Elm

autumn

2012

estonian literary magazine

Elm

4 Gábor Bereczki
by Reet Klettenberg

12 Harri Jõgisalu — A man like Estonian nature
by Jaanus Vaiksoo

17 A Drop of Water
by Harri Jõgisalu

18 Hellar Grabbi — a master of memories
by Peeter Helme

More information sources:

Eesti Kirjanike Liit
Estonian Writers' Union
Estnischer Schriftstellerverband

Harju 1, 10146 Tallinn, Estonia
Phone and fax: +372 6 276 410, +372 6 276 411
e-mail ekl@ekl.ee
www.ekl.ee

Tartu branch:

Vanemuise 19, 51014 Tartu
Phone and fax: 07 341 073
ekl@kirjandus.ee

Estonian Literature Centre
Sulevimägi 2-5, 10123 Tallinn
Tel: + 372 6314 870
ilvi@eki.ee
estlit@estlit.ee
www.estlit.ee

The Estonian Institute would like to thank the Estonian Cultural Endowment for their generous support

no 35. Autumn 2012

www.estinst.ee

22 Interview with Andra Teede
by Jayde Will

24 Poetry
by Andra Teede

26 Interview with Madli Puhvel translator of Trap in Infinity
by Jayde Will

28 Beginning of the tale — e-books and the future of publishing
by Jayde Will and Eeva Park

30 Seventh biography of Eduard Vilde
by Sirje Kiin

36 Estonian Literary Awards 2011
by Piret Viires

38 Short Outlines of Books by Estonian Authors
by Brita Melts, Rutt Hinrikus and Janika Kronberg

Gábor Bereczki

4

by Reet Klettenberg

Estonian culture is extremely lucky to have devoted envoys around the world, and it is a terrible loss when one of them leaves us. Gábor Bereczki (born on 24 March 1928 in Békés and died on 4 April 2012 in Budapest), a great Estophile and translator of Estonian literature into Hungarian, left behind an invaluable life's work as a linguist, teacher and translator.

On his 80th birthday in 2008, celebrated at Budapest University, Gábor mentioned how brief his 80 years seemed compared with how drastically the world had changed during that time, and that he had been quite lucky in his life. He thought he was lucky also in his birth. His family lived in a relatively poor peasant society, but he inherited a rich and beautiful folk language, which helped him during the decades when most of his time was spent translating fiction. Gábor had a chance to spend years amongst other nations and, out of respect, he learned their languages. Studying in Bucharest, he learned Romanian, in Leningrad he learned Russian; he mastered Italian at the age of 60 while working in Italy and read Dante in the original; he did not speak French fluently, but read Maupassant and other writers, and naturally he had to know German quite well in his research work. In addition, he knew Estonian, Finnish and a number of smaller Finno-Ugric languages. Gábor never flaunted his foreign language skills, but if someone praised his Hungarian – and quite a few outstanding men of letters did – he was genuinely pleased.

Gábor was born in the declining archaic peasant environment of Hungary, which maintained traditional values in many ways. The values acquired in childhood determined his world and his actions to the end of his life. He strongly believed, for example, that we must never underestimate people belonging to other nationalities and religious denominations.

As a farmer's son, Gábor had to start work at an early age. He learned to bear cold, heat and other discomforts, which made him physically fit. As a consequence, he had very little to do with doctors or pharmacies. During his long career as a lecturer, he only missed two lectures due to bad health.

He was equally lucky in his schooling. The teachers at the Békés Calvinist school did not try to suppress the pupils' ideas. According to Gábor himself, this was

something that later helped him to discover many new things in his fields of research.

He was already interested in linguistics in secondary school, especially Finno-Ugric languages. In 1944 he started learning Finnish, and in 1945 he read Miklós Zsirai's book on Finno-Ugric language affinity, and was greatly impressed by it. At university, Zsirai was his favourite lecturer.

Gábor's university years were spent in Budapest and Bucharest between 1948 and 1952. Among his lucky breaks, according to his own statements, was the scholarship he won to the University of Bucharest as a second-year student and acquiring a diploma in Romance studies, although it took him temporarily away from Finno-Ugric linguistics. His lecturers included world-famous professors of Romance studies, who introduced him to comparative linguistics.

In 1953 the Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences sent him to Leningrad for postgraduate courses. This time the focus was not on general linguistics, but on Finno-Ugric languages, so he was able to return to his earlier dream. In Leningrad, he also started his teaching career, working as a Hungarian lecturer in the Finno-Ugric department. Gábor spent a total of six years in Leningrad.

In 1958 he defended his MA thesis on the history of the Mari language. From 1959 he worked for more than half a century in the philosophy faculty at Budapest University, first as a docent, from 1979 as a professor and from 1998 as a professor emeritus. In 1987 he received his PhD for a thesis

on the Mari language. Between 1973 and 1986 he headed the Finno-Ugric faculty at Budapest University. “This is a faculty where everybody can translate and play the flute,” he explained to visitors.

After these jobs, Gábor held a professorship of Finno-Ugric languages at Udine University, but after returning home he once again taught undergraduate and doctoral students specialising in Finno-Ugric languages, especially Estonian.

Gábor visited the University of Tartu for the first time at the end of 1955. His visits became ever more frequent. This all culminated about a year later when he decided to get married. From that time onwards, he spent all his summers with his growing family on an Estonian farm called Kalama, where he made hay, chopped firewood and discovered that this was the place where he felt best in the world. A large part of his work was completed at the farm, including translations of Estonian literature. Estonia gradually became his second homeland, and in his last years he spent the more beautiful part of the year there. He never had a bad word to say about his adopted homeland, which acknowledged his contribution more than his first homeland did. Two homelands, two cultures and two languages signified for him a great intellectual richness.

At the beginning of his academic work, Gábor Bereczki dealt with the history of the Mari language, and issues of phonetics, morphology and etymology. When László Vikár in 1958 organised a trip to the middle course of the River Volga to collect folk songs, it was only natural that Gábor, with his excellent knowledge of Russian and Mari, would accompany him. Between 1958 and 1979 they spent twelve summers in the Volga-Kama region and collected several thousand folk songs in different Finno-Ugric (Mari, Erzya-Moksha and Udmurt) and Turkic (Bashkir, Chuvash and Tatar) language communities in over 300 villages. At that time it was Zoltán Kodály who encouraged folk music researchers and linguists to cooperate in fieldwork, as only in this case could both parties really benefit from the collected material. Gábor thus became fascinated with areal linguistics and his research expanded further, including the topic of the mutual impact between Finno-Ugric and Turkic languages. He was probably the most enthusiastic and best-qualified representative and cultivator of areal linguistics in Hungary.

Besides his everyday work as a lecturer, he compiled his vast knowledge in various textbooks. *A magyar nyelv finnugor alapjai* (Finno-Ugric foundations of the Hungarian language) has been reprinted five times, and will certainly remain a must for the students of Hungarian for years to come. Students reading Finnish and Estonian can use *Bevezetés a balti finn nyelvészetbe* (Introduction to Baltic-Finnic linguistics), and those studying the Mari language find the collection of texts *Chrestomathia Ceremissica* indispensable.

In his last few years, Gábor was involved in two large projects. He completed the manuscript of his Mari etymological dictionary, and reached the letter T in his comprehensive Estonian-Hungarian dictionary.

Professor Bereczki was certainly not an academic who spent his life in his office. He enjoyed life to the fullest, and was happy in the company of friends, colleagues and students. Although he never wanted to be the centre of attention, he always was. As a mentor and head of the faculty, he let his colleagues get on with their work. He did not push them, and there was really no need anyway, as people knew what they had to do and did it, but he was always ready to help with advice, observations and consultations.

Professor Bereczki was an embodiment of the Latin proverb *mens sana in corpore sano* (a sound mind in a healthy body). In Leningrad, he often went on skiing trips on the shores of the Gulf of Finland; on expeditions to the Volga, he was not only a dab hand in eating and drinking (although

these required a remarkable stamina as well), but also in wrestling. In Udine, he participated in northern Italian seniors' competitions and, at his home farm in Estonia, he ran a proper farm, which produced all the vegetables and honey the family needed.

He was an even-tempered man, which was largely due to his harmonious family background. He was on friendly terms with most people working in his fields. He avoided pointless conflicts at all costs. He felt best when he was able to tackle any of his numerous specialities; hence, he enormously enjoyed himself in Udine and in his retirement in Estonia, where he spent half of each year, in his own garden, with his bees, at the same time not neglecting his academic work and translations.

According to his friends and colleagues, the secret of Gábor's cheerful outlook on life and his equanimity lay in his very clear identity. He knew where he came from; his spiritual roots were firmly anchored in the soil of Békés, and therefore he felt at home everywhere in the world. Gábor's harmonious, direct personality charmed everyone, whether a Mari farm mistress, Tatar party secretary, the Estonian president, or a Hungarian, Russian or Italian student.

Estonian literature in Hungary

In his article on Estonian books in Hungarian, published in 2001, Gábor Bereczki divided the history of introducing Estonian literature in Hungary into three periods. The first period lasted from the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The earliest overview of Estonian literature in Hungary was compiled by the ethnographer and linguist Pál Hunfalvy in 1856 at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Summaries and literary anthologies have occasionally been published in Hungarian, in an effort to offer an overview of the entire Estonian literature or of a single significant period. Although an impressive number of Hungarian books have been translated into Estonian, perhaps even more than the Estonian books translated into Hungarian, introducing Estonian literature in Hungary has been a regular undertaking.

One of the essential people in the second period of introducing Estonian literature in Hungary was Aladár Bán, who was a mediocre translator, but an enthusiastic and brilliant researcher. Bán completed the first translation of the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*. Between 1933 and 1938, a series of six book appeared in Hungary, with the aim of presenting contemporary Estonian prose. A lecturer of Hungarian at Tartu University, Elemér Virány, translated the short stories of August Gailit, Albert Kivikas and Friedebert Tugals, and Aladár Báni translated Tammsaare's *The Master of Kõrboja*, Eduard Vilde's *Milkman of Mäeküla* and Mait Metsanurk's short stories.

A small anthology of Estonian literature appeared in 1944 under the title *Északi vártán. Észt rokonaink irodalma* (Waiting for the North. Literature of the Estonian relatives). This was a popular and cheap series, reaching a wide audience. Gábor Bereczki, who was 16 at the time, also bought the 130-page booklet, edited by Géza Képes, a crucial figure amongst translators of Estonian literature. Képes's anthology provided an excellent overview of 20th century Estonian poetry and prose.

After 1945, quite a number of translations of Estonian literature appeared, not as separate editions, but in various anthologies introducing Soviet literature.

The situation improved in the 1960s, and the heyday of translating Estonian literature into Hungarian was the period between 1960 and 1989, when the most important translator was certainly Gábor Bereczki. Another active translator was Győző Fehérvári, who studied both with Gábor and his wife Mai.

The visit of a small group of Hungarian translators to Estonia in 1966 constituted a major development in literary relations

between the two countries. The delegation included Zsuzsa Rab, a translator of Russian literature, and her husband, the acclaimed poet Imre Csanádi, as well as János Domokos, a translator and the director of the publishing house Európa, which specialised in foreign literature. Estonians must have left a very good impression on them and, as a result, Zsuzsa Rab became one of the most enthusiastic and excellent translators of Estonian literature. In his capacity as the director of a publishing house, János Domokos supported many translations of Estonian literature. He also asked Jaan Kross to compile an anthology of classic Estonian literature. *Az észt irodalom kistükre* (A Small Mirror of Estonian Literature) duly appeared in 1969.

The heyday of translating Estonian literature was characterised by the fact that various great figures of Hungarian literature were also quite keen to translate from Estonian, but they worked on the basis of rough translations . Gábor Bereczki produced tens of thousands of lines of rough poetry translations, and was awarded the title of the "best Hungarian rough translator" as a joke. Estonian poetry was additionally translated into Hungarian by István Ágh, István Bella, Imre Csanádi, Dezső Tandori, László Nagy, Gyula Illyés and Sándor Kányádi, who were regarded as classics even during their lifetimes. On the whole, poetry in Hungary was translated by people who were excellent poets themselves, which raised the prestige of Estonian literature even further.

In the course of thirty years, about fifty works of classic and contemporary Estonian literature were published in Hungarian. Among them was an anthology of 20th century Estonian poetry, and one of the compilers was Gábor. The book was sent to the Estonian Writers' Union, and was enthusiastically approved. However, after publication, the book was fiercely criticised by the leadership of Soviet Estonia's communist party, because the anthology also included poets who had emigrated, although most of the published poems had been written in Estonia. A few poems were by Uku Masing and Johannes Semper, and these poems condemned the cult of personality.

