathy for the main character, something that is in reality the most that can be expected from literature.** – *Novi list*

**The narration in *Ballerina, Ballerina* is tight, and that only adds to its expressiveness.** – *Radio Slovenia*

***Ballerina, Ballerina* is a painful and poetic reconstruction of its narrator's fractured worldview... in both the details of her family life and the bits of the mass-media reality that flow beyond the boundaries of her backyard... [she] is unreliable, disoriented, atemporal.**

– *Vladislava Gordić Petković, Serbian literary critic*

### **Awards and nominations:**

- Vstajenje Award 1998
- Shortlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 1998
- Premio di Poesia e Narrativa Città di Salò 2005
- Premio Umberto Saba 2005
- Nominated for Premio Strega Europeo 2007
- Included in the selection of 100 best Slavic novels

### **About the author:**

**Marko Sosič** (1958-2021) was a theatre and film director as well as novelist and short story writer, born in Trieste, Italy. He worked for various Slovenian and Italian theatres and television stations and started publishing fiction in the late 1980s. He wrote four novels and two short story collections. His work has been honoured with a string of literary and theatre awards, and he has been translated into several languages.



## **Irena Svetek** ***White Wolf***

**Beli volk**  
crime fiction  
2022  
344 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world

The naked body of a young woman lies abandoned in the overgrown ancient forest of Kočevski Rog. Someone has slit her throat. On her face she is wearing a mask shaped like the head of a wolf, iron bars in place of its mouth. Forensic pathologist Patrik Valbureto establishes that the victim had been raped and notices a human bite mark on her shoulder. State prosecutor Mio Aurelli and his team need to find out who the murdered girl is and figure out the significance of the white wolf mask. The investigation leads them to the region of White Carniola where Aurelli had spent the previous summer with his former wife Viola, and to the town of Kočevje, where the victim worked at the Society for the Protection of the Kočevje Wolf. Aurelli meets Perun and Mokoš, the parents of the murdered woman who are hiding a big family secret, and when another body is found in a cavern in the middle of the Kočevje forest, the story of forbidden love and sins of the ancestors slowly begins to unravel.

**White Wolf** is the second in the series of psychological crime novels by Irena Svetek, this time the framework of the story is pinned to ancient Slavic mythological tradition.

***“Hang on...,” said Aurelli and once again looked at the mask that the forensic technician was just putting away into a plastic bag. He held it and lifted it up a little. “What does this remind you of?” Everyone looked up. There was a sudden flash of recognition on the criminal investigator’s face. “My, the wolf’s head!”***



### About the author:

**Irena Svetek** (1975) holds a doctorate from the Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts. Her first novel *Close Up (Od blizu)* won her the 2004 Best Debut Award of the Slovenian Book Fair and a nomination for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year. She is also author of the novels *Seventh Wave (Sedmi val, 2011)* and *Go to Sleep, My Child, Go to Sleep (Zaspi, mala moja, zaspi, 2014)*. In recent years she has been mostly scriptwriting and has written the screenplays for numerous films, TV series and programmes. In 2021 she published the first in her series of psychological crime novels *Little Red Riding Hood (Rdeča kapica)*. The novel became a best-seller and is being made into a TV series. *White Wolf* is the second novel of the series and a TV adaptation is also forthcoming.

### Praise for *White Wolf*:

**The characters are fleshed out and layered, the story flows from the first page to the last, grabbing you and not letting go until you've read both books in one sitting. Which I did, and the whole time I felt like I was reading a translation of a foreign crime novel. In a good way. Little Red Riding Hood already puts you on edge, but White Wolf goes one step further with its vivid and cinematic quality. No wonder there's going to be a TV series based on these books.** – *book blogger Damjan Zorc*



## **Irena Svetek**

### ***Little Red Riding Hood***

*Rdeča kapica*  
crime fiction  
2021  
344 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights available**  
world

It's winter in Ljubljana and the snow is starting to fall. A man walking his dog in a park on the outskirts of town discovers the body of a brutally murdered thirteen-year-old girl, dressed only in a red cape. The criminal investigation that follows leads to a tiny town in the south of Serbia where a young woman was cruelly murdered many years ago. The son who witnessed his mother's murder was, aged four, adopted and taken to Slovenia. District state prosecutor Mio Aurelli is convinced the two events are linked but it is only when he receives an old diary from an orthodox priest that the story begins to slowly fall into place.

***Little Red Riding Hood*** reveals the dark and perverted layers of human nature and also holds up a mirror to society, reflecting the long-term consequences of educational neglect and abuse of children. It is the first book in Irena Svetek's psychological crime series featuring protagonist Mio Aurelli – district state prosecutor and gambling addict.



***“What does it remind you of?”  
he asked the young investigating  
judge. Sinčič, swallowing with  
difficulty, glanced at his older  
colleagues, then said, “Only a beast  
could do this.”***



### **Praise for *Little Red Riding Hood*:**

**The author distinguishes herself with effective psychological analysis and an exceptional flair for integrating various narrative streaks that intertwine in unusual and unexpected ways. In doing so, Svetek has written one of the most intense and suspenseful Slovenian crime novels of recent years. *Little Red Riding Hood* goes beyond the usual crime novel genre. An active murder case unravels the threads of other crimes, two further murders that happened in past decades, leaving the people connected to them with deep psychological wounds. ... The author does not connect the murders in a linear way, for example, through the perpetrator, but through the theme of domestic violence, along the lines of various forms of sexual violence or violence against women. ... *Little Red Riding Hood* is a very convincing, decentralised crime novel that moves along at an excellent pace, offering the suspense appropriate for the genre, and can, in terms of analysing sexual and domestic violence as well as the richness of the psychologically diverse and well-handled characters, also be read as a uniquely reliable, unbiased study of social conditions. – *Radio Slovenia***

