

# new voices

from Europe

LITERATURE  
ACROSS  
FRONTIERS

literary  
europelive

Juana Adcock  
Bruno Vieira Amaral  
Clare Azzopardi  
Rumena Bužarovska  
Erika Fatland  
Albert Forns  
Anja Golob  
Árpád Kollár  
Ciwanmerd Kulek  
Zoran Pilić

**discover**

**emerging literary talent**

**selected by European**

**festivals and venues**

# Who are the most interesting writers working in Europe today?

In our era of information overload, recommendations are more important than ever. This is why we have decided to make an annual selection of emerging European literary talent part of our landmark project Literary Europe Live. Chosen from a long list of thirty by a group of literary festivals and venues, the selection aims to highlight the richness and diversity of European writing in all genres and languages, including minority ones.

The selected authors are being given an opportunity they might not otherwise have with international awards that focus on a single genre or are judged by a single-language jury. And what makes the selection particularly interesting is the authors' varied engagement in the world of literature: they are novelists, short story writers, poets, but also literary translators, critics, editors, curators and organisers of projects. Their work will be promoted and, we hope, noticed, but they will also be brought together in numerous events - festivals, workshops, residencies - to discuss, translate, write and find inspiration for new work.

In other words, with the New Voices from Europe selection we are doing what Literature Across Frontiers has done for the past fifteen years: making literature travel, sometimes from the most unexpected places and in unexpected ways.

Alexandra Büchler  
Director of Literature Across Frontiers

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# Juana Adcock

Juana Adcock is a poet and translator writing in English and Spanish. Born in Mexico in 1982, she has lived in Scotland since 2009. Her first book *Manca* explores the anatomy of Mexico's violence and was named by *Reforma's* distinguished critic Sergio González Rodríguez as one of the best poetry books of 2014. She is currently apprenticed to Liz Lochhead as part of the Clydebuilt poetry apprenticeship scheme.



## This body of a woman I inhabit

This body of a woman I inhabit, desde where I've lifted my arm to touch the hair on the head of Moses, suddenly moved  
 to inside out tears from an entire childhood  
 of lips stiffened to sustain the world protect  
 the softness of our angles our wisdom of curtains, desde where I've half-lowered  
 eyelashes to seduce three, four desde where I've traced the sinuous "S" of desire  
 which Cratylus called "serpent" and Adam called "perception of flux," desde where I've grown tired of nursing  
     like Teresa or Diana  
 like the fear they did not feel when touching lepers  
 with their immaculate hands, the lips  
 with which they kissed  
 their blessed sores desde where I've washed out workshop grease  
 soaked fibres in a universal river of saliva desde where I've bled drops  
 miscarried fertilised wheat ivy desde where I've been a plot all bounty where goats graze

## Benediction

I throw my mobile phone  
 into the toilet  
 flush  
 wait a while  
 call myself  
 leave myself voicemail  
 may it reach a disoriented crocodile  
 some nuclear seaweed  
 an unavoidable concrete wall:  
     may your head be blessed  
     by an X flown by four birds  
     may your feet be blessed  
     by the worms that will eat you  
     may your hands be blessed  
     by the azaleas you didn't plant  
     may your navel be blessed  
     by the cells of your breath  
     may your mouth bless  
     it all, bless.

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"Juana represents so much of what is great about modern Scotland; new voices from diverse backgrounds making language their own, unafraid to experiment and innovate. Her practice is firmly balanced between translation and creative writing, and her poems and workshops often explore the relationship between the two."  
 – From the nomination  
 by Scottish Poetry Library

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# Bruno Vieira

Born in Portugal in 1978, Bruno Vieira Amaral is a writer, translator, literary critic and editor. His debut novel *As Primeiras Coisas* (The Former Things), published in 2013 by Quetzal Editores, picked up four major literary prizes – *Time Out Lisboa's* 2013 Book of the Year award, the 2013 Fernando Namora Literary Prize, the 2013 PEN Narrative Prize and the 2015 José Saramago Prize.

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“...some of the most beautiful pages in recent Portuguese literature, proving the rare intensity of this triumphant debut.”

– José Mário Silva,  
*LER on As Primeiras Coisas*

“Bruno Vieira Amaral’s debut novel [...] introduces a collective character, the Amélia neighbourhood, that may well become an enduring feature in Portuguese literary imagery.”

– Isabel Lucas,  
*Público on As Primeiras Coisas*

“A surprising novel of rare and poignant beauty, [...] one of those writers who know that good, true prose is also musical, it elevates and redeems us.”