The most successful author in the 30-year period was the novelist Jaan Kross. Four Monologues on Saint George (*Neli monoloogi Püha Jüri asjus*) was staged in a theatre, and Matriculation of Michelson (*Michelsoni immatrikuleerimine*) and The Czar's Madman (*Keisri hull*) were made into films by Hungarian Television. The drama version of the latter was broadcast many times on Hungarian Radio. Arvo Valton's grotesque short stories were popular among younger readers. Zsuzsa Rab was keen on poems by Ellen Niit and Paul-Eerik Rummo. Géza Képes's favourite contemporary poet was Jaan Kaplinski. Novels and short novels by Vladimir Beekman, Paul Kuusberg, Mats Traat, Enn Vetemaa and Mati Unt, and travelogues by Juhan Smuul and Lennart Meri were published.

One of the essential undertakings of the period was the publication in 1985 of the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*. The translator, Zsuzsa Rab, regarded it as one of her two most accomplished and favourite translations amongst several hundred. The first excerpt of the epic was published in Hungarian in 1884 by Béla Vikár, who translated the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*. The entire *Kalevipoeg* was translated into Hungarian for the first time by Aladár Bán and it appeared in 1929, although he left out about 700 lines and used end rhymes, claiming that Hungarian readers were not used to unrhymed poetry. Bán published a new edition in 1960, having worked on it further, and the editor Géza Képes corrected and amended it. The second printing unfortunately appeared in abbreviated form, leaving out over half of the epic.

Before undertaking *Kalevipoeg*, Zsuzsa Rab had had vast experience in translating Finnic-Baltic runic verses, and she could

also find inspiration in the new translations of the Finnish *Kalevala*. Zsuzsa Rab was a spirited translator who was not afraid of alliteration.

The prime period of translating Estonian literature ended with the publication of Jaan Kross's Professor Martens' Departure (*Professor Martensi ärasõit*) in 1989. Thanks to this period, the overview of Estonian literature in Hungary was quite comprehensive. Besides individual volumes, numerous translations also appeared in literary magazines and were broadcast on the radio.

After 1989 the situation changed: private publishing houses had no interest in books that produced little or no profit. A paradoxical situation emerged: the Estonian language can be studied at several Hungarian universities, but the number of Estonian books in Hungarian constantly decreases. On the initiative of the Faculty of Uralistics in Szombathely, the bilingual Minoritates Mundi series published Tammsaare's *Judith*, an anthology of 20th century Estonian poetry, The Tenderness of Bells (*Kellade hellus*), and the prose anthology Butterfly Emerging from Cocoon (*Kookonist kooruv liblikas*).

Gábor Bereczki as translator

Beginning with his secondary school period, Gábor Bereczki was preparing to become a Finno-Ugric linguist. He first read the existing translations of Finnish and Estonian literature in the 1940s, although he never thought he would one day translate fiction himself, as this was something he did only when he had time to spare from lecturing at universities and linguistic research.

He started translating by accident. In the early 1960s the Táncsics publishing house planned to publish two travelogues by Lennart Meri, who back then was a practically unknown Estonian writer. However, the translator who was supposed to undertake the job fell ill and the publishers turned to Gábor Bereczki. After a brief hesitation, he accepted the task and discovered that he enjoyed it. Gábor always believed that, besides studying the language kinship, Finno-Ugric linguists had the duty of introducing the culture of kindred nations to one another as well, because there was no-one else who knew these languages well enough (with the exception of perhaps the Finnish language). Translating fitted in perfectly with this idea. Gábor remained true to his specialised field and translated only from kindred languages, such as Estonian, Finnish, Erza and Mari, but primarily from Estonian.

Gábor established close contacts with the Estonian language and culture thanks to his wife Mai Kiisk . Over the years, the Bereczki family became almost an institution, the essential link between Hungarian and Estonian cultural relations. Gábor translated a few dozen literary works from Estonian and Finnish, including the Estonian national epic. Folklore had always been close to his heart, and thus he compiled and translated two comprehensive anthologies containing epic and mythical songs, spells, prayers and lamentations from the Baltic-Finnic, Volga and Perm language areas. He found inexhaustible inspiration from his native dialect, the popular language of Békés.

He was drawn to Estonian literature by his family ties and friends. Almost all his summers were spent at his wife's rustic birthplace in the village of Pikavere. Besides, he thought Estonian literature was good and vast. It would be silly to presume that only big nations could have big literatures. Gábor learned that from Géza Képes. He also learned that the literature of smaller nations is often far more fascinating. Géza Képes even suggested that there were two great female poets in world literature: Sappho and Marie Under.

Had Gábor not translated from Estonian, Finnish and some other smaller Finno-Ugric languages (e.g. Mari and Mordva), but

instead from English, French or German, he could have been the dean of fiction translators in Hungary. The rough translation of *Kalevipoeg* was of such a high level that Zsuzsa Rab, who provided the finishing touches to the epic, repeatedly claimed that, in any other country, Gábor Bereczki's work would have been acclaimed as a masterful rendition. He could have easily headed a school of fiction translators.

Thanks to Gábor's rough translation, new versions of Väinö Kaukonen's *Birth of Kalevala* and Kreutzwald's *Kalevipoeg* appeared in Hungarian. All in all, he managed to translate the works of 25 Estonian prose writers and 35 poets.

Quite a few anthologies of Estonian literature in Hungarian provided an excellent overview of our literature. Selecting the works required a different approach and a thorough knowledge of the topic. Gábor compiled these anthologies in cooperation with his wife Mai, who was an avid reader.

It was not easy to promote Estonian literature, as the average Hungarian reader had rather different expectations. Jaan Kross's *The Czar's Madman*, for example, was received very well by connoisseurs. Following the often slow-moving plot of Estonian, Finnish or even Swedish and Norwegian literary works is often a painstaking process for Hungarians. However, when Gábor read the first part of Tammsaare's *Truth and Justice* in the early 1960s, he thought there was no equivalent in Hungarian literature.

Closest to his heart, however, was translating Estonian folklore. He had been fascinated with folklore since his younger years. His later academic work was closely connected with folklore as well. Together with the folk music specialist László Vikár, he collected songs of Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples, and Gábor was thus well placed to understand the essence of folklore. He produced fine translations of Setu folk songs and Estonian fairy-tales.

Estonian and Finnish folk poetry have retained several forms that Hungarian has lost, for example the epic. Translation thus fills a certain gap in Hungarian culture.

Although translating was something Gábor did in his spare time, it was occasionally much more, even pushing academic work into the background. But he never regretted this. He was convinced that the shades which Estonian literature offered to Hungarians enriched their culture. For example, he translated Tammsaare during his fieldwork in the Mari El Republic, along the Volga River.

Gábor's Hungarian was superb, as was his sense of style, and his translations are still a pleasure to read. Several of his prose renderings received awards, although he freely confessed that he was not very good with poetry, and thus had to be satisfied with the thankless and often invisible role of a "rough" translator. Together with Zsuzsa Rab, Géza Képes and Gyula Illyés, he produced translations of poetry by Jaan Kaplinski, Paul-Eerik Rummo and Ellen Niit. This work proved to Gábor that excellent translations can in fact emerge when two translators are in constant touch. The translation of *Kalevipoeg* with Zsuzsa Rab is a good example.

Gábor worked very hard and fully realised that he should mainly pursue things that were close to his heart. He had no intention of wasting time on external splendour, and he avoided that quite successfully. It is only natural that Gábor Bereczki was acknowledged for his impressive life's work. Together with László Vikár, he received a major award from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1976 for the collection of Mari folk songs *Cheremis Folksongs*. He was granted the Order of the White Rose of Finland, the Estonian Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana and the Hungarian Cross of Merit; he was also elected an honorary doctor of the University of Tartu. The greatest acclaim and admiration were earned by his brilliant translations. Among those that have received awards are Tammsaare's *Truth*

and Justice, his anthology of 20th century Estonian poetry, Jaan Kross's *Czar's Madman* and *Professor Martens's Departure*, Lennart Meri's *At the Gate of the Northern Lights*, a Finno-Ugric mythology (with Dezsö Tandor), *Kalevipoeg* (with Zsuzsa Rab) and an Estonian photo album (with Endre Rácz), which also contained an overview of Estonian history and culture. The album was additionally published both in East and West Germany (for the former, history was painted a bit red to suit their ideology).

In translating, Gábor followed the principle that the text should be acceptable and understandable to Hungarians, and a literary work did not have to be topical, but should be something of permanent value. Making choices naturally required an excellent knowledge of both Hungarian and world literature.

At the Finno-Ugric faculty at Budapest University, Gábor sometimes conducted translation courses, where the participants met every week and were given homework, which was later analysed and discussed. In translating, Gábor served as an example, rather than a teacher. Nearly everyone in the faculty tried their hand at translating, although none was quite as dedicated as Gábor. Translating was a hobby to him, and he liked to do it, despite the fact that his commissions were always rather modest.

Gábor Bereczki had 84 active years of both intellectual and physical work. He never liked to waste time, even as a young man, much preferring to see to everything promptly. His colleagues loved to work with him. He never complained that a job was difficult or unpleasant, and everything Finno-Ugric was of special interest to him. He talked about this at a lecture at the Institute of the Estonian Language to the non-profit organisation Fenno-Ugria on 18 May 2011:

"During the last twenty years, the cooperation of Finno-Ugric peoples has strengthened on the political level, but translating literature is not, unfortunately, as well organised as it used to be. The friendship movement might be more extensive as well. This would have a favourable impact on the self-perception of Finno-Ugric peoples. I have tried to do everything in my power. My time is now up, and I rest my hope on the next generation."

Selection of Gábor Bereczki's translations from Estonian:

travelogues: Juhan Smuul's *The Sea of Japan*, *December* and Lennart Meri's *Following the Trails of Cobras and Black Widows* and *Shipmates on the Green Ocean*

prose: Anton Hansen Tammsaare's *Truth and Justice I* and *The Master of Kõrboja*, Friedebert Tuglas's *Little Illimar*, Jaan Kross's *The Czar's Madman* and *Professor Martens's Departure*, Lennart Meri's *At the Gate of the Northern Lights*, Mats Traat's *Dance around the Steam Boiler*, Paul Kuusberg's *Raindrops*, Viivi Luik's *The Beauty of History* and Vladimir Beekman's *Night Pilots*

folklore: fairy-tales of Finno-Ugric peoples, Estonian fairy-tales, and mythological and historical folk songs of Finno-Ugric peoples

anthologies: contemporary Estonian short novels, contemporary Estonian short stories, and Estonian poets of the 20th century

poetry: by Jaan Kaplinski, Jaan Kross, Ene Mihkelson, Andrus Rävälä, Johannes Semper, Aleksander Suuman and Juhan Viiding

drama: Anton Hansen Tammsaare's *Judith*, Juhan Smuul's *Forest Captain* and Mati Unt's *Ask the Dead about the Price of Death*

Harri Jõgisalu

A man like Estonian nature

by Jaanus Vaiksoo

There are no powerful contrasts in Estonian nature: no snow-topped mountains, deep canyons, ocean waves, volcanoes, hurricanes... Estonia is a level country of forests and marshlands, sliced by slowly winding rivers, lakes, meadows and fields. Life here is tranquil, and does not seem to offer anything exciting for a world traveller. However, many ramblers and hikers from abroad have been fascinated with our Nordic crisp and cool nature. The treasures of Estonian nature are hidden in the midst of all those quietly rustling forests: in early morning bogs that take the traveller back thousands of years, in the white nights of a northern country and in perceiving freedom, space and silence, in knowing that there are still places in Europe where the forests are not parks, but partly almost primeval, home to wolves, lynxes, brown bears and eagles. There is something here that for a large part of Europe has been lost forever. And there is a writer here who at first glance seems exactly the same as Estonian nature: modest, soft-spoken, a good listener and an attentive conversation partner. He likes to be in the background, prefers to watch from the side and never forces his opinions on anyone. This reserved man, however, has had an amazingly eventful life and published quite a number of wonderful books.

This man is Harri Jõgisalu. Born in 1922, he has participated in the nearly century-long chequered and complicated history since the first years of independent Estonia. Harri Jõgisalu has experienced moments that people today can only read about in books. Above all, he writes about nature and local history, and for children.

From Grand Marina to Kadriorg

During the last five years, Harri Jõgisalu has published two books of memoirs: *Grand*

Marinast Kadriorgu (From Grand Marina to Kadriorg, 2007) and *Märjamaalt Tallinna ja kaugemale* (From Märjamaa to Tallinn and Further On, 2011). Closeness to nature originated in his childhood, on a farm in a western Estonian village. The first volume of his memoirs is dedicated to those who established and ran this farm. The childhood years of the boy who had to grow up without a mother were spent at the farm, running around in the nearby forests and pastures, and by the river: *I always waited for the spring to come. There was so much to do at the river: watch how the ice retreated and how water reached the house and undulated in the meadows. When the weather was warm enough, the trees in leaf and the swallows had returned, grandma took me with her to the fishing coast. (—) This was the trip when I first saw the sea. The dark blue expanse took my breath away. My eyes could not grasp the distance that lay in front of me and rose to the skies. I thought I was standing at the edge of the world, where you look down and your head starts spinning; it seemed as if the land under my feet moved along with the waves surging to the shore, and I moved with them. The sea had an unfamiliar smell, but now, many years later, it announces the closeness of the sea still at a distance, before I reach the shore* (From Grand Marina to Kadriorg, p. 28).