**A crime thriller from the pen of a little-known Slovenian author was initially a challenge (though Beletrina is always very selective about what they publish), then an utter surprise and by the end enthusiasm. I can certainly place Irena Svetek's *Little Red Riding Hood* in the heavyweight category of Slovenian crime books, surpassing in my eyes many of its rivals. – *book blogger Matic Slapšak***

**A shocking story about the murder of a young girl, cleverly and convincingly written with film-like clarity. –**

*Metropolitan*

### **About the author:**

**Irena Svetek** (1975) holds a doctorate from the Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts. Her first novel *Close Up* (*Od blizu*) won her the 2004 Best Debut Award of the Slovenian Book Fair and a nomination for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year. She is also author of the novels *Seventh Wave* (*Sedmi val*, 2011) and *Go to Sleep, My Child, Go to Sleep* (*Zaspi, mala moja, zaspi*, 2014). In recent years she has been mostly scriptwriting and has written the screenplays for numerous films, TV series and programmes. In 2021 she published the first in her series of psychological crime novels *Little Red Riding Hood* (*Rdeča kapica*). The novel became a best-seller and is being made into a TV series. *White Wolf* is the second novel of the series and a TV adaptation is also forthcoming.



## **Dušan Šarotar** ***Billiards at the Hotel Dobray***

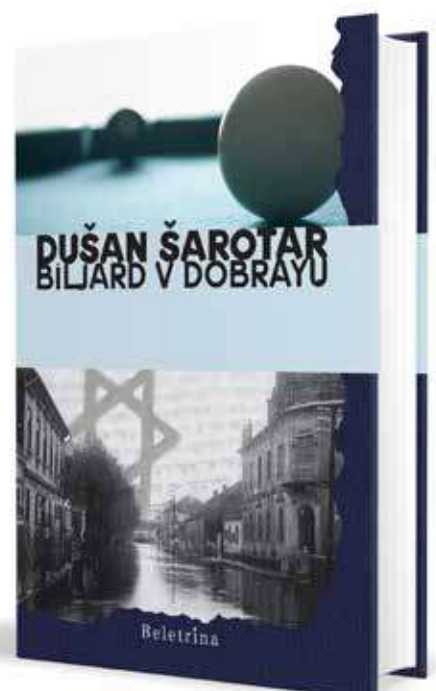
In the centre of Murska Sobota stands the renowned Hotel Dobray, once the gathering place of townspeople of all nationalities and social strata who lived in this small town in the middle of Prekmurje, a typical Pannonian panorama on the fringe of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The town had always been home to ethnically and culturally mixed communities – this is what gave it the charm and melos of Central-European identity. But now, in the thick of World War II, it is occupied by the Hungarian army.

For the past month, Franz Schwartz's wife Ellsie has been preparing their son Isaac, a gifted violinist, for his first solo concert, which is to take place at Hotel Dobray. Isaac is to perform at his bar mitzvah on 26 April 1944. When the German army marches into town and forces all Jews to display yellow stars on their clothes, Ellsie warns her husband that the family should flee the town. Schwartz promises her he will obtain forged documents, but not before Isaac performs his concert at the hotel.

A year later, in March 1945, Schwartz returns to the hotel on foot and alone; one of the few survivors of the horrors of Auschwitz.

***Biljard v Dobrayu***  
novel  
2007  
233 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Argentina (EDUVIM)  
Croatia (Fraktura)  
Hungary (Pannónia)  
Poland (Miedzymorze)  
Russia (Limbus Press)  
UK (Istros Books)



**Praise for *Billiards at the Hotel Dobray*:**

**Šarotar's prose can hardly find any parallel in literature. What does come to my mind, however, is a cinematic one: the Hungarian master of slowness Béla Tarr, directing screenplays written by László Krasznahorkai.** – *Večer*

***Billiards at the Hotel Dobray* is a book written with masterly skill. Šarotar takes his time and his narration glides slowly among the stories and people's destinies and across the landscape; a book bereft of all radicality. The eye's gaze from way up in the air is cool, distanced, almost indifferent to people's destinies; as if they were looked upon from a great distance, temporal as well as spatial, and the destinies of individuals were almost entirely insignificant specks in a more broadly outlined picture.**

– *LUD Literatura*

**Šarotar's lyrical writing has that rare quality to show character as being both within us and outside of us. He portrays people's complex motivations and reactions as they interweave with location and circumstances.** – *Scottish Review*

**The key specific poetic trait of the author is his marked synergy of lyrical rhythms and the rhythm of prose. With its dense apocalyptic imagery, the poetic quality of the language assumes a fable-like role.**

– *Sodobnost*

**Well versed as a narrator, Šarotar skilfully knits all the aspects of narration together, which results in a fresh, pleasant and carefully reflected approach bringing together two great literary qualities: lack of pretence and authenticity.**

– *AirBeletrina*

**A novel in which tiny acts bear enormous significance, acts of heroism, cowardice, cruelty and honesty...** – *The New European*

**Nominations:**

- Shortlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2008
- Shortlisted for the Big Other Book Award for Translation 2019
- Shortlisted for the Oxford–Weidenfeld Prize 2020

**About the author:**

**Dušan Šarotar** (1968) is a writer, poet, screenwriter and photographer. He has published five novels, two collections of short stories, three poetry collections and a book of essays. He is also the author of fifteen screenplays for documentary and feature films. His short film *Mario Was Watching the Sea with Love* (*Mario je gledal morje z zaljubljenimi očmi*), based on short stories from his collection *Blind Spot* (*Mrtvi kot*), won the 2016 Global Short Film Award in New York and the first prize in Ningbo, China, for best short film. Šarotar's novels, stories and poems have been translated into several languages. Two of his novels, *Billiards at the Hotel Dobray* (*Biljard v Dobrayu*, 2007) and *Panorama* (2015), were nominated for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year. Šarotar has also had several photographic exhibitions in national galleries and abroad.