– J. Rentes de Carvalho,  
*on As Primeiras Coisas*

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## Extract from *The Former Things*

I felt numb when I left my mum’s house. We’d had cottage cheese, cod with straw potatoes. I had seconds, and we drank wine – rough, cheap wine. I stood on the landing, lights out, smoking a cigarette and looking at the windows of the buildings across the street. I enjoy smoking in the dark, a clandestine pleasure. That’s where my mind was there and then. I walked down the stairs. I was sure the stairwell used to feel more alive, more people would go up and down with weary sighs, and even outside those stirrings, the muted animal breathing from within people’s homes would have been heard; voices from television sets, toys dragged across loose floorboards, doors creaking open and banging shut, knives slicing into onions, the tiny thunk of blades hitting stone kitchen counters, pots filled to the brim settling on the stove, matches scratching against the coarse edge of a box, water bubbling, brought

to boil, clotheslines screeching through rusted pulleys, the flutter of birds startled in their cages, a nervous dog pawing a wooden door, a yelp, the faded laughter of the miserable, the steady hum of a dozen refrigerators, a mother’s scream, and off in the distance, in the back of the building, the crash of bottles exploding into crystal shards in the bottom of a bin. But that had been years and years ago. The bedlam had died down, like a storm cleared. The building had become a diseased body, fragile in its naked concrete skin, silent as a body not at rest, but settling down to die. When I walked outside, I heard a voice:  
“Hey!”  
The voice grew sharper.  
“Hey, Bruno!”  
I searched the darkness, the streetlamps were out. I made out a profile.  
Who could it be? Surely someone who knew me.  
“How’s tricks?”  
He was standing right in front of me, but I didn’t recognize him.

“You don’t remember me?”  
That’s when it hit me. It couldn’t be. Fernando. He was standing right there. He looked the same as ever. He hadn’t changed a bit since we were kids. We shared a smile, it was only fair. We walked together through the maze of buildings. We found that we had very little to say to one another, after all.

“How long has it been? Ten years?”, I asked him  
“Longer than that. It happened on December 26th, 1999”, he replied.

Then he pointed at the phone booth in front of the local council headquarters.

“That’s where it happened. Right there. Remember?”  
My memory failed me. Had it really happened there?  
“There. December 26th, 1999. That’s where they killed me.”

# Clare Azzopardi

Born in Malta in 1977, Clare Azzopardi is an award-winning writer who writes for children and adults. Her work includes poetry, plays, short stories for adults, picture books for young readers and short novels for older children and young adults. Her first short story collection *Il-Linja l-Hadra* (The Green Line) was published by Merlin in 2006, and she is currently working on her first novel. She lectures in Maltese Literature at the University of Malta Junior College.



## Extract from "Sandra" in the collection *The Names They Left Behind*

The first key I ever left behind was the key to my diary. I left it on my desk at school, a green desk smeared with grease from sandwiches, where I usually kept my pencil or biro and which also had the letters 'pdm' scratched onto its surface. I left it in full view, on purpose, so Paula Dawn Mangion would find it. I was in grade six at the time. This diary was where I wrote my most intimate secrets: about my love affairs with Mauro, Ezekiel, Jamie, Keith, depending on who I'd quarreled or made up with. It had a padlock attached, which could be opened or locked with this small red key.

Paula was a pretty girl. I wasn't half as pretty as her, that was certain. To start with, her hair was straight and mine was curly; she didn't wear glasses and I did; her face was unblemished whereas mine was covered in freckles – pigeon droppings, my nan called them. Jamie fancied her. Sometimes he and Paula would quarrel in the morning so he'd play with me during the short break but by the second break he'd have quarreled with me and gone back to playing with Paula.

I planned the whole thing carefully. I spent the whole week writing love letters from Jamie, addressed to me. I carefully copied his handwriting from an English homework handout that I'd stolen from him during break and whose disappearance earned him a punishment. Then I told Paula a story about some trouble I was having with my Maths – apart from being pretty, Paula was also good at sums. I was sure she'd ask me over to her place, because the flat she lived in was just one floor below ours. That's exactly what happened. As soon as I arrived she showed me into her bedroom. I threw my schoolbag onto the bed and took out all my books. The diary was among them. Jamie's letters were tucked inside. I purposely let half

the books fall to the floor. The diary was one of them. I picked up my Maths book and my exercise book. I kicked the diary under the bed so that it was just visible, hoping that she'd find it when she was alone. As soon as we were done, I packed up all my things and left. I'd left my diary with one corner protruding just a little.