The sea became really close to Jõgisalu decades later. However, his home farm in the middle of nowhere has stayed in the writer's heart for his entire life. Economic hardship forced his father to move to town to look for work. For Harri, used to limitless freedom in the countryside, the tiny flat in a several storey-high tenement house and its dusty courtyard seemed like a prison. During the subsequent years of development and various schools, the young man kept yearning for his childhood farm, a place where he could temporarily take time off and find peace and inspiration.

Harri Jõgisalu was born at about the same time as the Republic of Estonia. Hence, his obvious ethical attitude, instilled at home and school, that one's home and homeland must be defended. *From Grand Marina to Kadriorg* describes the shock caused by the arrival of Soviet power in 1940. He learned about all the alarming events and changes of power directly from the corridors of power. His father had previously worked as a caretaker and boilerman at *Grand Marina*, the biggest cinema in Tallinn, and during the final years of the Republic of Estonia he got a job in Kadriorg Palace, the government's administrative building. As a simple boilerman, he initially survived the Soviet power; during the German occupation, he saw many famous and notorious historical figures at close hand. When the Soviets returned, the simple working man was no longer spared. Someone reported on him and he was arrested and sent to a Russian prison camp, where he died in 1952. Harri joined the German army as a volunteer and participated in the short military campaign in summer 1941, from Pärnu to Narva: *We were raised to defend our country. Estonia was most important for us, we learned that as scouts, we were instructed in national defence at school, studied the history of the Estonian War of Independence and we knew how the red troops were beaten and Estonia became free. (—) I was adult enough to understand the events of the past few years, the mood of my father and people in my home village. Without making any fuss about it, we were ardent patriots* (From Grand Marina to Kadriorg).

During the difficult war years Jõgisalu worked for various institutions, e.g. the German Public Service, which attracted him with a promise of study at university for free. He also taught at Martna, was the schoolmaster in Rõude, was forced into mobilisation at an instruction camp of the Waffen-SS and was finally captured by the KGB and dispatched to a Soviet "filtration camp". There he had to work on the construction of a cellulose factory at the Leningrad-Moscow railway. This inhuman existence in a Stalinist

Harri Jõgisalu (Photo by Alar Madisson)

prison camp, suffering cold and constant hunger, is vividly characterised by an incident described in his memoirs. On Christmas Day, Jõgisalu was sent to the attic of a storehouse to shovel oats into sacks. Suddenly he saw something oblong in the grain: *I took a closer look: it was a fish – a herring! Oat grains had got stuck to it and withered, but the fish was in one piece and did not smell. This could be useful, I thought, and slid the fish into my pocket. I continued sweeping with my broom and discovered several more herring under the oats, six or seven. I had chanced upon a rat's hidey-hole, the fish dragged from the storage downstairs. Without a trace of conscience, I nicked the rat's supplies*. Harri distributed the herring stolen from the rat between his fellow prisoners in tiny bits like Christmas presents. They all enjoyed it enormously. After two years of harsh prison life, Jõgisalu was finally set free.

In 1947 Harri Jõgisalu started teaching at Märjamaa Secondary School, having no idea that he would stay there for thirty years. During the first years there, he studied at the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute through distance learning and acquired the qualifications of a teacher of biology-chemistry.

Children's writer

During that period, Jõgisalu began writing plays for children at his school, which were very well received. Teaching natural science, he set up a nature corner at school where pupils could observe living nature

undisturbed. A terrarium was built at school, with ants bustling about in one corner and large edible snails in another. Watching the ants briskly milling around and the slowly moving ponderous snails, Jõgisalu produced a parable, *An Ant and a Snail*, straight from nature. According to him, this was his first serious attempt at Estonian children's literature: *An ant is laughing at the snail's laziness and slow movement. "Look at me! I am carrying a whole log for my home and I am running!"*

"Why do you carry your home by such tiny bits! You try hauling the whole lot on your back, as I do, and see whether you can move at all," replies the snail and continues on its way unhurried.

This story was also the beginning of Harri Jõgisalu's first book, *Käopoja tänu* (Gratitude of a Cuckoo Chick), published in 1967. It contained over thirty parables about the relations between various animals and plants, or contacts with people.

As a teacher, he knew the children's world very well and was in daily contact with nature. The fact that Harri Jõgisalu developed into a children's writer was thus quite natural. He published *Sass ja Jass* (Sass and Jass, 1968), *Nõiutud allikas* (The Enchanted Spring, 1974) and *Suutäis soolast* (A Mouthful of Salt, 1974). The latter describes various adventures that happened over the years at various hiking trips. *Enchanted Spring* is a collection of beautiful miniatures, born out of encounters between man and nature, animals and birds. Walking extensively and getting to know the area around his home was Jõgisalu's passionate pastime for decades. At the end of the 1970s he wrote a fascinating animal-book called *Kärp* (Marten), based on what he saw at his summer home in western Estonia. It appeared in 1981, and was named the best children's book of the year. The story tells about a family of martens who settled between the downstairs ceiling and upstairs floor of Jõgisalu's summer cottage. They enjoyed a tranquil existence in winter, but in summer when people arrived, both parties were rather annoyed with one another. All hell broke loose at night: the martens scuttled around the floor and the ceiling, and the little ones could be heard whimpering during the day.

Maaleib **(Rural bread)**

In 1954 Jõgisalu managed to convince the local men to take him along to the autumn Baltic herring fishing. He had been yearning to go to sea ever since he saw it for the first time at the age of five or six. Catching fish on an August night was an exhilarating experience: *By the evening we managed to cast the nets. Quiet, dark and warm August night descended on the sea. Lights were lit on boats and ships, which sparkled on the black water like glow worms. After dinner we lay down on the bottom of the boat under the sail-cloth and tried to sleep, with water splashing on the other side of the inch-thick planks. A few times, I heard the shrieking of the seagulls – according to men a good sign that the fish were on the move*. However, the first sea outing nearly had a nasty ending – an unexpected storm broke out and the men managed to get through a dangerous shallows to a nearby islet in the nick of time.

On that islet, Jõgisalu befriended an old man. *He talked about his work on the islet, and birds who came in spring; he showed me the nesting places of ducks and knew how many chicks were hatched. The nests were everywhere: in the caves underneath the ridges on the shore, under brier and currant bushes, right by the walls of his cottage. I would have liked to see the birds but they had left for the sea or flown south for winter. The old man said they would all return in spring to their nesting places and he would protect them. (—) Next spring I turned up again and saw the birds.*

One chance fishing trip thus led Harri Jõgisalu to fall in love with the island of Kihnu and the islets around it: meeting the inhabitants of Kihnu and learning about their archaic culture. The dialect spoken on the

island, seafaring, fishing and their traditional way of life, all encouraged him to produce one of his masterpieces years later, the children's book about life on Kihnu titled *Maaleib* (Rural bread, 1985). In 1986 the book received the annual literary award in Estonia and was declared the best children's book the following year for the whole Soviet Union.

The dialogues occur in Kihnu, the tales describe the daily life of the singular culture on the island, and the customs and values that the mainland has long forgotten.

In one story, for example, a young boy named Märt, who has come to spend his summer holidays with his grandparents, can hardly believe his eyes when he sees his local friend leave home and, instead of locking up, he simply leans a stick against the door. What's even more amazing is that there is no lock on the door at all.

He left everything he had, everything in the house, including his parents' wallets, in the house with no lock on the door!

People lock everything in town. Certainly the flat, even when you are actually at home. The cellar is locked. The garage is locked, even with two keys. The car doors are locked. And the bicycle. All the rooms are locked at school, all the cupboards and desk drawers. (—) Märt was so used to locks that it seemed almost scary to be without them.

"What if someone goes in?" he asked his friend anxiously.

"Why would he? It is plain to see there is no one at home, I've put the stick out!" He was utterly convinced that this broomstick would protect the house from a stranger's eye and itchy fingers.

With stories full of similar affable humour, the teacher quietly, imperceptibly, taught children ethical values and ways of life that they should adopt from their ancestors.

Traditional Estonian culture

Estonian traditional culture and local history gradually become the favourite topics in Jõgisalu's books. At birdwatching seminars organised in the 1960s by the Estonian Naturalists' Society, he met the experienced forester Lembit Tihkan, who lived not too far away. *Lembit Tihkan told me about the life of local people, wealthy masters and poor peasants, gamekeepers and village healers who helped with any disease known to man. I had also remembered stories told by elderly people in my own area. (—) I thought that Lembit's stories should be written down, as they were excellent material, passed on from one generation to the next, describing the life of our ancestors. Such stories do not in fact belong to any one person, but should be available to all people*.

This was the start of a cooperation between Jõgisalu and Lembit Tihkan that lasted many years and resulted in the publication of a wonderful book about local history, *Lugusid vanalt Läänemaalt* (Tales from Old Lääne County, 1989). Researching local history and the history of Estonia was the mission of the writer-teacher during the Soviet period. He was determined to provide children with knowledge about their ancestors, which the Soviet authorities preferred to ignore.

In *Vesiratta Madis* (Madis of the Waterwheel, 2005), published after the restoration of independence in Estonia, Jõgisalu continued to pursue the topic of local history. The book tells about a farm on the banks of a mill lake, which the family has turned into a museum and where they carry out all the jobs around the farm as they used to do in olden times. The protagonist is the son of the family, Madis, born and raised on Vesiratta farm, who knows exactly what is going on in the fields and in the stables; he is a serious country lad as they used to be in the past. The book can also be used in history lessons at school, as it offers lively descriptions of daily life on an old-fashioned farm. Jõgisalu got the idea for this book at a seminar for local history enthusiasts, when

he and other teachers visited a farm museum in southern Estonia. *Most of the seminar participants were teachers who took a sensibly practical interest in the museum buildings and displays. In the main building of the farm, the threshing room, they asked many questions about the big stove and how the grain was threshed, how the stove with a pile of loose stones on top heated the room in winter, and how food was cooked there. I got the impression that the teachers did not know a great deal about the life of rural people in our own country, less than a hundred years ago, and found it difficult to imagine that. While learning and teaching Estonian history, it had not been seen as necessary to explain that the barn-dwelling with a threshing room was the most suitable type of building in these climatic conditions and thus typical of our agriculture and cattle-breeding. Initially a small cottage had no chimney, and it was only perhaps 150 years ago that more rooms were added and a chimney was installed on the roof. This type of house has survived to this day. The barn-dwelling has been home to Estonians for several thousand years, i.e. as long as fields have been cultivated.*

This is how so many of Harri Jõgisalu's children's books have come about – out of his curiosity about nature and his home regions, listening to old farmers' stories and hiking extensively around Estonia, in order to convey his impressions and newly acquired knowledge to his young readers. This is certainly a huge and necessary job in the history of Estonian culture.

On 24 August Harri Jõgisalu celebrated his 90th birthday.

Piisake vett

(A Drop of Water)

The dusty road runs across the meadows, ducks into villages, hides in the thick of forests, meanders on the hills like an asphalt-scaled dragon, and vanishes beyond the horizon.

The earth smells of maturing grain and mown hay. Distances flicker in the summer heat.

The traveller feels tired. The straps of his rucksack cut into his shoulders, sweat pours into his eyes, his whole body is impossibly hot and his thirst is excruciating. The road, however, does not care about the traveller's fatigue: it runs on and on.

And then, all of a sudden, heat and tears of sweat are forgotten, the traveller is seized with an unexpected joy of recognition, as if he were looking into the eyes of his beloved or laughing together with a child – a lake is sparkling in the midst of thirsty fields, lush meadows and the dark line of the forest. It is blue and iridescent, casting rays of sun, reflecting treetops and white clouds.

Nothing can stop the traveller now: into the water!

So cold and bracing. The lake is deep. Be careful! What an enjoyable sensation: the man seems to have arrived at a wondrous spring of energy.

(From The Enchanted Spring, Tallinn: Eesti Raamat 1974)

Hellar Grabbi
a master of memories

by Peeter Helme

Hellar Grabbi (Photo by Helmuth Neider)

Hellar Grabbi is the *grand old man* of Estonian literature. This may seem a trivial sentence to start an article. But it actually isn't, because it is a polemical sentence. Born in 1929, Grabbi, who this year received the National Culture Award for his book of memoirs *Seisata, aeg!* (Halt, Time!), has spent 67 of his 83 years outside Estonia, mainly in the United States, and he still lives in Alexandria, near the capital city. Between 1965 and 1999 he published the leading exile Estonian cultural magazine Mana and is often indeed described as an "exile Estonian cultural figure". Grabbi himself, however, disagrees with this definition.