## **Suzana Tratnik**

### ***A Pontoon Bridge***

***A Pontoon Bridge*** is set against the political backdrop of 1990s Slovenia, a time of political change in a newly independent country and a time of legitimization of hate speech against minorities. The novel tells the story of eternal student Jana, a young woman who lives on the existential edge. Though very well educated, Jana and her friends largely live on the margins – because of their sexual orientation, poverty or other differences – and some even fall over the edge. After a difficult breakup with drug addict Simi, Jana must face her demons and anxiety attacks all on her own. When she starts going to therapy, she begins to see her life as a pontoon bridge, provisional and temporary. Taking stock of her wild recent past, she tries to build and bring meaning to the present, although she keeps worrying how strong this bridge of hers really is. With fun times consigned to the past, Jana is acutely aware of her loneliness, both on a personal and social level. As she searches for her place in the world, she comes to realise that her circle of lesbian friends is the only community where she feels like herself.

*A Pontoon Bridge* is a radical book that features vivid and candid descriptions along with slang typical of the era, recalling the 1990s Slovenia that gave birth to the LGBT community and the alternative squat of Metelkova. A time when rave parties abounded and club life was imbued with activism and rebellion.

**Pontonski most**  
novel  
2020  
284 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Germany (Konkursbuch Verlag)





### **Praise for *A Pontoon Bridge*:**

**Suzana Tratnik often delights readers with her prose about people in search of themselves who are also somehow trapped in an unfriendly world. And she does this with self-irony and humour. *A Pontoon Bridge* is a metaphor for an interesting novelistic story about making your way through life – a story the writer fleshes out in various registers of the language. – TV Slovenija 1**

**[Tratnik's] heroine lives a somewhat unusual life, somewhat on the social margins, but when she finds herself going through an emotional crisis, she is very human. And the same is true of the writer's narrative.**

– Radio Slovenia

**This is also a novel about the search for self and the fear of losing those who are dear to you, as well as the realisation that it might sometimes be good to lose them, because this might be the way they find themselves. [...] No matter how much Jana and the others are at rock bottom, in the most complicated and difficult situations, no matter what burdens they might carry, they find time for sometimes playful, sometimes very dark humour, and discover bits of wisdom and life truths that touch the reader or open a new horizon, even if that horizon may be invisible to the particular world the novel deals with, or alien to the reader.**

– Vestnik MS

***A Pontoon Bridge* is a novel about love, addiction, psychological disorders, and “growing up”, but it is also about the importance of a solid foundation for activist communities. This is a multi-layered work, which knows how to fully exploit its own literary resources: the choice of style is well grounded, works on a number of levels, and serves various purposes, while the novel's themes are convincingly interlaced and honed with perception, understanding and care.**

– LUD Literatura

### **About the author:**

**Suzana Tratnik** (1963) is a writer and translator. She has written a number of books, including seven short story collections, six novels (*Ime mi je Damjan/My Name is Damjan*, *Tretji svet/Third World*, *Tombola ali življenje!/Bingo or Life!*, *Norhavs na vrhu hriba/Madhouse on the Hilltop*, *Pontonski most/A Pontoon Bridge* and *Ava*), a children's picture book *Zafuškana Ganca* (*The Hany Rattie*), monodrama *Ime mi je Damjan* (*My Name is Damjan*), a radio play *Lep dan še naprej* (*Have a Nice Day*), two non-fiction books on the lesbian movement in Slovenia and on lesbian literature. She received the Prešeren Fund Award for Literature, the highest national award in the field of arts, the Novo mesto Short Award for best short story collection, and the Desetnica Award for best YA work. Her books and short stories have been translated into more than twenty languages.



## **Goran Vojnović** ***Đorđić Is Back***

It's August 2017 and the start of the European Basketball Championship when Marko Đorđić arrives, unannounced, in Fužine, the notorious suburb of Ljubljana where he grew up. For the first time since moving to Bosnia more than a decade ago, he returns indefinitely, maybe even forever. But he doesn't really know what to do in Fužine. His father Radovan has stomach cancer and is waiting for surgery, his mother Ranka cares for his father and is becoming a nervous wreck herself, and his childhood friends, Adi, Aco and Dejan, are moving in circles to which Marko no longer belongs. Adi is drowning in drugs, Aco has totally dedicated himself to crime, and Dejan is lost in small-town life on the other side of Slovenia. Nowadays, the only thing binding these old friends is their memories.

With each new day, with each new victory of the Slovenian national basketball team, it becomes clearer that Marko no longer has a place in Slovenia. A decade of living in Bosnia, marked by nationalism, war trauma and an unhappy first love, has turned a once confused teenager into an emotional wreck of a young man, whose turbulent inner world is a mirror image of the outside one.

*Đorđić se vraća*  
novel  
2021  
340 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Austria (Folio Verlag)  
Croatia (Fraktura)  
North Macedonia (ILI-ILI)  
Poland (Sedno)  
Serbia (Geopoetika)  
Sweden (Ramus)



**Goran Vojnović appeared on the Slovenian literary scene like a comet and has settled there as a permanent bright star.**

– Mitja Čander, Publisher, Beletrina

## Praise for *Đorđić Is Back*:

The novel *Đorđić Is Back* on the one hand looks at the issue of assimilation, a theme of notable significance during the present refugee crisis, and considers the question of a Serb in Bosnia. The novel reflects on the political problems in Bosnia but also social problems in Slovenia. It documents the changes that have taken place, also reflected in the fact that Slovenia managed to become a European basketball heavyweight. The comprehension that people grow up but do not necessarily change, and that the reasons for this are complex, is the social context that serves as the background to the story. On the other hand, the second half of the novel presents more intimate moments such as Radovan's illness, relationships within the Đorđić family and Marko's crushes and friendships, hanging by a thread, yet still valid... What is especially important in this is that Vojnović bets on the balance between one and the other, committing himself to neither an overtly contextual nor an immanent critique of society. [...] Despite its length, the novel is one you read straight through, and perhaps the most credit for this goes to Vojnović's carefully chosen and skilfully utilised language. – *Radio Slovenia*