The next day, during the short break, when I was sure Paula Dawn wasn't looking, I left the key in plain sight. And things turned out exactly as I thought they would. While I was playing, Paula came to leave me my diary on my desk. She saw the shiny little red key and curiosity got the better of her. She was with her best friend and my worst enemy, Sara, whose fingers too began to itch. So, key and diary in hand, they locked themselves away in the toilets. After break I found my locked diary on the desk as I'd expected. But the key wasn't there. She and Jamie never made up again. As for me, sometimes they spoke to me and sometimes they didn't, depending on their mood. Meanwhile, I tried smiling a little more than usual at Jamie, gave him the odd bit of chocolate, a new eraser, but I guess curls weren't really his thing. I left the diary in a drawer in my desk and never opened it again, because no one ever left the key where I could find it.

I don't know what it is about keys exactly, but whenever I spot one, my eyes go twitchy, my heart skips a beat, my legs go wobbly, my palms begin to sweat, my head turns from side to side and as soon as I'm sure that nobody's looking, I snatch it and put it in my jeans pocket or in a handbag to use when the time is right.

Translated by Albert Gatt

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“None of [Azzopardi's] women are your run-of-the-mill characters. They are strong, strange, obsessive, stubborn, yes, but never ordinary.”

– Ramona Depares, *Malta Today*

“Clare Azzopardi [is] I suspect, the most perceptive and stylistically distinguished short story writer in this country that I have ever read.”

– Paul Xuereb, *The Malta Independent on Sunday*

“Azzopardi gives us pictures of a young society living often on the razor's edge...”

– Paul Xuereb, *Times of Malta*

“Such series as the De Moliizz books, and the ongoing Jake Cassar series for young readers (published by Merlin), have achieved cult status and remain bestsellers year on year, thanks in large part to Azzopardi's wacky, irreverent and fresh style of writing.”

– *The Books*

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## Extract from “Nectar” in the collection *My Husband*

Although he’s a gynecologist, my husband tries to make out he’s an artist. That’s just one of the things that annoys me about him. Actually, I don’t remember exactly when most of the things he says and does first started getting on my nerves, but I can single out this one as one of the more irritating things. For instance, when we have guests over, he tells them that he “dabbles in art,” but that he’s not an “artist” per se, thereby falsely representing himself as modest. People come over to our place often. For my part, I find it wholly undesirable, because it means having to cook and clean both before and after they arrive.

My husband insists on there being an abundance of food, by which he

aims to show that we’re a so-called functional family. These lavish banquets are normally held in our living room, on the low table surrounded by a two-seater sofa, a three-seater sofa, and an armchair, which can accommodate four others besides us. I’m the one who does all the serving, and I’m mainly stationed in the kitchen. When I go into the living room to have a chat with them, I have to sit on a stool. Lying through my teeth, I always say that it’s quite comfortable.

Meanwhile, he talks to the guests, mainly about himself. Because it’s indecent to talk about cunts, which are the sum total of his knowledge, he talks to them about his “art,” namely his oil paintings. He works on them in one of the rooms in

our apartment, his “studio.” Consequently, our two boys, who are always fighting, have to share a room.

His paintings are extremely amateur. The colours are somewhat blurred, leaden, and depressing. Whenever he makes a mistake, he smears the canvas with a new coat of paint. In that way, his paintings resemble huge piles of vomit – like a hearty meal that’s been regurgitated. He believes that his paintings are “abstract” and that they “render emotional states of anxiety and exultation,” but in reality they depict what he knows best: cunts – from inside and out.

I assume that others can see this too, at least those who are more intelligent. I’m almost certain they refer

to him as “the gynecologist who paints cunts,” and that they laugh at him behind his back. What’s more, he totally deserves it.

I wouldn’t be the least bit upset if that were the case. Though, to his face they flatter him. “But you’re a true artist,” they say to him, staring at the paintings as if before them stood a canvas painted by Leonardo.

And then he pulls out his well-known phrase: “No, I merely dabble in art,” adding, once again with false modesty, “I’m just a plain old doctor,” knowing full well the kind of status his profession enjoys.

Translated by Paul Filev

“Bužarovska’s short stories perfectly blend the local, Macedonian and transitional, with the universal human drama and social pressures. Her stories are artistically impeccable and offer astute insight into the human psyche, they also carry a dose of social criticism and awareness and, therefore, possess emancipatory potential.”