In an interview with the cultural weekly Sirp in 2009 he asked: "If writers in Sweden and elsewhere in the West produced exile literature during the Stalinist era, what did they do in Estonia – was that Estonian literature?

Or was it in fact Soviet literature?“ And he replies a few sentences later: “...Estonian writers who managed to escape to the West continued to write Estonian literature (after all, they did not exactly agree that from then on they would produce exile literature), whereas literature at home had, under the threat of death, become totally monstrous and lost all artistic value. At that time, Estonian literature was only written abroad.“

There is no trace here of arrogance, of which many Estonians at home have accused many Estonians abroad, sometimes justified, sometimes not. Grabbi has always sincerely believed that there is only one Estonian culture, and it does not matter where it is produced.

Such a modern-sounding idea of nationality and homeland was not in the least obvious in the 1960s, when Grabbi was becoming one of the leading literary critics, publishers and organisers of cultural life abroad. Many exile Estonians were not prepared to make any compromises as far as Soviet Estonia was concerned. Most of them had shared Grabbi’s destiny, whose last memory of Tallinn dated to 20 September 1944, when he, together with his mother and brother (his father, an aide-de-camp of the President of Estonia, had already been killed in a Soviet prison camp), escaped from the Red Army, who invaded the city two days later, on board a German transport vessel. These people had to leave behind their dreams and ideals, which did not vanish but increased in exile. This was especially true for the political and cultural leaders among the exile Estonians.

“A few dozen years after leaving our homeland, many exile Estonian schools taught about Estonia as it once was, rather than as it was at that time,” writes Grabbi in his essays-memoirs *Halt, Time!* (p. 23). He expanded this thought in his interview with the weekly Eesti Ekspress: “The world of thinking of the exile politicians was dogmatic. What prevented it from expanding was probably the severe trauma caused by leaving Estonia, and it was difficult to do things together freely for anyone.”

The young and enthusiastic Grabbi fell victim to this trauma himself. As was already mentioned, he based his activities on the assumption that there was one Estonia, one Estonianness. Under Grabbi as editor, the international journal of Estonian literature, art and science Mana became more youthful and energetic and, what’s more, for the first time it included the cultural life in Estonia. It published book and theatre reviews, introduced artists living in Soviet Estonia and commissioned work from authors living there, as much as possible (this usually caused quite a number of problems for the writers involved). Many exile Estonians did not like Grabbi’s approach at all and, when he started visiting Estonia in the late 1960s in order to get to know the local cultural people, the fierce nationalists in the West thought he had betrayed their ideals to communism. Paradoxically, the Soviet Estonian authorities did not trust him either, and in 1978 Grabbi was issued a ten-year visa ban.

• • •

History has proved that Grabbi was right: Estonian culture is one, whether it is produced in Estonia, North America or Russia. In his journal – which was sometimes banned in Soviet Estonia, sometimes allowed only for certain people, and sometimes more or less allowed (all this sounds pretty confusing, but this is what the Soviet politics was like) – Grabbi brought Estonians and Estonianness at home and abroad closer. We can confidently claim that his efforts and those of other equally broad-minded cultural people made it possible to include exile-Estonian culture and literature in Estonian cultural life after the country regained independence.

Despite (or perhaps because of) his experience, Hellar Grabbi developed into a

fine man of letters. After all, he was keen to defend and promote his ideas. His first literary experiments date back to his younger years, when he was active in sports, mainly in the shot put, volleyball and basketball. Grabbi began seriously writing when his job demanded it.

Incidentally, Grabbi's day job was not initially the editor-in-chief of Mana; he worked in the US Library of Congress, from where journalism and publishing work lured him away later.

He very often contributed to Mana, and he introduced Estonian literature in the magazine Books Abroad/World Literature Today. Over the decades, he therefore acquired plenty of experience in journalistic writing. This came in extremely handy, a fact well proved by his three books of essays-memoirs: *Vabariigi laps*, *Seitse retke isamaale* and *Seisata, aeg!* The first was published in Estonia in 2008. The need to express himself precisely as a journalist, coupled with his skill in imbuing a text with powerful emotion through an economic use of words have today made Grabbi not an "exile-Estonian cultural figure" or an "exile-Estonian literary critic", but a sensitive master of style. Hellar Grabbi possesses the rare talent of blending rational facts and literary suggestiveness into an impressive whole. His books form a thematic unity: the first is devoted to his childhood in pre-war Estonia, the second describes trips to occupied Estonia and the third tells about the authors' younger years in West German refugee camps and the start of a new life in the United States. Despite this, each tale is also a distinct work, which can be enjoyed individually, at the same time each following smoothly from the last, like a crown of sonnets, where each text can be read independently, while still being part of a whole.

The second book, *Seven Trips*, is a chronologically separate interlude. Grabbi hopes to publish a fourth book in the series, about exile-Estonian cultural life, which will lead to *Halt, Time!*

Several awards prove that all of this has not been just a critic's hagiography: his book *Child of the Republic* received the essay award of the Estonian Cultural Endowment in 2008 and the already mentioned National Culture Award of the Republic of Estonia for his lifetime achievement and also for the book *Halt, Time!*. Being elevated from critic to writer is a welcome development for Grabbi himself, who said last spring that he was happy to see that the brand new TEA Publishers' encyclopaedia "lists him as a writer and not just an essayist or memoirist".

Hellar Grabbi (Photo by Irja Grabbi)

Works by Hellar Grabbi

Vabal häälel. Mõtteid kahesajast eesti raamatust
(In a free voice. Thoughts on two hundred Estonian books), 1997. p. 304

Tulgu uus taevas. Mõtteid viiekümnest kirjanikust
(Let a new heaven come), 1999. p. 278

Eestlaste maa (The land of Estonians), Ilmamaa,
series Eesti mõttelugu (Story of Estonian thought), 2004. p. 502

Vabariigi laps (Child of the republic),Ilmamaa, 2008. p. 384

Seitse retke isamaale (Seven trips to the fatherland), Ilmamaa, 2010. p. 454

Seisata, aeg! (Halt, time!), Ilmamaa, 2012. p. 406

Interview with Andra Teede

by Jayde Will

Do you feel you've changed as a person through your writing?

It's rather the opposite – first of all I change and then it starts to be reflected in my texts. Perhaps writing helps one analyze themselves a little better to and understand changes, something happens, and when I write a poem about it, then I understand as well that it is important and it should survive. But have I changed at all during my time as a writer? Of course! If such a young person doesn't change, then something is very wrong. Who wants to stay sixteen forever?

A number of your poems (*St. Petersburg-Vladivostok*, *Sforzando*) and even the titles of some of your collections (*Atlas*, *Moves*) touch upon the concept of roads, being taken somewhere, going off on a long journey. Have you consciously written your poetry with this in mind?

I'm the kind of writer that first of all experiences their work and then writes it down. There is a lot of movement in my poetry because there's a lot of that in me and my life. I love departures, taking off somewhere, and I do it all the time. If you'd total all the time I have spent in trains, cars, ships, planes, hotels, gas stations, check-ins and check-outs, it would end up being a good year or so. I return to them all the time and I love and need them. There's something refreshing and beautiful in movement, you are free of all the crap that gathers at home, you are free of all the people you know, you aren't stuck in your language or cultural space. You simply keep your eyes open and experience, look, listen, taste. And write it down.

What is the most difficult part of the process of writing poetry?

There isn't anything difficult in writing, the poems come to my mind themselves and tell me to go and quickly get a pen. Publication is another thing, even after many years of writing, countless performances and four books, I am still extremely nervous when I give my latest work to someone to read for the first time. Maybe they will say it's crap, so what will happen then?

Is there an Estonian poet or poets that you identify with?

I'm trying not to think about other writers in this sense. Following in someone's footsteps is tricky business, and forces too many obligations on you. In Estonia there are many poets whose work I follow and enjoy, and there are many I have learned from, but perhaps it's better if I don't mention any names.

I have also read some of your literary criticism – how did you start writing it? I have always found it hard myself to write a thorough critique of a work.

Writing literary criticism is terribly excruciating for me. At the same time, it's very helpful, this analyzing of someone else's work deeper. In this way you understand your own writing better, you know how to look how someone else might see and analyze you. I began like most do. An editor asked if I wanted to, and I wanted to. At the beginning of course the birth pains were quite strong, I sat down with the article for days and couldn't write anything. Now I

Andra Teede (Photo by Scanpix)

know better where to direct myself, because I have come to an understanding that looking at a blank sheet of paper doesn't help anyone.

You have made references to Finnish literature, music and culture in your poetry and literary criticism – what's your link to Finland?

I have never lived in Finland, but I have been there hundreds of times. I love all the small distant places in the North. I also have a lot of Finnish friends. There's something very lonely about Finns — their films, music, literature and even the country with its endless forests and thousands of little islands, where you could get lost forever, are so nostalgic. All Finnish writers are of course crazy, what a dream it would be to have Timo Mukka and Arto Paasilinna sitting together at one table with me.

Do you feel young Estonian authors have the chance to get published? It seems that there are a number of publications in Estonia that offer a wide variety of writing.

Yes, we have a literary magazine for young people and some internet sites, but there is a strong filter if you want to get published. Writing is very trendy in Estonia and as a result the competition is fierce. I was simply lucky when I got started. But if you really want to, then you will eventually get published. After all, a large part of a writer's work is findig a spot to fit into.

Is there anything you'd like to see more of in Estonian poetry? Any particular trends that you see elsewhere, but not in Estonia yet?

It's not about trends, Estonian literature is very trendy and always changing. Perhaps I would like to see more calmness, thinking things through. People are writing empty words far too much.

Having already published a number of collections at a young age, where do you go from here? Are there any other genres that you have thought about trying?

Now I am studying dramaturgy at the Drama School of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and it seems I will start more or less working for the theatre. I also want to travel more. I've already understood that writing will always be there. And since life is terribly long, this means I will manage to try out all genres. I am not worried about that at all.

p o e t r y b y A n

these poems
they're like a shopping list
a long and slender
enumerated column

bread olive oil cheese
hate love going
what to take along what
to experience what
to write down

minced meat is pointless
it goes bad
but mineral water
and wine

being afraid is pointless
it doesn't get you anywhere
but longing and passion

they certainly could
fill up your cart
fill up your car
fill up your paper
take along everything
you can carry

keep it
one day you very well might

need it again

you get only
one set of molars
brush them with care

you get only
one pile of bones some joints
look after them

you get only
one history
reflect upon it

everything that seems
humorous today
will come back again

all those free extras
you get with a bargain
will cost you the most

just like winter comes every year
no injury no foolishness
is just a coincidence

you are only given one life
with one beginning and one end
get used to it

d r a T e e d e

the art of giving up and
the art of overcoming

the art of waiting around and
screw the art

all of life is filled with art
all the time it's grand artistic

sentiments

the art of the unfathomable
the art of going with the flow

my life in art
is the most incomplete

the most implausible
the most uncomfortable

the most rigid
the most artistic

Translated by Jayde Will

Interview with

Madli Puhvel

translator of *Trap in Infinity*

by Jayde Will

How was the decision made to have "Trap in Infinity" published as an e-book?

Eeva Park was contacted by the e-publisher. She knew I had translated *Trap in Infinity* and asked whether I'd be willing to submit it for e-publication. For me the work was finished. I was glad to have it made available, though naturally I would have preferred paper version publication because in my limited experience I rarely see advertisements for books available only in the e-form. I am glad there is a journal such as ELM which can notify readers of e-translations of Estonian books.

You also translated *Border State* by Tõnu Õnnepalu, which was published in the US in 2000 and which was one of the few Estonian novels to appear in English up to that time – how does the experience of publishing of *Trap in Infinity* as an e-book compare?

In both cases I translated the book before I had a contract with a publisher. So, for *Border State* I had to first find a publisher on my own. With the e-publication, I was contacted by the author and then the publisher. Northwestern University Press which published *Border State* provided editorial help and advertisement. The e-book publisher did not.

Did you have any prior experience with e-books, either as a reader or as a translator?

I bought a Kindle in 2010, primarily to take books to read on a three week trip to China. Since then I have put about 40 books on it, primarily books I have wanted to start reading IMMEDIATELY, or else take along on trips.

You reside in the US – how has the position of e-books changed over the last few years? It seems there has been an explosion in the purchase of e-books.

I really cannot comment. I know there are several e-book readers now sold by different companies, for example, the bookstore Barnes and Noble has its own. With Kindle I deal only with Amazon.com and haven't followed the market for the others.