Compared to some of his previous novels, [Vojnović] avoids many sentimental metaphors. This time Marko prefers to compare his life to a humble freight train, "There will never be an end to this cargo I'm hauling along." Despite the lengthy narrative, the author constantly keeps up the pace; be it buying flour for his mother Ranka or being unable to tell his father Radovan that he is leaving again, this pace is always dictated by Marko's tense and acute consciousness. And while he is capable of keeping a (critical) distance from his friends Adi and Aco's self-destructive ideas, he manages to draw us in with retrospective deliberations that are gently

balanced explanations of events of the last decade, and with ongoing dialogues that, as well as out loud (with Ranka, with Radovan...) Marko conducts with himself, inside his head, if his defences fail. When they fail. – *Dnevnik*

## Nominations:

- Shortlisted for the Book of the Year Award 2021
- Shortlisted for the Kritiško sito Award for best book of the year 2022
- Longlisted for the Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2022

## About the author:

Author and director **Goran Vojnović** (1980) exploded onto the Slovenian literary scene in 2008 with his debut novel *Southern Scum, Go Home!* (*Čefurji raus!*). The novel became an instant bestseller, reaped all the major national literary awards, including the Kresnik Award and the Prešeren Fund Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement, has been reprinted numerous times, made into a theatre play and a movie (the latter was directed by the author himself) and translated into nine languages. His second novel, *Yugoslavia, My Fatherland* (*Jugoslavija, moja dežela*, 2012), also received the Kresnik Award, was made into a theatre play and translated into twenty languages. His third novel, *The Fig Tree* (*Figa*), was published in 2016 and once again received the Kresnik Award, was adapted into a stage play and translated into several languages. Vojnović is only the third person ever to receive three Kresnik Awards. *Đorđić Is Back* (*Đorđić se vrača*, 2021) is his fourth novel.



## **Goran Vojnović** ***The Fig Tree***

**The Fig Tree** follows the intertwining stories of Aleksandar and Jana, Vesna and Safet, and Jadran and Anja, as well as others. But mostly that of Jadran, a 30-something who tries to piece together his family history, in order to better understand his own story. Because he cannot understand why Anja has walked out of their life, he tries to understand the death, supposedly facilitated by a suspicious pill bottle, of his grandfather Aleksandar. He tries to understand the withdrawal of his grandmother Jana, the disintegration of her memories, and her retreat into oblivion and dementia. Jadran tries to understand the departure of his father Safet, his disappearance from Ljubljana in the first year of the war in the Balkans. And he tries to understand

his mother Vesna, her bewildering resentment of his grandfather, her silent disappointment with his father. Vojnović is a master storyteller, and while the fateful choices made by his characters are often dictated by the historical realities of the times they live in, at its heart this is an intimate story of family, of relationships, of love, freedom and the choices we make.

**Figa**  
novel  
2016  
402 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Austria (Folio Verlag)  
Bulgaria (ICU)  
Croatia (Fraktura)  
Egypt (Al Arabi)  
Hungary (Typotex)  
Israel (Lesabooks)  
Italy (Keller editore)  
Lithuania (kitos knygos)  
North Macedonia (ILI-ILI)  
Poland (Sedno)  
Romania (Casa Cărții de Știință)  
Serbia (Rende)  
Sweden (Ramus)  
UK (Istros Books)  
Ukraine (Navchalna Knyha – Bohdan)



**One of the most important novels to come out of the Balkans in the last decade.**

– Teofil Pančić, Serbian writer and literary critic



### Praise for *The Fig Tree*:

**This is a story of people who shared so much and yet who quickly drifted so far, so fatally, apart. *The Fig Tree* is a moving, gripping novel of family, and national, division.**

– *The Art Desk*

**Vojnović filters the recent history of his homeland, the suspicion of outsiders, the racial and cultural tensions through the lens of one family's experience (his background in film is evident in much of the novel). He explores a world where a name can be a threat or destroy a life. Memories can be destructive, as the Balkan wars proved. But they also sustain us. *The Fig Tree* is about identity – about what makes us, what shapes us. Vojnović often withholds crucial strands of the narrative that reveal a character's motivations. Safet's abrupt departure and Aleksandar's desire to work in Cairo are initially baffling. Together with Jadran, the reader has to untangle the threads in an attempt to find the answers. When Aleksandar returns to find his wife irretrievably changed, it is truly heart breaking. Vojnović's portrait of Jana's memory loss, from the perspective of the husband caring for her, is one of the most moving accounts of dementia I've ever read. This is a remarkable portrait of a country's fragmentation and a family's fracture.**

– *Book Blast*

**Goran Vojnović's *The Fig Tree* is a gentle, quiet, emotionally powerful novel concerned with memory, families and the stories we tell each other.**