– From the nomination by the Croatian Writers’ Association

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“Rumena Bužarovska is a master of nuanced psychological portrayal whose female characters of different ages tell ordinary stories of post-transitional reality in Macedonia full of corruption, shiny boutiques, poverty and violence. Her focus is on everyday drama that unfolds behind closed doors, stifling her characters and tearing their worlds apart. Her heroines are not fighters. Drama that often reads as thriller is told in rational and cold language and the gap between the content of the narrative and the manner in which it is reported allows the character to be revealed in a particularly intimate way.”

– From the nomination by Booksa, Zagreb

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# Rumena Bužarovska

Rumena Bužarovska is the author of three short story collections – *Čkrtki* (Scribbles, Ili-ili, 2007), *Osmica* (Wisdom Tooth, Blesok, 2010) and *Mojot maž* (My Husband, Blesok, 2014; Ili-ili, 2015). She is a literary translator from English into Macedonian and her translations include works by Lewis Carroll (*Through the Looking-Glass*), J.M. Coetzee (*The Life and Times of Michael K*), Truman Capote (*In Cold Blood*) and the Welsh author Richard Gwyn (*The Colour of a Dog Running Away*). She is Assistant Professor of American Literature at the State University of Skopje in the Republic of Macedonia, where she was born in 1981.



“Since her debut in 2011 Erika Fatland has used her huge knowledge in ambitious and challenging projects. Through her books she has brought little-known parts of the world into Norwegian literature and taken Norwegian experiences and non-fiction into the world. She has placed herself in an exclusive international tradition and she writes for an international audience. The Non-fiction Prize is to honour an author in the initial phases of a remarkable authorship. Erika Fatland is a most worthy winner.”

– The Norwegian Non-fiction Prize jury

## Extract from *The Village of Angels*

At the Beslan exit of the motorway, a little welcome committee was waiting. Three men and a lady stood, as if to attention, beside a battered yellow Toyota and a white Lada Zhiguli. Two of the men were identically dressed, in dark suits, both with inserted shoulder pads, as though to strengthen their square frames. They looked like two black fridges. They were both past their best age, even though I had been promised “well-trained men in good health of a maximum of 45 years old” in the contract. The lady was slim, with short hair. She was wearing sunglasses and black leather trousers. Under her short jacket, she sported a tight t-shirt, also black.

“Well,” mumbled Eric from the International Red Cross committee when he caught sight of the congregated group. One of the French men wolf-whistled from the backseat: “Quelle femme.” What a woman.

I gathered my things together and said goodbye to the NGO workers that I had met the evening before. Eric and the French man wished me good luck. Then the white minibus rolled out onto the road again, closely tailed by another bus of the same type, in which sat armed guards in khaki uniforms. All well trained and in their prime. Just a couple of hours and they would be arriving in Grozny. My journey ended here.

It was over 40 degrees; the air was dry and oppressive. I could see the snow-topped peaks of the Caucasus which, as Knut Hamsun wrote in his travel journal *In Wonderland*, almost became one with the white clouds in the sky. Down here, the landscape was green and flat. The two black-clad men squeezed themselves together in the front seats of the little Zhiguli, whilst I sat in the back with the woman who was to be my guide over the next few days. The big men seemed remarkably out of place in the small seats. Vova and Rusik were their names. They had pistols in their belts and didn’t speak. Their job was to look after me, day and night, for the next three months.

Mairbek, the manager of the security company, followed us in the yellow Toyota. And so I was escorted to Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia, that sun-drenched day in late summer 2007. I couldn’t stay in Beslan itself because of the security situation. Beslan is about half an hour’s drive from Vladikavkaz. It was the first day of my social anthropology fieldwork and the situation felt simply absurd.

Translated by Karoline Warr

# Erika Fatland



**Erika Fatland (1983) is a Norwegian author and social anthropologist. Fatland made her debut as an author in 2009 with the children’s book, *Foreldrekrigen* (Parenting War, Capellen Damm). Her first non-fiction title *Englebyen* (The Village of Angels), on the terror attack in Beslan, was published 2011 also by Cappelen Damm. In 2012 she wrote *Året uten sommer* (The Year Without Summer, Kagge) about the terror attack in Norway in 2011. In her latest book *Sovjetistan*, published by Kagge, Fatland takes the reader on a journey unfamiliar to even the most seasoned globetrotter: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Fatland has lived and travelled abroad extensively and speaks English, French, Russian, German, Italian and Spanish. Fatland was named one of the best Norwegian authors under 35 by the Norwegian newspaper *Morgenbladet* in June 2015. *Sovjetistan* was winner of The Norwegian Booksellers’ Non-fiction Prize in 2015.**