Do you feel that e-books open up new avenues for translators? Perhaps e-publishers are more likely to publish books they might not have published in print-only versions.

I think e-book publishers definitely are more likely to publish books that the paper version publishers refuse. The investment is much smaller. The paper version market for translated books is very small in the US, maybe 3% of all books published annually, at least it used to be that a few years ago. For a translator it's extremely difficult to find a publisher. E-book publishing may be a way to make more translations available.

Those that support e-publishing often mention accessibility as a huge advantage over printed books – do you think this is the case?

Accessibility is definitely a huge advantage for e-books. You read a good review and you want the book. You have your Kindle and your Amazon account, and the book is in your hands within 5 minutes. But other than accessibility and space, I still much prefer the paper version, a book where you can turn the pages and easily return to passages you liked, where illustrations (photos, maps) are clearer and you can share it with others.

What do you think the biggest advantage that e-books have over printed books?

Again, the biggest advantages are accessibility and the ease of bringing the book along. A minor advantage for those with bad eyesight is that you can make the fonts larger or smaller.

Do you have plans in the near future to have other translations published as e-books?

I have two other unpublished translations, Maimu Berg's *I loved a Russian* and Viivi Luik's *Seventh Spring of Peace*. I would be happy to have either published in e-book form but of course, it would depend on whether the authors would want it.

Do you think e-publishing is the way to go?

I think all authors would prefer to have books available both in the paper as well as the e-book format. That's how Amazon.com now sells most, it's good to have a choice.

Madli Puhvel is the author of *Symbol of Dawn* (1995), a biography of Estonia's first notable female poet, Lydia Koidula. In addition she was the translator of Tõnu Õnnepalu's novel *Piiririik*, published by Northwestern University Press as *Border State* in 2000. This year her translation on Eeva Park's novel *Lõks lõpmatuses* appeared as *Trap in Infinity* in e-book format published by Digira e-publishers. Since retiring as Professor of Medicine at the UCLA School of Medicine, in Los Angeles, California, Madli Puhvel and her philologist husband Jaan Puhvel have spent the past 20 summers at their country home in the midst of the Kõrvemaa forests, close to Aegviidu where hunting for mushrooms is one of her favourite pastimes.

Beginning of the tale

e-books

and the future of publishing

by Jayde Will and Eeva Park

E-books are quickly changing the landscape of publishing and readership. Worldwide the march of e-books has been staggering – over half of all books in the US are now sold as e-books, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. E-books are also making their way to Estonia, and you can see more and more people with e-readers sitting in cafes and other places. I had the chance to talk with Estonian writer Eeva Park about her book "Trap in Infinity", which was published by e-publisher Digira, as well as Madli Puhvel, the translator of the novel. I wanted to ask them about their opinions on translation, e-publishing and the future of the book.

JW: Your book Trap in Infinity, translated by Madli Puhvel, was published this year as an e-book. How did the idea to publish the translation as an e-book come about?

EP: What made me start seriously entertaining this chance was the fact that Madli Puhvel's translation of my novel Trap in Infinity long went unpublished due to the lack of a publisher. An author inevitably feels guilty when an endeavor that is connected to their work has reached a dead-end.

JW: What was your first reaction to the offer of having it as an e-book?

EP: I saw it as the only chance to have an already existing translation of the novel come out as a book. This time as an e-book.

JW: From what I know, you are the first Estonian writer to have an entire novel translated into a major language and published first in electronic format and not in printed form. Has your decision already

affected how other writers are beginning to look at electronic books?

EP: The biggest problem for reaching the audience of another language is still first and foremost a question of the translation, its quality. It was a great honor when Madli Puhvel offered to translate my novel, but at the same time translation fees and subsidies that are better ensured by the presence of a traditional publisher (at least at the current moment) than through the e-publishing system.

JW: The e-book publishing industry is just starting in Estonia. What do you think the biggest barriers are for the growth of e-books? People's mindset, the publishers, the authors themselves?

EP: I don't think authors would cause a problem here. Whether we wanted to or not, we all learned how to work on a computer, as well as impart our texts electronically. Those that are still writing with a typewriter or even a pen are very few, so in a certain sense e-publishing is a rather logical procession of things. At the same time, I don't think or want e-books to totally push out traditional books. You could say that a part of literature, for example science fiction, is suited almost better as an e-book by its nature than for example poetry. But that is also a very personal view.

JW: It seems that one of the main advantages of e-books is that they are accessible to people from all over the world – do you think there are any drawbacks to this? Are you afraid of books being downloaded illegally?

EP: The world of the internet is already so saturated that an unknown author from a small language that has been published has to fear more that his work remains unnoticed, even if it's "accessible to all", than he has to fear of it being "stolen". So for the moment I don't really know how to react with concern towards free downloading.

JW: What do you think the biggest barrier right now is for electronic books in Estonia is – the fact that it is new or that people do not have e-readers and other technology yet?

EP: We Estonians have always been quick in going along with newest things, but at the same time I have rarely seen people using e-readers. But I don't think the question is about the high price of e-readers, but rather about the overall decline of reading habits.

JW: I recently talked with Books From Lithuania, which is a public institution in Lithuania that promotes Lithuanian literature abroad. They have published two anthologies of Lithuanian prose as e-books, and it seems that there is interest in e-books: one anthology has been downloaded 130 times, while the other has been downloaded 250 times. Do you think these are promising numbers?

EP: For the beginning, 250 is certainly a promising number. At the same time I believe that as an e-book, you need to make the book more noticeable, not just upload it on the internet and wait that just maybe something miraculous will happen.

JW: In the US, the sale of electronic books has grown to around half of all books sold – do you think that could happen in Estonia?

EP: Everything reaches us sooner or later. There's no way of avoiding that, however the book will stay, and in the shape and way we love it.

Seventh biography of Eduard Vilde

by Sirje Kiin

Every new biography about Estonian writers should, in principle, be welcomed, because we do not have as many of them as do bigger and older-culture nations, where there exists a tradition of publishing different, alternative biographies of their literary greats. These types of biographies are few and far between in Estonia, but it can happen, because this newly published biography of the novelist and a playwright Eduard Vilde (1865-1933), the founder of Estonian critical realism, is the seventh one.

The very first book in this group was, *Eduard Vilde: eesti kirjanduse vanameister* (Eduard Vilde: Old Master of Estonian Literature), written by Karl Mihkla 1935. The poet Gustav Suits published a series of three biographical articles in a Swedish Estonian literary magazine *Tulimuld* in 1950. Herbert Salu's doctoral work in Finnish about the historical novels of Eduard Vilde was published 1964 in Helsinki. Two monographs followed by Villem Alttoa: the biography *Eduard Vilde* in 1965 and an analysis of Vilde's creative work, *Eduard Vilde sõnameistrina* (Eduard Vilde as a Master of the Word) in 1973. Finally, the largest monograph, *Eduard Vilde elu ja looming* (The Life and Work of Eduard Vilde), by Karl Mihkla, was published in 1972. In addition, there is a line of books with memoirs, collections of articles, and even collection of cartoons about Vilde. So we need to first ask the question, "What kind of new information or quality can be offered in a new biography of Vilde?"

The first addition made by this book is that it is the first biography of Eduard Vilde written by a female author. We can perhaps expect a bit of a different angle or point of view than those offered by male authors.

In her introduction Viitol points out that, because Vilde participated in the 1905 revolution, he fit well with the goals of soviet propagandists, who shaped and portrayed him as an excellent example of a socialist writer. In soviet Estonia, there were rules about what to hide in Vilde`s works and what to emphasize in them, but Viitol promises that now we can be free of those kinds of limitations and political influences. Also, Viitol promises in her introduction that she will delve into those issues and relationships in Vilde`s life that were not discussed during soviet times, or were touched on only very briefly.

Woman of the work, ox of the horn: let's see how a female biographer fulfill her

promises. She declares that she will not write much about Vilde's literary works, but this limitation by the author herself prevents her from making deeper connections between his life and creations. Viitol provides only a few examples when Vilde based a character on a real person. This choice also makes impossible to show how life has, or has not, affected the creative work of the biggest realist in Estonian literature. In my opinion, she has lost the best opportunity for a biographer, which is unfortunate because, in Vilde`s works, there are lot of those kind of connections. The promising title of Viitol's introduction, "Life as a story of creation" remains only a promise, because we don't find much of the story of Vilde's creation in this biography.

When there is no coverage of the subject's creations, then there can be no coverage of the reception, either. Viitol mentions it only a few times, despite there being numerous comments about how often Vilde felt himself excluded because of Estonia's very poor, cramped conditions, constant negative criticism, the pettiness of the literary award system, and the general unfairness of the cultural life. Vilde suffered from it so much that he wanted, after long years in exile, not to live in the 'perfect' Estonian Republic, for which he had fought strongly as a social democrat and about which he had written so many political articles, but somewhere in Alpine mountains or in Germany.

Instead of writing a biography connected to writer's work, Viitol has chosen another way, focusing on Vilde's relationships with his contemporaries. The value of this idea should be recognized because it might create a better picture of Vilde's times and produce a more complete gallery of characters. The cast of characters in this biography is really rich, with chapters about Vilde`s relatives, starting with another Estonian writer, his cousin Eduard Bornhöhe, and including his mother, sister, stepdaughter, first wife Antonie, and second wife Linda Jürmann. There are also chapters about Vilde's lovers, including the young poet Marie Under and the beautiful Jewish woman, Rahel Uschmarow, in his later years. In Viitol's book, we can read about Vilde's best childhood friend Jakob Hermann Vahtrik, about many Estonian journalists and writers (Jaak Järv, Juhan Liiv, Bernhard Linde, Peeter Speek, Jaan Lintrop, Karl August Hindrey), publishers (Eduard Virgo, Johan Lilienbach), and artists Ants Laikmaa and Magnus Kull. We can also learn about contemporary Estonian politicians Jüri Vilms, Jaan Tõnisson, Konstantin Päts, Johannes Vares Barbarus, Viktor Kingissepp and many others. Some of them are covered thoroughly, some more briefly, but the impact of their roles in Vilde's life is written quite persuasively.

Viitol writes most profoundly about the parallel lives of cousins – the two Eduards – Vilde and Bornhöhe, but sometimes the presentation of the material is erratic in time, place, and people. It is not always clear which Eduard the author is talking about. There is a little confusion about who was who's first critic: Vilde of Borhöhe or on the contrary. Viitol leaves slightly obscured the relationship of those two significant men in Estonian literature. Did the exuberant Vilde have more tenacity and talent than Bornhöhe, or did he just have more luck and better communications skills?

Viitol is, at times, quite tongue-tied when it comes to sharing her findings as a researcher. For example, she writes on page 47 that, in one unpublished manuscript from 1919 (*Estonian People's Theater*), Vilde shared his ideals quite well, but she does not explain what Vilde wrote about.

Chapter about faithful youth friend of Vilde offers lot of new material about revolutionary young man Jakob Hermann Vahtrik, but this exciting, tragic and well written chapter ends with a strange

sentence by author: “But there was nothing they could of said to each other in the end?” It is hard to believe, there was nothing to say to Vilde`s closest friend and co-fighter, whose wife and a mother of his five children was just killed in New Market of Tallinn 1905? Why was there nothing to say?

Though Viitol promises in her introduction to refute distortions made in Vilde’s biography by soviet authors, she does not argue very much with either Mihkla or Alttoa. She includes a few remarks concerning some small arguments by Mihkla, but even then she argues about the poet Juhan Liiv, not directly about soviet times interpretations of Vilde.

In fairness, there is an area in which this new biography does a good job of correcting errors from the past: she rehabilitates the reputation of Vilde`s first wife Antonie. Viitol does not present her as a fury as did previous male biographers. She understands the drama of Antonie better than male authors did and sees in her many more colors. She describes her as a business talent with good taste. In places you can feel author’s compassion to Antonie, who still loved her husband, though his lifestyle and world views did not fit with hers at all. Antonie spent the last years of her tragic life in long term hospital care, and she ended it by suicide in 1934, only few month after Vilde’s death in 1933.

Viitol still sees some good connections between Vilde`s work and life. For example, she plays with the idea, in the chapter about Marie Under, that her nature could have been the model for the central character Juliette Marchand in Vilde`s most famous historical panorama novel, *War of Mahtra*. Yet, she agrees with the arguments of Villem Alttoa that the Juliette character was written to mirror Maria Kollmann (p 111). In the same chapter, Viitol agrees with Sirje Kiin, who saw Marie Under as an ideal woman character for Vilde when he created Eeva Marland as a Woman of the Sun in his most beloved and performed play *Tabamata ime* (Elusive Miracle). I wonder why Viitol includes no photo of Marie Under while providing images of many other Vilde friends, colleagues, wives, and lovers.