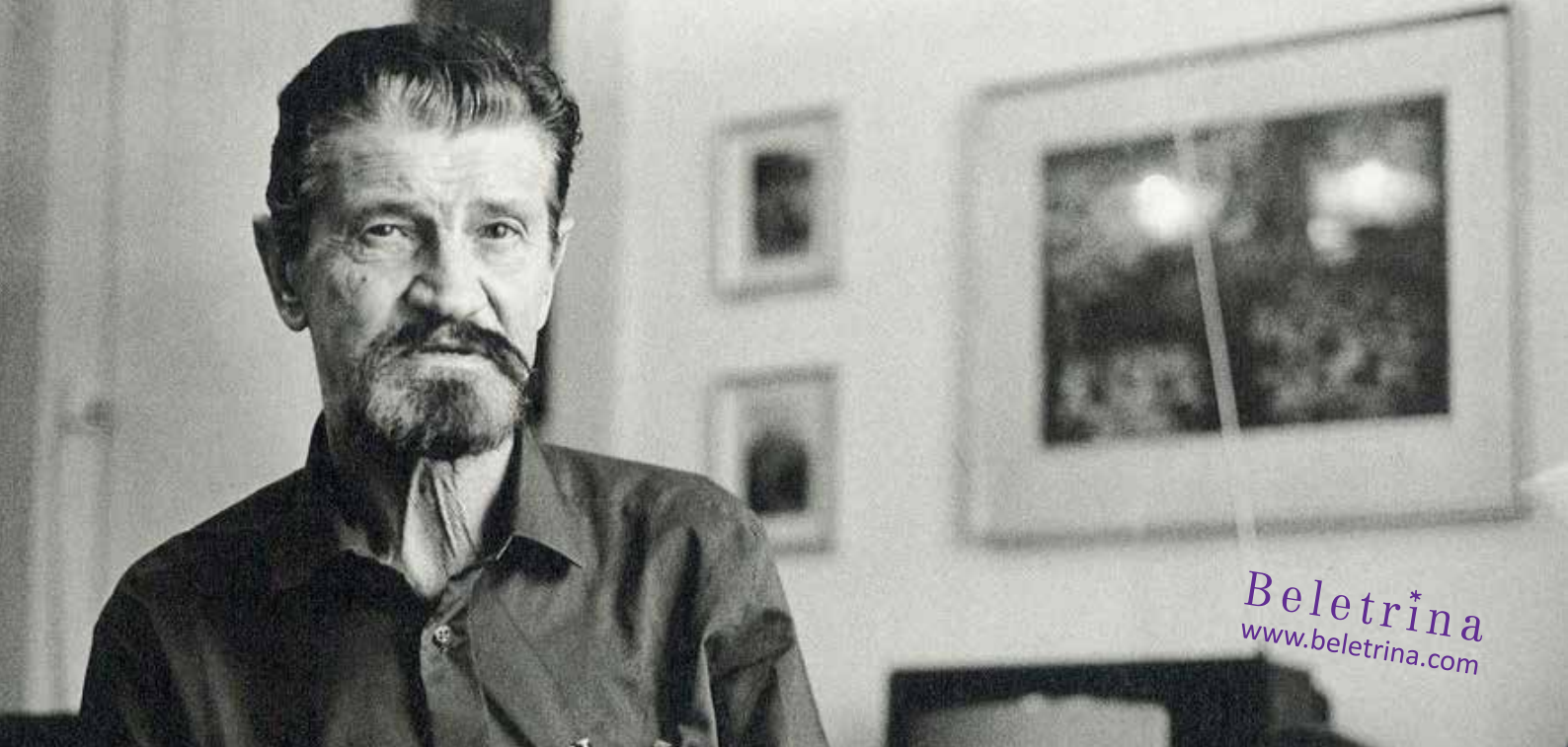
– *Times Literary Supplement*

### Awards and nominations:

- Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2017
- Župančič Award, the highest recognition of the City of Ljubljana for outstanding creation in the field of art and culture, 2017
- Shortlisted for the Njegos Award 2017
- Longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award 2022

### About the author:

Author and director **Goran Vojnović** (1980) exploded onto the Slovenian literary scene in 2008 with his debut novel *Southern Scum, Go Home!* (*Čefurji raus!*). The novel became an instant bestseller, reaped all the major national literary awards, including the Kresnik Award and the Prešeren Fund Award, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement, has been reprinted numerous times, made into a theatre play and a movie (the latter was directed by the author himself) and translated into nine languages. His second novel, *Yugoslavia, My Fatherland* (*Jugoslavija, moja dežela*, 2012), also received the Kresnik Award, was made into a theatre play and translated into twenty languages. His third novel, *The Fig Tree* (*Figa*), was published in 2016 and once again received the Kresnik Award, was adapted into a stage play and translated into several languages. Vojnović is only the third person ever to receive three Kresnik Awards. *Đorđić Is Back* (*Đorđić se vraća*, 2021) is his fourth novel.



## **Vitomil Zupan**

### ***Minuet for Guitar*** (in twenty-five shots)

***Minuet for Guitar*** is an intense exploration of the horrors of war, of morality and of historical forces propelling men this way and that. Using his life experiences for much of the action in the novel, Zupan introduces us to Jakob Bergant Berk, a man lost in two places and times. Slip-sliding between occupied Slovenia in the 1940s and a Spanish resort in the 1970s, we move from harrowing wartime guerrilla fighting to Berk's curious encounter with Joseph Bitter, a former German soldier, on vacation in Spain. In the war, Berk is an apolitical non-conformist swept along by events over which he has little control, and some thirty years later, still traumatised by his war-time experiences, he tries to make sense of his memories in discussions with his old enemy Bitter. Once rumoured that it was used by the CIA as a manual for guerrilla warfare, *Minuet for Guitar* is a powerful examination of war on par with Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night*, a modern Slovenian classic filled with philosophical ruminations and told in Zupan's casual, ironic and seductive voice.