# Albert Forns

Albert Forns is a Catalan journalist and writer. His novels are *Jambalaja* (Anagrama, 2016), winner of the Anagrama Prize and *Albert Serra (la novella, no el cineasta)* (Albert Serra, the novel, not the filmmaker, Empúries, 2013), winner of the Documenta Prize. He has also published a poetry collection *Ultracolors* (LaBreu Edicions, 2013). Early in his career Forns was the driving force behind several critically acclaimed cultural online initiatives such as the online magazine of literary criticism *Llibrofags* and the now defunct *Projecte Embut*, a mixture of artistic and literary creations and essays. Forns regularly writes about theatre, literature and visual arts for his blog as well as for *Time Out* magazine and the digital magazine Núvol.com. As a journalist he has chronicled festivals of film, theatre and visual art such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta in Kassel.



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On *Albert Serra (la novella, no el cineasta)*:

“This is a very unusual book within Catalan prose, very stimulating and frankly entertaining.”

– Pere Gimferrer, on the programme *El matí* on Catalunya Ràdio

“One of the most original and thought-provoking voices of new Catalan prose.”

– *El Mundo*

“One of the best books I’ve read in Catalan in recent years.”

– Artur Ramon, *El Punt Avui*

“A book to read in feverish and playful fits.”

– Biel Mesquida, *Diari de Mallorca*

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Extract from *Albert Serra*  
(the novel, not the filmmaker)

In the preface, in just two lines, he sums up an entire life devoted to literature: “...one day I started writing, not knowing that I had chained myself for life to a noble and merciless master. When God hands you a gift, he also hands you a whip; and the whip is intended solely for self-flagellation.” Now only the whip is left, in Capote’s life. He has no one, alcohol has destroyed his liver and cancer will take him soon. His assistant, a Haitian indulgent mother who cooked for him and cleaned his house every day, was probably the last person to see him alive. No, Truman Capote is not our protagonist, that would be too depressing. That last part was merely a narrative device to fit one fragment with the next. No, today we will focus on Jean-Michel Basquiat. We are a few blocks away from 860870 U.N. Plaza, the splendid glass skyscraper where Capote had his apartment; we are downtown, on the same streets where Cécile and Barceló walked. It is 1983 and for weeks now this young black man, Jean-Michel Basquiat, has been the most sought-after rising star in the city. He went from being homeless to being the next big thing in a matter of months. The price of a Basquiat painting quickly tacks on the zeros, and is already almost as high as those of young stars like Julian Schnabel, who lately has been lining his pockets with his “ceramic paintings,” made of broken plates shamelessly inspired by Gaudí’s

trencadís!. We are in the middle of the art boom of the eighties, that crazy decade when painting prices rise exponentially and financial speculators, desperate to acquire them, take the skyscrapers’ ultrafast elevators to catch them, to get even higher, always willing to pay even a little more. For the first time in history the art market has been turned on its head, and now it is no longer the artists chasing after buyers, please, buy something, I’m starving, now it’s the opposite: the filthy-rich collectors are lining up at studio doors and the painters can’t work fast enough. It is so insane that the rich buy up paintings just in case. “Nobody wants to be part of the generation that ignores a new Van Gogh,” say the dealers. And the primitivism and scribbles of Jean-Michel Basquiat, the black man who paints like white men who painted like black men, are the current talk of the town.

Translated by Mara Faye Lethem

In fact the idea of making paintings using pieces of broken plates came to Julian Schnabel in a hotel room in Barcelona, after visiting the Park Güell in 1978. “My interest, unlike Gaudí’s,” he explains in his autobiography *C.V.J.*, “was not in the patterning or the design of the glazed tiles, it was in the reflective property of white plates to disturb the picture plane.”

“Anja Golob’s texts open up a philosophical resonance chamber. She does not shy away from the big questions – what is happiness? Love? Released from pathos, she lets her ideas run freely into the realms of the absurd and the comical, which are of course so very close to the tragic, to melancholy. The heart becomes a lump of meat on the windowsill while the human, the fallible being, becomes one who hopes and dares and sweats. High and low are close – in her language world the pendant of love and happiness is an electric drill. Golob’s language rings and pulsates and swirls until you’re giddy, elegantly binding assonances and internal rhymes, elegiac and songlike. Perhaps the Slovenian language possesses special poetic qualities – when you hear Anja Golob you are quite convinced that this is so. Anja Golob is an important young poetic voice which deserves to be heard far beyond the borders of Slovenia. ‘Anyone who writes is sending something out/and yelling for all to hear what she is thinking/that she is thinking.’”  
– From the nomination by Berlin Poesiefestival