Viitol deserves praise for a good, peaceful style of story-telling. Also, there is a good balance between created text and literary references, not too many or too long, so that the story is not interrupted. Considering the large size of the literary archive about Vilde, there is always a temptation to make long references, whole letters or articles for example, but Viitol is restrained and modest, sometimes even too reserved. Vilde’s letters to his lover Rahel could have been a much more colorful and juicy source if Viitol had sought to reveal the human and feelings side of Vilde’s character. At the same time, Viitol gives us a very precise overview of Vilde’s illnesses and health problems, despite them not being very relevant to his creative work (with the exception of eye problems that may have limited his later writing). But why is Vilde’s emotional and love life, his sensuality and eroticism, so carefully excluded from his biography, despite its influences on his early social life and – most important – his creativity?

In the chapter about Vilde’s second wife, Linda Jürmann, we are told a lot about their intellectual and political common interests, but a marriage does not consist solely of a mental partnership. Why their relationship cooled and why they lived apart for so many years, Viitol does not say. We are not told why Vilde fell in love with Rahel, or what attracted him to her. Instead, Viitol focuses on their communication difficulties and on the sad end of their love story. One really good exception to these problems is Viitol’s discovery of a new connection between Vilde’s late short story, *Casanova Says Goodbye*, and the ending of his relationship with Rahel. This is the kind of insight that I would have loved to see more of in this new biography.

This biography tells us a lot about how much Vilde loved humor and how many attempts he made to publish humor magazines and newspapers. There are many cartoons about Vilde in our literary history, which leads me to ask, why does only one appear in this book?

It seems to me that, on pages 129-130, Viitol is a bit unfair to politician Jaan Tõnisson, presenting only Social-Democratic criticism of him without an opposing view. Estonia's leading politician at the beginning of the Estonian Republic had many supporters, as well as critics.

I'm not sure that Viitol meant it this way but, to me, Vilde's criticism of the negative social climate inside Estonia, and his strong wish to stay away from everyday petty intrigues and reciprocal mud-throwing, sounds like an accurate description of the situation even today. When Vilde writes about his life in Denmark, "I live here in the cleanliness" (page 159), I worry that those words are felt by many Estonians who live abroad today. Analogously, we can wonder if Vilde's opinion about Estonian literary criticism in his day is also accurate today. He said it was a "cottagers" criticism. Several times during Vilde's life, his best novels and plays did not receive awards and accolades in Estonia because of some local small intrigues. Only later on was it discovered that his works had timeless and lasting value. Two examples of this are his most famous plays Elusive Miracle and *Pisuhänd* (The Hobgoblin).

Vilde`s financial situation remains a bit unclear. It has been widely reported that he had little money, and awaited small payments for submissions to Estonian newspapers. We hear of him pawning his possessions but, at the same time, Vilde traveled abroad not for just months but years. Later, he spent several months in expensive health resorts and even planned to buy a house in Germany or the Alpine mountains. We are left with the mystery of whether his poverty was real, or not. We do know that he never bought a house, but he did receive a nice flat as a gift from the Estonian Republic. That flat was in Kadriorg Park in Tallinn, and he worked there very productively for several years. Today, this location contains the Literary Home Museum of Eduard Vilde.

Some questions remain about Vilde's role in supporting the Estonian language. In the introduction, Viitol introduces Vilde as a fighter for Estonian language rights. After his return from the exile, starting in 1917, this was clearly the case. However, in the beginning of 20th century, Vilde wrote love letters to Marie Under in German. When and how a German language cultural personality change to become a fighter for Estonian language rights is not covered in this book. Also, there is little coverage about the development of Vilde's literary views. Viitol mentions that the young Vilde wanted desperately to become an actor, but details of that interest remain hidden.

Viitol has done a much better job in covering the development of Vilde's political views and how he became a Social Democrat. Vilde's strong criticism of Lenin was new to me, as were Vilde's prophetic warning about both Germany (1917-18) and Russia (1930s).

It was surprising for me to read how desperately Jaan Poska, later a national hero, tried to keep Russian as the official language in the Czars State of Russia. And, in contrast, how decisively Viktor Kingissepp, a Russian-minded revolutionary communist, fought to make Estonian the official language. Viitol's book proves once again that nothing in history is black and white, but many shades of gray.

Viitol depends heavily on the work of historian Jaak Valge, a recognized authority on this period of Estonian history, but the list of sources should have been a little bit broader, because the period during which

Vilde lived has been well-studied by Estonian and foreign researchers. Historical diversity would have benefited this book. Some of Viitol's sources are old and she has not always noticed newer studies. For example, her comments about Johannes Barbarus are based on Harald Peep`s work from decades ago. Also, photos should have source citations.

My general impression of this biography is that it is very Estonia-centered. Vilde, however, was an international man and diplomat who traveled and lived many years in other European countries (e.g., Germany, Denmark, Latvia). Vilde had an important diplomatic mission in 1919 when he traveled around Europe to apply for recognition to the new Estonian Republic. These events would imply the necessity of foreign archive sources in this book, but Viitol does not raise her eyes from her Estonian writing table. She does not go bravely outside to look at sources that could be found in foreign archives. Viitol prefers to stay safe and to refer only to previously-published material in Estonia.

Viitol does not precisely analyze how soviet editors censored Vilde's works, even to the point of creating clear falsehoods. What did Vilde write and what was written for or over him? As a free nation, now is the time to know precisely and honestly what really happened.

Finally, I appreciate the social and historical picture of Vilde's time created by this biography, substantiated by descriptions of many people in Vilde`s life. Viitol's book is not simply a story about Vilde, but also a story of Estonia at the beginning of the last century.

It's sad that Vilde's last big novel was not finished. It could have told a story about political corruption and social ethics and, if it had, it would ring true even today, wouldn't it? In reading Vilde's last political articles, we can see that he prescribed "democratic self-cultivation" as a cure for political corruption. From the last page of Viitol's book echoes the question, "Would the fate of Estonian Republic have been different if Estonian nation would have listened to the serious warnings of Eduard Vilde in the beginning of the 1930s?" In the context of recent political scandals in Estonia, one of Vilde`s own sentences is also very apt: "In the educated democracy, they feel a s h a m e."

Viitol's book engendered in me a deep sense of guilt. Why did Vilde constantly feel so discouraged in Estonia? Why did he not get enough support for his creative work in his own country? And the critical question today is, why might we all feel the same way?

Livia Viitol. Eduard Vilde.

Publisher Tänapäev, 2012, pp 375

Estonian Literary Awards

2011

by Piret Viires

The 2011 Cultural Award of the Republic of Estonia for Outstanding Lifetime Achievement was given, among others, to the literary critic and editor **Hellar Grabbi**; the national award for her work in 2011 went to the poet **Mari Vallisoo** for her collections *Koidutäht koolivihikus* (Morning star in an exercise book) and *Tabamatu toalävel* (The elusive on the doorstep).

The annual award of the Estonian Cultural Endowment was received by **Indrek Hargla** for his series of novels about Apothecary Melchior, for his continuing high standard of creative work and for his genre diversity.

The genre awards of the Estonian Cultural Endowment's Literature Foundation in 2011 were distributed as follows.
The best achievement in prose in 2011 was awarded to **Olle Laul**'s novel Kodutus (Homelessness). The poetry award went to **Kalju Kruusa** for the collection *Tühhja*. The best essay award went to **Tõnu Õnnepalu** for his book *Ainus armastus. Valik esseid* (The only love. Selection of essays). The drama award was given to **Jaan Kruusvall** for his play *Tasandikkude helinad* (Sounds of the plains). **Ilmar Tomusk**'s book *Volli vanad vigurid* (Volli's old tricks) was selected as the best achievement in children's literature. The award for translating from a foreign language into Estonian was given to **Leena Tomasberg** for her translation of Claude Simon's novel *The Flanders Road* from French. **Maima Grinberga** received the award for translating Estonian literature into a foreign language, namely Jaan Kross's *Professor Martensi ärasõit* (Professor Martens' Departure) into Latvian. The jury also gave an award outside the genre specification, and this went to **Andrei Hvostov** for his autobiographical novel *Sillamäe passion* (The Passion of Sillamäe).

The award for best article was given to **Ljubov Kisseljova** for Tegelased ja nende prototüübid. Jaan Krossi novelli *Kolmandad mäed* ja näidendi *Doktor Karelli raske öö* põhjal (Characters and their prototypes on the basis of Jaan Kross's short story The Third Mountains and play The Difficult Job of Doctor Karell; Keel ja Kirjandus 2011, no 6).

The awards for literature in Russian were received by **Andrei Ivanov**'s book Kopengaga (*Копенгага*) and Nil Nerlin's poetry published in 2011.

The 2011 debut award (the Betti Alver Award) went to **Margus Tamm**'s prose book *Unesnõiduja* (Sleep-charmer).

The 2011 Friedebert Tuglas short story award was given to **Kätlin Kaldmaa**'s short story *Kui poisid tulid* (When the boys came, Looming 2011, nr 12) and **Toomas Vint** for his short story *Pettekujutelmade linnuparv* (Flock of disenchantment) in the book *Kunstniku elu* (Life of an artist). The short story award was established by Friedebert Tuglas in 1970. There are two awards each year, given to worthy recipients on Tuglas's birthday, 2 March.

The Eduard Vilde Award of Vinni Parish for the best literary work that follows Eduard Vilde's traditions went to **Indrek Hargla** for his medieval crime novel *Apteeker Melchior ja timuka tütar* (Apothecary Melchior and the Hangman's Daughter).

The Virumaa literary award is given for the best artistic interpretation of the history of the Estonian people in poetry, prose or drama, or for monographic research related to Virumaa. In 2011 this ward was given to **Andrei Hvostov**'s *Sillamäe passion* (The passion of Sillamäe).

Hugo Hiibus's biographical book *Piibu ja pliiatsiga* (With pipe and pencil) received the A. H. Tammsaare Albu Parish Literary Award, for a work about today's world or a work tackling the life and work of A. H. Tammsaare.

The Võru County government issues the Bernard Kangro award for authors from Võrumaa, connected with it or for a work dealing with Võrumaa-related topics. This time it went to **Grethe Rõõm**'s children's book *Raamatuvardjad. Tähtraamatu tagasitulek*.

The Jaan Kross literary award is issued by the Jaan Kross Foundation with the aim of recognising remarkable literary achievement, in areas associated with the writer's diverse creative work, which display ethical and aesthetic standards typical of Kross's own work. The latest recipient was **Jüri Hain**'s *Väikene Wiiralti-raamat* (A small book of Wiiralt) and *Raamatulehitseja* (Browser of books).

The Juhan Liiv Award goes to the best Estonian-language poem published for the first time during the last year, and is awarded by Alatskivi Parish, together with the Alatskivi Secondary School and Liiv Museum. This time it went to **Jaan Kaplinski**'s poem *Nelikümmend aastat tagasi* (Forty years ago).

Another poetry award, named after Gustav Suits, has been granted since 2004 by the Tartu city government and the Cultural Endowment of Tartu and is given to a poet who, during the past year, published at least one excellent, philosophically profound collection of poetry. The most recent was awarded to **Carolina Pihelgas** for her collection *Õnnekangestus* (Stupor of happiness).

A special annual award, named after Karl Eduard Sööt, and issued by the Luunja local government and school, is given for children's poetry. In 2011 it went to **Wimberg**'s poems *Rokenroll. Luuletused tarkadele lastele* (Rockenroll. Poems for clever children).

The Estonian science fiction Stalker Award is given by the Estonian Science Fiction Association; in 2011 it went to **Indrek Hargla**'s collection *Suudlevad vampiirid* (Kissing vampires).

The Tallinn University Literary Award was initiated by Rector Rein Raud in January 2007, with the aim of acknowledging and introducing Estonian authors who study or teach at Tallinn University or have graduated from it. The best of the works published in 2011 were **Jürgen Rooste**'s collection of poetry *Kuidas tappa laulurästikut* (How to kill a mocking-viper) and **Märt Väljataga**'s translations of short stories by Vladimir Nabokov, *The Vane Sisters* and *Signs and Symbols*.

The literary award Esimene samm (The first step) was established by the Literary Festival Prima Vista for the best printed text by a debuting author. Among debuts published in the press in 2011, the award went to a short story by **Silvia Urgas**, *Lugu Koit Toomest, millel pole Koit Toomega vähimatki pistmist* (A story about Koit Toome that has nothing to do with Koit Toome, Värske Rõhk nr 25).

(In most cases, only rough translations of the titles are given.)