***Menuet za kitaro (na petindvajset strelov)***

novel

1975

426 pages

Slovenian language

**Rights sold**

Germany (Guggolz Verlag)

Italy (Volland Edizioni)

Spain (Sajalín Editores)

USA (Dalkey Archive Press)

**War is also a dance. The war  
dance has begun, they say.  
A minuet. Accompanied by a  
twenty-five-shot guitar.**

### **Praise for *Minuet for Guitar*:**

**Many nations, no matter how small, have produced great war literature. American classics like *A Farewell to Arms* and *Catch-22* have a Slovenian equivalent in Vitomil Zupan's 1975 masterpiece, *Minuet for Guitar*, about a young partisan named Berk eager to battle German invaders during World War II.** – *Wall Street Journal*

**Zupan's literary gifts are on full display in passages that range from startlingly lyrical to graphically realistic, achingly surrealistic to boldly philosophical. An intensely imagined exploration of war.** – *Publishers Weekly*

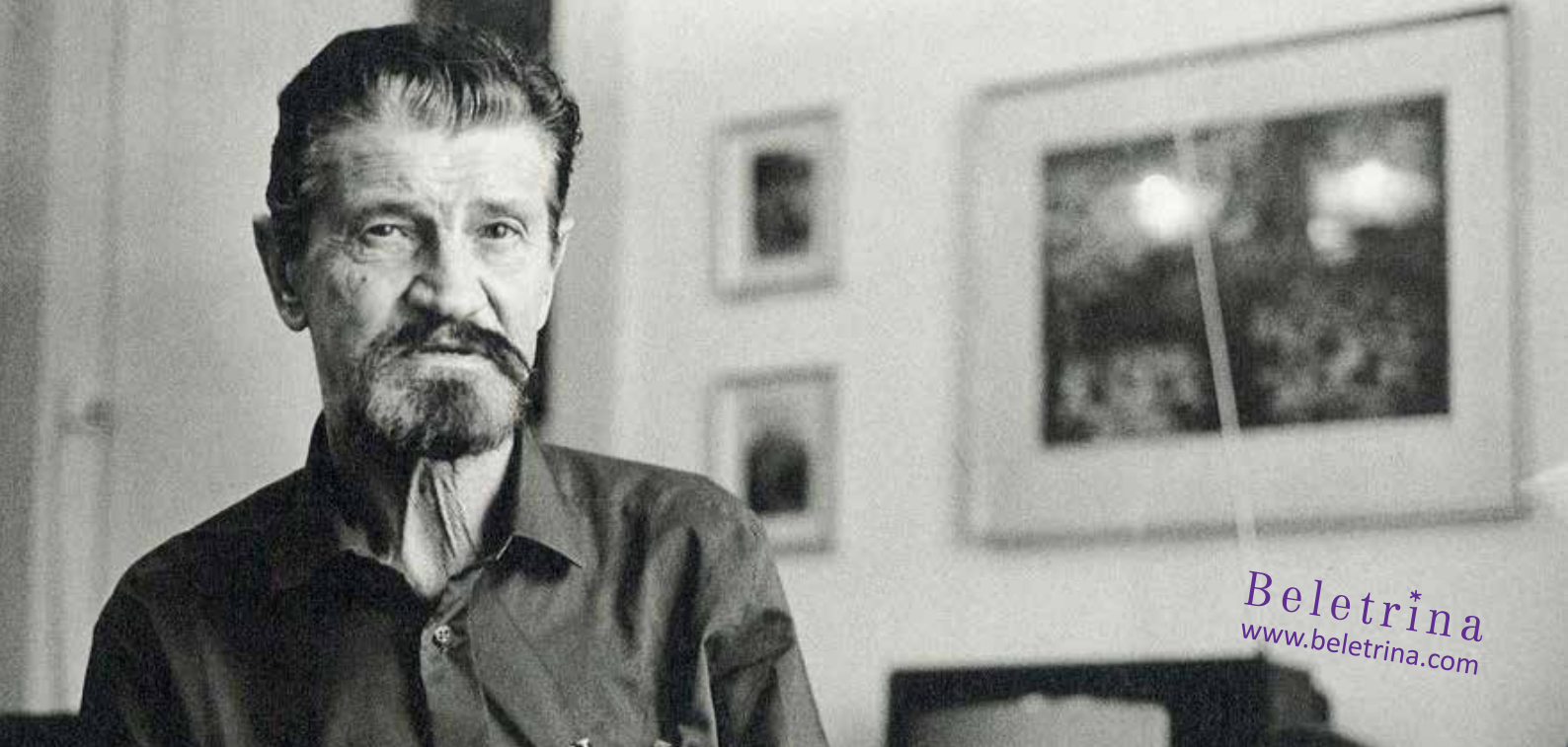
**Minuet's resolution, to the degree that it does resolve, occurs in the shadow of perspective. It is the resolution of convalescence, of being made whole again in the awareness that in war the only difference between men is the colour of their uniform, the direction in which they are told to point their guns. As Berk observes, "War was cruel and innocent at the same time... It is a dance, accompanied by a 25-shot guitar."** – *MAKE Literary Magazine*

### **About the author:**

**Vitomil Zupan** (1914–1987) was one of the most extraordinary and charismatic Slovenian artists of the 20th century. A writer, poet, playwright, screenwriter and essayist, he left an indelible mark on literature while also making notable contributions in the fields of film, TV and radio. His restless spirit took him to places all over the world and into all sorts of jobs and activities: he was a sailor, a boxer and a skiing instructor, as well as a culture editor and painter. He was a prisoner at two concentration camps and joined the partisan movement after the capitulation of Italy. After the war, he was sentenced at a show trial to 18 years of prison and forbidden to write, however, his sentence was commuted after seven years. He began writing again, initially under a pseudonym, and remained an independent writer until his death. Zupan received several awards for his writing, among them two Prešeren Awards, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement: the first in 1947, the year when the Prešeren Awards were instituted, and the second in 1984, for lifetime achievement.