## Veins, Wires From *Bent Hang*

I’ve had this dream: an animal has fingers.  
It rests on its side, I observe it from the back,  
Its head is bent forward as though it were  
Timid, and it rocks back and forth in light rhythm.  
With blank, mechanical motions  
It rummages through the rupture, its fingers  
Carefully sorting the tissue and looking for veins.  
They pluck them one by one to make them easier to hold –  
the veins are thin, but sturdy, like the wires inside of an electrical network –  
and tear them strenuously, one after the other.  
The animal works soundlessly, it’s almost immobile, slowly  
And thoroughly it cuts the intake of pulsation to the heart  
That’s closing whimperingly, like the veil of an animal’s pupil parts.  
The space around it is emptied, drenched in a pool  
Of the slithering blood it cannot and wants no longer to control.  
The coat of its skin is stretched on the skeleton like a tent  
Flaccid in the springtide breeze, at its front like scattered luggage the stranded organs lie.  
The animal gasps for air (the body is a machine), it listens,  
Contracts, shrivels, extends its inflamed fingers,  
And it freezes triumphantly.

Translated by Tadeja Spruk



# Anja Golob

Anja Golob (1976, Slovenia) has so far published four volumes of poetry, three in Slovene and one in German translation (*ab und zu neigungen, hochroth*, Vienna, 2015), selections of poems and other texts in numerous magazines, and over seven hundred theatre reviews. Her second book *Vesa v zgibi* (Bent Hang, Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, 2013) was nominated for both Slovene poetry prizes, and was awarded The Jenko Prize 2014. She works as a poet, writer and translator. Since October 2013 she has also been the editor-in-chief of an independent Slovene publishing house VigeVageKnjige, which she co-founded. It specializes in publishing Slovene translations of graphic novels both for children and adults. After studying philosophy and comparative literature at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, she worked as a theatre critic for fourteen years. Occasionally she still works as a dramaturge for contemporary art and dance performances. She lives between Ljubljana and Brussels. More under: [www.anjagolob.org](http://www.anjagolob.org)

# Árpád Kollár

Poet Árpád Kollár was born in Serbia in 1980. He has published three volumes of poetry – *Például a madzag* (For Example the String, FISZ, 2005) which won several debut writing awards; *Nem Szarajevóban* (Not in Sarajevo, FISZ, 2010) and a children's poetry book *Milyen madár* (Which Bird, Csimota, 2014) which was selected as Hungary's 2015 Children's Book of the Year. He currently lives in Szeged, Hungary, where he works as a literary historian at the University of Szeged. He is also the president of the Hungarian Young Writers' Association (FISZ).



## Extract from *Not in Sarajevo*

you cannot be a tourist in sarajevo  
who, spittle drooling, takes inventory  
of the appurtenances of horror  
you cannot shove your palm  
into the crevices left by grenades  
as if in the millennial stones of the wailing wall  
you would conceal your message

in sarajevo you cannot be a sarajevian

in sarajevo you cannot know  
what you could be and what you could have been

in sarajevo every morning you arrive and  
adherence falls due once darkness descends  
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in sarajevo the trees are the most naïve  
into the bare firewalls they plunge  
their tentative roots  
and they absorb the bricks more greedily  
than young girls the force of life

in sarajevo the trees do not bother  
with politics  
the hundred-year oaks sit with  
tranquility in their tenant sports  
they are not troubled  
the city just now being built up or destroyed  
to slowly exchange my shelter for leafy bowers

in sarajevo wise little trees only breathe  
suck in the bricks  
diligently they grow  
for they are aware  
around here you can never know

Translated by Otilie Mulzet

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“Árpád Kollár writes in a fine, delicate, personal, lyrical style.

His contemplative, often prose-like poems, which provide a fresh perspective on the peculiar world of children are just as enjoyable for adults. In fact, they can be considered as belonging to both genres: children's and adults' poetry. We believe him to be a unique voice who not only writes great poetry but has shown that even children's poetry can be the most fine, witty, clever and lyrical genre.”