Short Outlines of Books by Estonian

by Brita Melts, Rutt Hinrikus and

Peeter Helme
Varastatud aja lõpus
(At the End of the Stolen Time)
Tallinn: Tuum, 2011. 160 pp
ISBN 9789949901494

A couple of decades ago, Jaan Undusk published the novel Kuum. Lugu noorest armastusest (Hot. A Story of a Young Love) (1990), which has, up to now, remained a unique and unrepeatable phenomenon in Estonian literature. It is essentially a treatise on love and, stylistically, a glorious wordplay, an exhilaration in language. The third novel by one of the most remarkable authors, critics and essayists of the younger generation, Peeter Helme (b. 1978), displays the same approach: it attempts to write down all that is known about love, but in fewer words and less playfully. The main effort of At the End of the Stolen Time is spent in describing love, in putting the feeling into words, and the evolution of love is described in quite a moderate tempo: more intense parts about feelings alternate with philosophical deliberations on time, based on German thinkers. The 'stolen time' of the title refers to the time the two people spend together, initially in secret, stealing it from their separate everyday lives. Thus, the attempts to describe absolute love are supported by deliberations on absolute time, and the two point to the main question of the book: is the continuity of love and its preservation possible at all if there are no solid foundations (for example, cohabiting or a child) on which to build this love?


Peeter Helme (Photo by Scanpix)

Peeter Helme has said that the best literary style is simply 'being honest to oneself until the end', and in this book he demonstrates such a complete honesty of

Authors

Janika Kronberg

feelings. The book is supposedly based on real life, but the reality is skilfully overshadowed by an extremely discreet approach to everything outside the feelings of love: side characters are given neither personality nor substance, the everyday milieu is indifferently neglected, the life of the couple outside their relationship remains anonymous, and they are not even given names; there are not even hints about their professions or activities. Helme's text flows only to describe their life in their feelings. However, this relationship has no good future, it becomes a routine, the passion fades and, ultimately, the main character "has no strength even to give direction to his own life, let alone to rein in their love or preserve it". Even the most perfect love hides a good measure of sadness and Helme's book shows us the unavoidability of the fact that even the happiest life can be lived unhappily.

While Helme's previous book September (2009) was icily ironic, sarcastic and, in a sense, a grotesquely harsh work, we can say that this novel is warmly emotional and even romantic. Romanticism is always accompanied by a small amount of exaggerated sweetness. The author has admitted this in the book but, in this case, he has expressed this romantic atmosphere with words in such a way that it has preserved its pure and sensible beauty. This is not a light pink and one-dimensional romance but a thought-inspiring and intellectual analysis of feelings, written in a supple and sensitive style. BM

Jaak Jõerüüt

Kõik luuletused

(All Poems)

Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2011. 331 pp
ISBN 9789985794623

The title All Poems seems to mark a kind of a summary of the author's path of poetry and it does, indeed, contain all the poems that the prose author and poet Jaak Jõerüüt (b.1947) has published in his five collections of poetry (Kaitsekiht 1975, Kõne sellel teemal 1977, Üks ja ainus 1997, Uus raamat 2004, and Armastuse laiad, kõrged hooned 2010). Jõerüüt, who at present is the Estonian Ambassador in Sweden, had made his first appearance in print eight years before publishing his debut collection of poems: in the late 1960s he had participated in official literary publications, but also in dissident samizdat literary almanacs. As a

rule, he has not included these poems in his later collections and, with one or two exceptions, they cannot be found in All Poems. Despite this omission, All Poems reveals a representative and varied path of poetry.

What have been the main directions and changes in this path? Since the very beginning, the poet has striven towards an individual, elegant and aesthetic style. By organising words and using them to reflect life, he attempts to overcome both private and general discords in the alienated world, to search for truth and recognise lies, to discuss life and death, love and happiness. Jõerüüt writes about great eternal themes and does not manifest his private points of view. In his first collection, he declared, “I myself. I, viewed from aside./ Inside me, among other things, my heart that we are not talking about.” His poetry has been called essentially objective and distanced, a poetry of “things and situations” that does not offer many chances to see the real soul and spirit of the poet and does not reveal personal moods but makes generalisations using ordinary phenomena and details. “... if you want to hide sadness, put up a protective layer!”: the young poet often hides his sadness and deeper emotions; he wraps his self in a pronounced impersonality, which has even been seen by critics as a conscious hostility towards poetry. But, thirty years later, we can see open emotions, poetry that comes unhindered and straight from the poet’s heart and his work is much more self-centred. In the collection published in 2004, the author promised: “I SHALL LEARN to dive into myself/ The well of my heart is deep”, and his journey takes him more and more to his own inner landscapes, being more and more personal and even confessional. This confessionality is also the leitmotif of Jõerüüt’s latest book of prose, his autobiographical essayist novel Muutlik (2010).

The poet’s style has changed as well. His earlier condensed, coolly ironic, analytical and laconic bystander’s view has become freer, warmer, deeper and more insightful. Such changeability in expression marks a steady movement towards an elaborate stylistic and nuanced whole, at the same time clearly holding on to his refined straightforwardness. Already in his first book the poet declared, “When making a story of your life, you cannot avoid emphasising”; All Poems draws different shades of style and emphasis together into a journey through the poet’s inner landscapes, where his aim is to finally reach himself. It is interesting to note that Jõerüüt, who has published poetry for 45 years, has never been fascinated by the hot trends of the moment. He has, from the very beginning, proceeded from his own personal style and poetic quality, having thus remained unusually individual and independent of the mainstream. BM

Doris Kareva

Sa pole üksi. Lood.

(You Are Not Alone. Stories)
Tallinn: Verb, 2011. 224 pp
ISBN 9789949912469

Doris Kareva (b.1958), who has previously published only poetry and articles on various themes, has now put together her first book of prose. There have been other authors who have started with poetry and moved on to writing stories. Some of them, such as Viivi Luik, have remained true to prose after having changed their genre, but others, such as Lehte Hainsalu and Kristiina Ehin, who published her first collection of short stories six years ago, are continuously balancing on the border of the two genres. Doris Kareva has published more than a dozen poetry collections and we wouldn’t expect her to change genres and, to be sure, she did recently publish another collection of poetry, Olematuse aiad. This collection of stories, You Are Not Alone, contains 20 poetic fairy

tales, which all can all be characterised as journeys towards harmony. Harmony should border on “silence, chiming silence”, and this silence gives birth to stories, just as it is written on the back cover of the book: “Silence is the best storyteller in the world. If you listen to it for some time, stories emerge that you have never heard before, but which you recognise instantly. You are never alone – the world is talking to you.” Thus these stories can be taken as a journey born of silence, whose progress can mostly be followed through the prism of emotions, and whose aim is to achieve equilibrium: the stories tell us about yearning, loneliness, friendship, empathy, and love in human souls and in the universe.

Kareva’s prose is, similar to her poetry, polished and tasteful, her texts are lyrically fragile and ethereal, the poetic world she has created floats now and then like a dream and, although her stories cannot be called lyrical miniatures, they can still be seen as by-products of poetry. However, her message is very clear, although it is rendered in eloquent parables: the author, a lyricist of sensitive and contemplative character, warns the reader of “overthrowing the fine equilibrium of the world”. Human weaknesses, mistakes and existential problems are presented with wise, womanly tactfulness and discreet philosophical insight into life, without any hints of reprimanding morals.

“I have always wanted to write fairy tales, because I have always much loved reading, but I have also realised that fairy tales cannot be written in such a way that you simply figure them out and write them down. Fairy tales have to develop and grow, and it took me very many years to grow into them,” said Kareva in one of the cultural TV broadcasts about her book. The fact that the author really did slowly grow into these stories is confirmed by the mature plots full of wisdom and the stylistically graceful texts, whose elaboration can seem even too pretty, without any space for catching one’s breath. However, this is the poet’s style and any deviation would prevent us from achieving our goal: harmony. Even the sadness that hides behind the sublime serves the aim of striving for equilibrium. “Do not seek anything less than perfection,” says the book, and Kareva is following this path into the world of pure fairy tales. BM

Imbi Paju
Soome lahe õed. Vaadates teiste valu
(Sisters across the Gulf of Finland. Watching the Pain of Others)
Tallinn, Hea Lugu, 2011 428 pp

Imbi Paju (b.1959) is a journalist, film director and writer who lives alternately in Estonia and Finland. She is best known for her film Memories Denied (2005) and the book of the same title, published in 2006. It has been difficult, even for the author, to overcome the emotional power of words in


Imbi Paju (Photo by Scanpix)

Memories Denied, but the resources of memory are still far from being exhausted.

Imbi Paju's new book Sisters across the Gulf of Finland. Watching the Pain of Others has also grown together with a film and ripened after the completion of the film. The film about sisters on opposite shores of the Gulf of Finland opens with a meeting between two old women. Some time in their youth the women shared the same ideals: one of them served in the Estonian women's voluntary defence organisation Eesti Naiskodukaitse, while the other was a member of a similar organisation in Finland, Lotta Svärd. Both of these organisations were created to give women an equal opportunity with men to defend their homeland. The Estonian woman Helmi Visnapuu lives through almost the whole of the 20th century: she was born in 1915. Her story was briefly told in Memories Denied. The present book does not add much to it, except for Helmi's confession that, although she has not forgotten the pain, humiliation and forced labour in Siberia, she neglected to tell everything at the time of making the film and book, and what is left to tell has a deep meaning.

The Soviet regime made the people who defended their country criminals, and the leaders of women's organisations were executed soon after the annexation of Estonia by the Soviets, thus sharing the fate of Estonian army officers.

Very often, discoveries are made and new knowledge is acquired by sympathising with other people's fates. We can say that the sisters across the Gulf of Finland are sisters to all of us. In the world, and even nearby, in Finland, people did not know for a long time what was actually happening in Estonia. Imbi Paju has been passionately devoted to filling these gaps in people's knowledge and she talks about Estonia's past and present. If any historian tries to reproach the Estonian leaders of the 1930s, she rushes in to defend their positions.

The story of the women of the two countries has mostly been written from the Estonian point of view. Paju does not use the discourse of historians; she writes in the language of journalists and essayists, which undoubtedly guarantees a wider audience for her works.

Sisters across the Gulf of Finland skilfully combines history and the stories of the people who have survived the rollercoaster of history; only stories are the measure of history: it is individual memory that joins human history with the non-empathic "great history", the singular with the general. Helmi serves as the leitmotif of the story, and she keeps the reader and even the author herself on the rails. The book touches upon the names or stories of several Finnish *pikkulotta* and Estonian *naiskodukaitsja*. The story of the two similar organisations of the two countries, which have undeservedly and due to violent demands been forgotten, is the backbone of the book. The hard work done in finding the surviving members of the organisations deserves the greatest merit.

The new book confirms Imbi Paju's reputation as an author focused on a single theme. The task of telling about pain weighs heavy on her heart; each of her books is a mission, a special task, and an obligation to enlighten her readers. For Paju, the telling of Estonia's story also means assuming the position of an advocate for all smaller and weaker participants in history, who have often proved to be, and are even now, the victims of powers and regimes, but whose pain is overlooked by indifferent bystanders.
RH

Aino Pervik

Matlena teekond

(Matlena's Journey)
Tallinn, Mustvalge Kirjastus, 2010. 72 pp

Critics have said that this small book, published in 2010, is beautiful, deep and has a powerful force of generalisation. Aino Pervik (b. 1932) is a well-known author, who has earned her renown with numerous books for children and young adults. The few books that she has written for adults have, so far, attracted little attention. Her most popular books, which have made her a classic of Estonian children's literature, are, for example, Arabella, mereröövli tütar (Arabella, the Pirate's Daughter) and Kunksmoor. These are funny books with exciting plots and expressive characters, but they also have deeply pedagogical messages that give young readers something to think about.

The story of Matlena's journey is told by an experienced and skilful author. Pervik has said that the story is based on the family lore from her mother's side. The plot is simple: the author's great-grandmother, who is expecting a child, goes to the city, meaning Tallinn, from the country. She needs a certificate confirming that her lawful husband, who has gone missing in the Crimean War, is dead. This war positions the plot in the 19th century. Matlena is expecting a child, and its father has to become Matlena's husband, which is why the certificate is needed. Matlena fights for the honour and good name of her unborn child and, therefore, for all the following generations. She is worried because the village does not forgive offenders against its customs. The story is simple, but philosophical as well. You cannot go against a fixed order but, within the framework of the order, if you have the strength and initiative, you can do anything.

"If you have the paper [the certificate], even God will not mind but will accept you into holy matrimony. If you are a widow and you have the paper, then your new life can be blessed, parents are free of sin and the child is proper and lawful in the eyes of the village. The demand of the village is that you have the paper."