**He was known for being elegant, cosmopolitan and charismatic, dressed in a black outfit completed with a tie or a silk scarf, a velvet jacket, with his hair slicked back and styled with nut oil. The grand marshal of any parade. The star of the club. A dandy. A dude. Woland from Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*. He had a reputation due to his romantic aureole of a war hero, an eternal rebel and a champion of the pen. He was always in the company of some hot babe. We have yet to encounter such a unique figure among Slovenian writers.**

– *Dušan Jovanović, Slovenian theatre director, playwright and essayist*



## Vitomil Zupan

### ***Levitan*** (A Novel or Maybe Not)

Written as first-person testimony, ***Levitan*** is a semi-autobiographical account of the prisons of Tito's post-war communist Yugoslavia. The novel (or maybe not) reveals the treatment of political prisoners, prison hierarchies and internal power relations, as well as author Vitomil Zupan's rapacious libido and his numerous erotic experiences, both in and out of prison. Levitan doesn't wallow in self-pity or self-flagellation. He is an entertainer, a libertine who would rather talk about sex than about the mistreatment of prisoners. He is not even claiming to be innocent. He ended up in prison after drunkenly phoning one of the heads of the regime and telling him that he'd heard Tito had abdicated and left the country. It was 1948, the Informbiro period, a time of purges and persecution by Tito, following his break with Stalin's Soviet Union. When he woke up in the morning, Levitan found himself staring down the barrels of four handguns. In prison, he comes up with a strategy for survival. He entertains his fellow inmates and writes and writes and writes. He records the events that transpire in prison, as well as his own thoughts, his fight for survival and his battle with the institution. He is a student of 'the school of prison'. He is internally free to study everything he wants, and finds erotic pleasure in his constant writing, which is then sneaked out through the prison bars.

***Levitan (Roman, ali pa tudi ne)***  
novel  
1982  
348 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Czech Republic (Studio Rubato)  
Germany (Guggolz Verlag)  
Russia (Rudomino)  
Serbia (Red Box)

**You know what they say about the Peloponnesian War: that it only happened so that Thucydides could write History of the Peloponnesian War. And that also holds true for Zupan: everything that happened to him only happened so he could write novels about it. – Mladina**



### Praise for *Levitan*:

**Today, everything that was good about Zupan's novel thirty years ago, is even better, even more profound and – perhaps most unusually – even more intense. Instead of the intensity dissipating with the passage of time that turns current into not-so-current affairs, instead of the tension in the novel being relieved, *Levitan* is stronger than ever. Some of its strength perhaps lies in the biological age of the reader, but it's not just that. By taking the pathos out of his eventual fate, Zupan had left the story to run past the structure and narrative of the novel, to fork and branch into a Mississippi-like delta, into a book whose strength is above any and all ideological and religious particularities.**

– Croatian writer Miljenko Jergović

**If it was once praised as a critique of communist terror, today Zupan's *Levitan* is a literary parallel of Italian comic Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful*. In his novel, Zupan creates an autobiographic character, a prisoner who understands his incarceration as a school of life. Because he counts on being killed, he is able to overcome his fears. All the while drinking up the days as if he were free.** – Mladina

***Levitan*'s ambition is to be a document of its time, a justification of the writer's innocence, as well as a reflection of political and social oppression of the individual – all this in the literary form of a rather singular novel.**

– Vanesa Matajč, literary historian

### Awards:

- Župančič Award, the highest recognition of the City of Ljubljana for outstanding creation in the field of art and culture, 1982

### About the author:

**Vitomil Zupan** (1914–1987) was one of the most extraordinary and charismatic Slovenian artists of the 20th century. A writer, poet, playwright, screenwriter and essayist, he left an indelible mark on literature while also making notable contributions in the fields of film, TV and radio. His restless spirit took him to places all over the world and into all sorts of jobs and activities: he was a sailor, a boxer and a skiing instructor, as well as a culture editor and painter. He was a prisoner at two concentration camps and joined the partisan movement after the capitulation of Italy. After the war, he was sentenced at a show trial to 18 years of prison and forbidden to write, however, his sentence was commuted after seven years. He began writing again, initially under a pseudonym, and remained an independent writer until his death. Zupan received several awards for his writing, among them two Prešeren Awards, Slovenia's highest award for artistic achievement: the first in 1947, the year when the Prešeren Awards were instituted, and the second in 1984, for lifetime achievement.

**He was known for being elegant, cosmopolitan and charismatic, dressed in a black outfit completed with a tie or a silk scarf, a velvet jacket, with his hair slicked back and styled with nut oil. The grand marshal of any parade. The star of the club. A dandy. A dude. Woland from Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*. He had a reputation due to his romantic aureole of a war hero, an eternal rebel and a champion of the pen. He was always in the company of some hot babe. We have yet to encounter such a unique figure among Slovenian writers.**

– Dušan Jovanović, Slovenian theatre director, playwright and essayist



## **Bronja Žakelj** ***Whites Wash at Ninety***

***Whites Wash at Ninety*** is an exhilarating debut, a powerful, witty and most of all inspiring novel that tells the story of the narrator, who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s. In her childhood, her world revolves around her parents, her brother Rok, her grandmother Dada, her aunts and uncles, the Sarajevo Winter Olympics and all the other big and small things that made up the world of every child growing up in Yugoslavia back then. And although it speaks about all these things, the novel is mainly a story of growing up, of facing loss and illness, of overcoming fears and of everything that we do not want to see until we are inevitably faced with it. This is a book that delves into eminent questions of life and death with humour and charm, and without a trace of moralising or self-importance.

***Belo se pere na devetdeset***  
novel  
2018  
268 pages  
Slovenian language

**Rights sold**  
Bulgaria (Matcom)  
Croatia (Naklada Ljevak)  
Hungary (Metropolis Media)  
Italy (Bottega Errante)  
North Macedonia (Ars Lamina)  
Poland (Sedno)  
Serbia (Laguna)

**A powerful, witty and most of all an inspiring debut**

[Bronja Žakelj's] book came at a time when readers believed that Slovenians could only go wild for foreign authors. When they believed that all stories about life had already been written, and that nothing more could surprise them. But then came September, the end of summer [2018], and with it, a book that mercilessly confronted them with the biggest questions of life and death. – *Delo*



### Praise for *Whites Wash at Ninety*:

How painfully tight can the embrace between soft tenderness and the immense brutality of existence be. With her heart-breaking autobiographical novel *Whites Wash at Ninety*, author Bronja Žakelj accomplishes what few people are able to: she navigates the gloomiest bends of life with joyful and exciting prose, as well as whimsy and irony. Žakelj delves into memories, sometimes partly our own, collective memories, into timeless sources of anxiety, such as illness, loss, death, denial, lies and solitude, with the sparkling song of a literary soul that had never lost its childlike playfulness, joyousness and freedom. Casually relating all the terrible things that she had not been spared, Žakelj shines a light on the reality of the human condition: that people are painfully alone and that adults often give up much more easily than children. In terms of her prose, Žakelj hits the mark because she never becomes preachy or pathetic; because life consists mostly of short sentences, much laughter and an abundance of tears.