– From the nomination by Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest

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# Ciwanmerd Kulek

Ciwanmerd Kulek is a novelist, poet and translator. He was born in 1984 in the Kurdish eastern region of Turkey, and lived in Bismil, a small town on the river Tigris in the province of Diyarbakir, until he moved to Istanbul several years ago. He graduated in English and history of philosophy from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara in 2006, and works as a high school teacher of languages. He is the author of four novels in Kurdish: *Nameyek ji Xwedê re* (A Letter To God, 2007) *Otobês* (The Bus, 2010) *Zarokên Ber Çê m* (Children By The River, 2012) and *Defterên Perrîdankan* (The Butterfly Notebooks, 2014). His novella *Çar Yek* (One Fourth) was published in 2015, and his poetry collection *Strana Şev û Rojekê* (Song of One Night and One Day) in 2016. Ciwanmerd Kulek has translated a number of literary works from English, Spanish and Turkish into Kurdish, by writers such as J. M. Coetzee (*Disgrace*), William Faulkner (*As I Lay Dying*), James Joyce (*Dubliners*), Mario Vargas Llosa (*Death in the Andes*), Gabriel García Márquez (*Crónica de una muerte anunciada*), Juan Rulfo (*El Llano en llamas*) and Orhan Pamuk (*White Castle*).

“His novels, in which the author plays with the subtleties of language, and creates powerful characters and ambiance, hold an important place in the Kurdish literary scene of Turkey. The imaginary worlds he builds for his characters to inhabit turn into a feast of reality in readers’ minds. His avant-garde, agitating voice is sadly still unknown even among Turkish literature lovers.”

– From the nomination by Diyarbakir Arts Centre

“*Nameyek Ji Xwedê Re* (A Letter to God) was more provocative than what we were used to. For one thing, against the current transcendental Kurdish characters that would save the Kurds from all their troubles, the author offered us something new: a dispassionate male narrator, sceptical and peculiarly resentful, political enough not to talk about politics, preoccupied enough with the world he created not to go chasing after mythical love stories; and in doing so he performed a sort of language engineering trick by approximating a Faulknerian style which is not easily digestible for readers of a “politicized society”.

– Şener Özmen (writer, translator, artist and art critic) in an article published in the Books section of *Radikal* magazine’s website.

## Extract from *The Butterfly Notebooks*

I came from Istanbul to Cizre on Friday, March 21. I had read Mr Somebody’s notebooks twice. As the saying goes, people don’t always wear their heart on their sleeve, much less so when they write. But here, at every reading, I kept discovering so many familiar things, personally speaking, that even if all those pieces put together had not revealed his identity, I would have still guessed who he was. Having disguised himself with a new identity, he had run into someone from the old days, as much as he had not wanted to be recognized. So, this was all a misunderstanding.

Tens of pages of our student adventures, captured and recounted in meticulous detail he had piled up throughout the narrative in which he deliriously and chaotically confessed to his literary ambitions, brought him back to me and shed light on the years we had spent apart. As I made the connection between the past and present, he appeared in front of my eyes as if he had never left, as if we had suddenly met by chance in the street after all those years with no news of one another, and were deep in conversation in some teahouse, exchanging news

and reminiscences. He was none other than Ferzende. Who else would always draw butterflies on the margins of every available piece of paper? Neither the newspaper we would read at breakfast, nor the banned political magazines friends brought to our home back in those days, were safe from these butterflies drawn with a pen. Both volumes of *The Anthology of Turkish Poetry*, which he had borrowed from me and kept for some months, had taken a bizarre shape by the time he gave them back to me. Some poems had been invaded by butterflies to the extent that you could no longer read them. Therefore, it didn’t seem strange that when I read his notebooks teeming with butterflies, on a page he filled with them for the sake of his love for Luz, I saw that, when the time would come and they had a daughter, he would wish to name her Mariposa. Butterfly.

But what surprised me more than anything was that I recognized Gülten on those pages, when I no longer believed I would ever see her again, though sometimes a far and sudden voice or emotion would remind me of her and stir up memories. Ferzende had not left

her out but he had changed her name and her fate as though it also had no pity on her and took her through many hardships during those years I had been deceiving myself when thinking of her. Yet, Gülten was still herself in my mind. The fact was that whatever had changed her circumstances had not been able to change her. Even a tiny detail reawakened that semblance which I recalled from the bottom of my heart. While reading the never-ending pages in which Mr Somebody was talking about her, I felt as if I myself had written those lines. We had felt similar things. In some places where he could not mention her name directly, he had left a blue butterfly bearing three black spots on its little wings, and I instantly recognized her and rejoiced. I was floating on air, not only because I could see that that semblance was still there, but also because my feelings were still alive. I was unable to contain myself discovering these secret allusions, and it was obvious that Ferzende had also found it difficult to write them.