The story is told in the form of inner monologues of alternating narrators. First Matlena talks, and then the author explains things; some scenes at the outset of the story are told in third-person, so as to provide a view from a height over the whole panorama of the story. This short book links the author and her ancestors in the continuity of life. "And I think that the continuity must not be broken by me," says the author in her part of the inner monologues. "Nobody knows for sure any more how it all happened or what it looked like to other people. You think about it and write it down just as if you had seen it with your own eyes." RH

Aino Pervik (Photo by Tairo Lutter/Õhtuleht)

Rein Raud

Hotell Amalfi

Hotel Amalfi
Tallinn: Tuum, 2011. 163 pp
ISBN 9789949918621

Rein Raud (b.1961) is the most erudite Estonian scholar of Japan and an author who writes convincingly in any genre. His new book Hotel Amalfi is, similarly to his previous one (Vend, 2008), a book of extremely film-like character. This is an elegantly exact and balanced, exciting story about the creative work and dreams of the head of an interior design firm, the most laconic summary of whom may be that he "designs human souls and castles in the air".

The story opens with a mysterious event: the main character, called Roland, an interior designer, finds a slip of paper in his shoe with a message that promises unexpected events. Soon, two strangers appear who offer him an extremely inspiring commission to design a perfect hotel where all guests, from a tourist who seeks affordable comfort to a CEO who is accustomed to luxury and refinement, will feel absolutely comfortable and at home, as if the place was created for them. The commissioner demands that only Roland and none of his subordinates be the designer, and Roland accepts the fantastic, challenging commission. He borrows the name for his hotel from the small seaside town of Amalfi in the Italian province of Salerno, which is, earlier in the book, briefly related to some events in his private life. Having failed with his initial design and realising that this extraordinary interior design has to use plays of light, the protagonist starts to see the still incomplete interiors in his dreams. And his life lived in this dream space – separate from the real life, but with the same (hopeful) characters who all have the same dream on the same night – takes a direction of its own, "But there, in that hotel, I was as free as I knew how to be and I could do everything that I ever wanted to do."

In this dream hotel, Roland is naked and invisible to all, until a person arrives who is able to see him. "Although outside this hotel everyone can see my physical body, hear me talking and see me moving, none of them can see my real self, the Roland who is able to create a world by using only his spiritual strength, to create such a world where, right now, we two can move mountains, erect cities and melt the ice. Nobody sees it. Only you." The one who can see him is, naturally, a woman – Regina – who has both business and emotional private relations with Roland in real life. Thanks to her, Roland learns to experience new feelings, to see what is truly important and, having corrected the mistakes in some of her house designs, he finally starts to understand perfection, "... no perfection is complete if it does not hide a discord". These two stories, one in the real world and the other in dreams (and the latter may even be more intriguing than the former), progress on their parallel paths towards a fatal point where the dream life proves to be more vigorous than the real life. The interior designer has finally realised that, although routine work can be fatal to a creative soul, absolute freedom can be as fatal. Ultimately, it is the reader who has to decide whether Hotel Amalfi is a story of self-discovery or self-loss. BM

Lauri Sommer

Räestu raamat

(The Book of Räestu)
Tallinn. Menu Kirjastus, 2012. 272 pp

Lauri Sommer (b.1973), a writer with an MA in literature, is also known as a musician. He started publishing as a poet (debut collection in 1998) but has also written prose, and his books of prose have been well received. His latest, The Book of Räestu, belongs to the present day literary mainstream – autobiographies – as well as offering excellent examples for those who attempt to explain how life becomes literature or how we recognise when it happens.

This is quite a special book, containing autobiographical, biographical and literary historical themes that are all of equal importance. Sommer writes about his acquaintances, his relatives and about the history of his family, but does it in a unique way that changes routine everyday life into something special. He believes that we have to remember all our ancestors with gratitude, and he unites people and places with the magical and the circumstantial.

Lauri Sommer (Photo by Scanpix)

We cannot accuse Sommer of following the present trend in Estonian literature of exploiting one's biography: what else should an author write about if not about his own life and experiences. The story of one's ancestors can prove to be a way of revealing some essential secrets.

"One's ancestors can be seen as variations in the common life force," says Sommer, and continues elsewhere that "the pull of songs, the ancient means of cognising the world, is strong and can change one's essence". Using his inheritance of old songs and stories, Sommer searches for and finally finds the core of existence. The story of the people of the village of Räestu is, actually, a story about discovering oneself as one of the links of the great chain, and about being a part of the ancient and magical whole.

The village of Räestu, which cannot be found on maps, is the centre of Sommer's world; here, it is not enough "if you know each apple tree and each building of the farm, you also have to know the person who planted or built them … you have to remember each person who has laboured here with gratitude."

Sommer's world is formed by the landscapes of southern Estonia, more lush and romantic than the landscapes and the sense of life in northern Estonia. In addition to his family line and the people of his village, Sommer draws into his world the local writers Artur Adson and Juhan Jaik, as well as some cats, boulders and many other natural objects.

Concerning Estonian autobiographical literature, a number of well-known authors have already been mentioned and analysed: Jaan Kross, Jaan Kaplinski, Tõnu Õnnepalu and several others; all of them have created unique and representative worlds of their own. Lauri Sommer's monumental, warm and magical Räestu presents a new, multi-layered and distinctive path through the thicket of Estonian autobiographical literature. RH

Andrus Kasemaa

Leskede kadunud maailm

(The Lost World of Widows)

Tallinn: Varrak, 2012. 173 pp
ISBN 9789985325094

Andrus Kasemaa's (b. 1984) three collections of poetry have been warmly received. In his first book of prose, the author continues to develop place myths and other themes that we already know from his poetry. Kasemaa's first collection of poetry bore a title with a mythological touch, Poet's Peace (Poeedirahu) (2008), marking the poet's home place near Lake Peipsi in Ida-Virumaa.

In The Lost World of Widows, Kasemaa brings forward one concrete aspect of his poetry and develops it into a kind of perfection. He focuses on depicting the landscapes of his childhood, which were left empty after people left their farms in the 1990s, by describing the life and fate of old widowed women. The result is unique in Estonian literature, a successful fusion of a treatise and a work of fiction that Kasemaa calls "vidualogy". It is relevant to point out associations with scientific research because some parts of the book remind us of an anthropological or ethnological study of the history of a certain area during almost a century. We read pages-long lists of things that are a part of the widows' world; the author has used local oral tradition, as well as archival sources, and the photos of the old widows add a special charm and a dimension of reality to the book. The era of the widows is not limited to the time that Kasemaa himself has experienced but reaches back to the year 1849, when a law was issued that allowed peasants to buy the farms they had been living on. He pays special attention to the settlers' farms that the young state of Estonia gave in the 1920s to soldiers who had fought in the Estonian War of Independence. Analogy to the Old Testament is clearly pronounced in the book: "It was just like the creation of the world. In the beginning, the land was empty and barren. Then came the man and the woman. The man built the cattle shed and the sauna, where they lived during the first year."

Kasemaa has described his book and its objects, "The study of widowship is really a pastime and hobby of gentlemen. I have to admit that I am much more fascinated by eighty- or ninety-year-old widows than seventy-year-olds, as the older ones are more mature, and they observe life as if they have already crossed the border." The stories of the widows reveal the author's pathos set against a background of modern urbanisation and the accompanying spiritual splitting and complexes, and the unavoidable disappearing of old traditions. In this pre-Internet epoch, the widows live in the safe world of their possessions and stories. The long-gone happy days and people whom we can see in old photos are given a new life in Kasemaa's book. This life also includes a young boy's wanderings in the woods and fields, realisation of nature's harmony, the romanticism of playing Red Indians and treasure hunts. Naturally, death and burials play an important role in the widows' world. "The widows' photo albums were like mythical books, like pictures frozen on the iris of drowned people, like the cooled-down worlds of supernovas. Everything was long-gone, forgotten, endlessly full of dead people."

Kasemaa's unattainable and lost ideal, poeticised in his book, seems to be a time that flows in an archaic and peaceful rhythm and a patriarchal way of living, the magical symbol of which is an image from his childhood of a man with a horse ploughing a field. At the same time, this is an allusion to a painting by the Russian painter Ivan Shishkin, "Morning in a Pine Forest", a copy of which hung in very many places during the Soviet time. Here, Kasemaa has hit on a paradox of Estonian history: although the Soviet regime deported and tried to destroy the Estonian people, the traditional country life, centred on agriculture, fell apart only after Estonia regained independence. Some efforts to balance the country life and city life have become noticeable only during the last decade, largely related to rediscovering the cultural heritage, and these changes have given new hope to Kasemaa as well.

Kasemaa's style is mostly descriptive and registering; intertwining narratives that present the widows' stories alternate with his own subjective conclusions and private childhood memories. His skilful balancing on the border of good taste makes the book particularly delectable, even spicy. His text balances between fetishism and gerontophilia; with great interest, he observes the widows' old-fashioned washing drying on clotheslines like fascinating ethnographic items, and describes how he secretly drank their liquid glucose and how he dreams of entering the widows' dreams. But this deep understanding of the world of the widows, the excited sliding of a hand over old dresses, contains little of direct erotica and much more of the memories of the one-time erotic tension embedded in them. JK

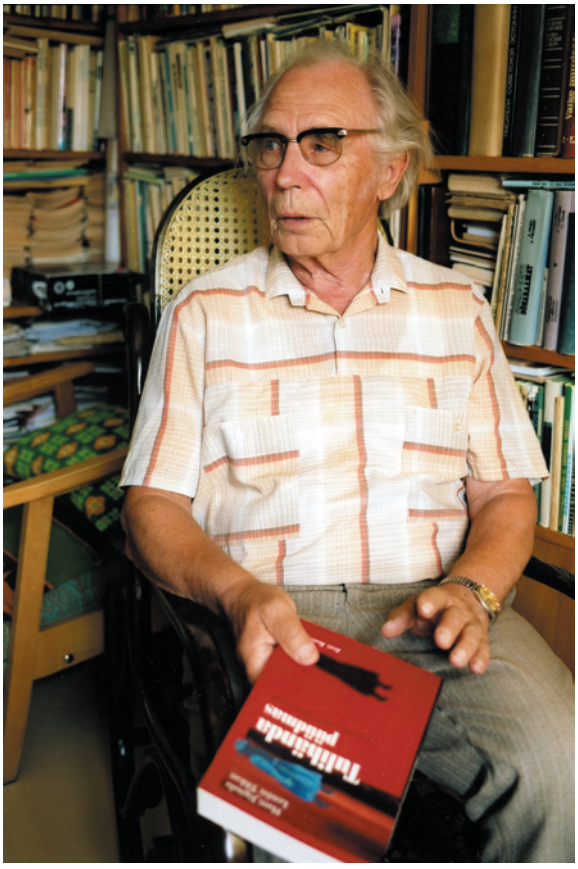
Andra Teede
Käigud
(Moves)
Pärnu: Jumalikud Ilmutused,
Divine revelations, 2011. p. 110
ISBN 9789949920013

Andra Teede (b. 1988), the youngest member of the Estonian Writers' Union, was only 17 when she published her first collection of poems, Takso Tallinna taevas (Taxi in the Sky of Tallinn, 2006). To an unusual extent for a debut, the collection was remarkably well received. Ever since then, Andra Teede has been described as talented by all critics and has established herself firmly in our literary scene. Besides poetry, she writes criticism and portrait stories, conducts interviews and actively participates in literary life by organising grand-scale events. Käigud is already the fourth collection of poetry of the still very young author, which demonstrates her purposeful aspirations and creative development into an even bolder, sharper and word-sensitive poet.

Teede's work represents pure, strikingly honest and melancholy urban poetry. She is simultaneously sad and rebellious, lyrical and blasé, socially sensitive and funny, passionate and meek. In her work, emotional spontaneity, simplicity of thought, verbal verve and awareness of style form an inspiring symbiosis, which revolves around three significant topics: the reflection of society in people, love and yearning, and time. The latter forms the framework for Teede's work: the themes rely on the existing environment and self-perception; the poet refers to the movement of time and constant change and, along with this, people change too, including the poet, and the reflections of society captured in free verse.

The debut collection contained the lines: "the hollow din of tallinn / when fear sticks to cold stones / the morning cries out in vain / in the primordially painful / damp town wall convent / autumn plays with us wetly", and these sum up the main mood of the book. Later, however, images of the environment remain more like background lighting and increasingly deepening self-perceptions start to dominate. It has been said about Teede's poetry that it is "stylish decadence, with plenty of intellectual substance and youthful enthusiasm". In her case, the decadence conceals ebullient emotions, anxiety, sincerity and consideration, as well as the strength of the lyrical self, with unshakeable self-perception.

In her fourth collection, Käigud, Teede is significantly calmer, more pensive and even resigned; there is no longer any youthful rebellious spirit or mindless bursts of passion. The ponderings of the lyrical self are deeper and more rational, and her previous spontaneity in words and life has been replaced by a certain maturity and wisdom of experience. Against the background of goings and returns in the poems of the collection, there is a constant yearning for love, expectation, loneliness and the need to be independent. Teede's alert gaze at the surrounding society has certainly survived, although the poet has become perceptibly older in her perceptions, and this is a sign of moving towards maturity. BM



Harri Jõgisalu (Photo by Alar Madisson)