– Kresnik Award jury

***Whites Wash at Ninety* will undoubtedly become one of the most read Slovenian contemporary novels.**

– Večer

**Certainly, an excellently written novel, which, although grounded, courageous and sometimes even daring, manages to soar in the best sense of the word.**

– Delo Literary Supplement

**The autobiographical *Whites Wash at Ninety* is a heart-breaking, touching story that is unafraid to face our illnesses, our impermanence and our fears. It is also a story about love – between mother and daughter, between siblings, between grandchildren and their grandmother, between a girl and her boyfriend ... as well as a story about courage, strength, hope and the meaning of truth.** – Siol

**Many people experience the extraordinary, which would be worth describing, but few can translate this into literary works. Bronja Žakelj is one of them. Of course, the veracity of events described is important for readers, but – as paradoxical as it may be - the persuasiveness of her writing is crucial. For the unconvincingly described facts, however true they may be, are destined to make only bad literature.** – Slavenka Drakulić

### Awards:

- Kresnik Award for best novel of the year 2019

### About the author:

**Bronja Žakelj** (1969) has a graduate degree in journalism, but her love of writing disappeared somewhere between the lines of magazine articles and editorial offices of daily newspapers. She found her first job in marketing and today works in banking. Since there is not much space for creativity in the world of finance, and her love of writing had never been entirely forgotten, she decided it was time to write her first book. *Whites Wash at Ninety* was published in September 2018 to much acclaim and has been reprinted countless times already since then.



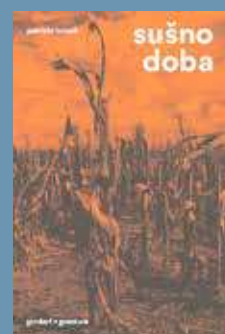
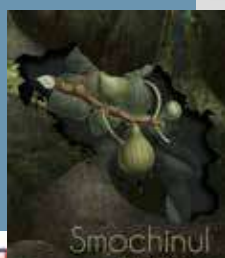
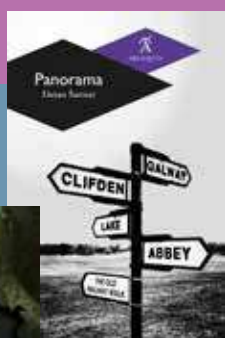
**Beletrina** is one of Slovenia's leading literary publishers and cultural organisations. Since we were established in 1996, contemporary literature has been at the heart of our publishing activity and we have brought some of the most essential works of modern literature, both fiction and non-fiction, to Slovenian readers.

Our philosophy is to give priority to creativity, originality and directness. We respect our authors and invest considerable effort in the promotion of their work. We are proud to publish some of the very best Slovenian authors, modern classics and contemporary writers. These authors not only attract substantial attention now but promise to flourish for generations to come.

Eight Kresnik Prize-winners have been published by Beletrina and our titles have been translated into more than 30 languages around the world.

As well as publishing the foremost Slovenian writers of the day, we believe that it is important to bring as much world literature as possible to Slovenia. Beletrina has a highly curated catalogue of translated fiction and non-fiction, which includes works by foreign authors such as: W. G. Sebald, Herta Müller, Laszlo Krasznahorkai, Deborah Levy, Andrzej Stasiuk, José Saramago, Sofi Oksanen, Marieke Rijneveld Lucas, Paul Celan, Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, C. G. Jung, Giorgio Agamben ...

Beletrina is also involved in several international projects. Each year we organise two international festivals: **Fabula – Literatures of the World** Festival, a prose festival that takes place at the end of each winter in Ljubljana, and in the summer **Days of Poetry and Wine**, the biggest poetry festival in the region. Since 2014 we are the coordinator of the European poetry platform **Versopolis** that unites 30 literary festivals and 320 poets, which makes it the largest poetry platform in the world.







**Beletrina Academic Press**  
 Neubergerjeva ulica 30  
 1000 Ljubljana  
 Slovenia  
 T: +386 1 200 37 00  
 E: [rights@beletrina.si](mailto:rights@beletrina.si)

**Foreign Rights Manager**  
 Petra Kavčič  
 T: +386 1 200 37 07  
 E: [petra.kavcic@beletrina.si](mailto:petra.kavcic@beletrina.si)

[www.beletrina.com](http://www.beletrina.com)

## **Authors represented by Beletrina**

**Gabriela Babnik**

**Dino Bauk**

**Polona Glavan**

**Jurij Hudolin**

**Alojz Ihan**

**Drago Jančar**

**Samira Kentrić**

**Lojze Kovačič**

**Jela Krečič**

**Mojca Kumerdej**

**Feri Lainšček**

**Eva Mahkovic**

**Katarina Marinčič**

**Ana Marwan**

**Katja Perat**

**Ana Schnabl**

**Marko Sosič**

**Irena Svetek**

**Dušan Šarotar**

**Zmago Šmitek**

**Suzana Tratnik**

**Jani Virk**

**Goran Vojnović**

**Vitomil Zupan**

**Vlado Žabot**

**Bronja Žakelj**

**Jernej Županič**