Translated by Kawa Nemir

Nature is my natural enemy. Ever since I've known of myself, that's the way it's been and that's the way it's going to be. I don't know how to say it differently or more eloquently without getting away from the truth so I won't even try. Nature or wilderness, which is a more precise term by far for the inaccessible and truly wild spaces, makes a man ridiculous and helpless. Not every man, of course, but people like myself have no business going there without the company of experienced guides armed to the teeth. The chances of a pallid-complexioned, thin-skinned creature prone to every disease known to man, as I have always been, surviving on his own in the wilderness for longer than half a day are minimal from the very start. In ninety-five per cent of cases something would kill me: a black widow, an alligator, a lesser spotted eagle, a bear, insects of this kind or that, leeches, snakes, thunder and lightning or, if nothing else, I would trip over, cut my forehead open on a sharp rock and die on the spot.

In the lower grades of elementary school, and this is the last thing I'll add, they enrolled me in the Boy Scouts. As I was of puny physique and eternally pale in the face, my parents probably thought that spending some time in nature and in the company of

others would not hurt. No more than a few meetings later they took us camping. And even though I was very young, I felt that something might go wrong. We set up our tents, raised our Boy Scout flag from the pole, made our campfire in the evening, and the next day – a competition. This last, key discipline brought the most points and it consisted in passing several control spots on a terrain that for the most part, naturally, extended over some thick woods. At one moment, I have to admit, I too was overcome with a touch of enthusiasm and competitive spirit. That Boy Scout zeal could be felt at every step and I was not left immune to that admittedly completely irrational excitement. I didn't know exactly what we were doing, but I followed others who fanatically hopped around completing all of the tasks that needed to be completed. One of the tasks was to use a rope, which was supposed to act as a jungle vine, and jump from one side to the other of a smallish river, a creek or a swampy puddle. I let go of the rope too early, fell down and rolled down the bankside into the water. It wasn't a steep fall, nor was the water deep, and I wasn't the only one who got stuck there, but I was the only one who, while splish-splashing up the hill, was attacked by a swarm of forest killer bees.

In truth, it wasn't a whole swarm and they were not killers, there were perhaps only ten or fifteen of the most belligerent and angriest bees, of which three managed to sting me: in my neck, forearm and forehead.

This last sting, right in the middle of my forehead, made my whole head swell. That very day they took me back to my parents with my face completely deformed. For three days no one could even look at me without horror – I looked like a tiny, skinny freak with a head three sizes too big. And so my Boy Scout career ended – too quickly and ingloriously.

For thirty years I kept to civilization as my natural habitat. The beauties of wild spaces can be seen on television or in the photographs of friends who visit such places in an attempt to cure themselves of the bustle, stress and other predicaments of the city. For thirty solid years I never took one step out of the city transportation zone, and then, just like that, I accepted the invitation of Tanja Mravak and the CAWH (Croatian Association of Writers-Hikers) to join her and a couple of foreign authors and visit our colleague Blaž Petrović who, for the past few years, had been living in a log-cabin on Mt. Velebit. ...

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

# Zoran Pilić

Born in Zagreb in 1966, Zoran Pilić is a novelist and short-story writer. His first collection of short stories *Doggiestyle* (Fraktura, 2007) was turned into a play for theatre: *Sex, laži i jedan anđeo* (Sex, Lies and One Angel) which was performed at the Zagreb Academy of Dramatic Arts in 2009. His debut novel *Đavli od papira* (Paper Devils) was shortlisted for the prestigious Croatian literary award *Jutarnji list* and listed as one of the best novels in 2012 by the Croatian Ministry of Culture. The Ministry listed Pilić's collection of short stories *Nema slonova u Meksiku* (There Are No Elephants in Mexico) as one of the country's best books again in 2014. His short story *Kad su Divovi hodali zemljom* (When Giants Walked the Earth) won the European Short Story Festival prize in 2015. He also writes book reviews and publishes fictional editorial on Booksa.hr.

"Zoran Pilić's prose brims with dynamic and natural dialogues of contemporary life, underlined with black humour and dark undertones. The mix of realism with grotesque tragicomedy and weird flirtation with the paranormal and surreal is what makes his writing so close to what we experience as real life. Pilić's poetry surprises and makes one wonder. It can be safely said that Zoran Pilić is one of the funniest Croatian contemporary writers, a painter of everyday vistas viewed from the skewed position of a benevolent outsider. His stories will make you laugh, and even as you laugh they will stealthily transpose you to the other, darker side we don't want to see."

– From the nomination by Booksa

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