



© Marek Kedzierski

Jana Beňová – Slovakia

Café Hyena (Plán odprevádzania) (2012)

Café Hyena (Seeing People Off)

Publishing House **Marenčin PT**

Biography

Jana Beňová (b.1974), is a poet and prose writer, who graduated from the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Bratislava (1993-1998) with a degree in theatre dramaturgy. At first, she wrote for the publications *Dotyky*, *Fragment* and *Slovenské Pohľady*. Then she worked as a journalist for the daily newspaper *SME*, writing under the name Jana Parkrová. Currently, she is employed as an editor in the Theatre Institute in Bratislava.

She debuted with a collection of poems, *Svetloplachý* (1993), following up with another poetry collection, *Lonochod* (1997). Just as in her debut, this too is a 'travelogue' of interpersonal relationships, love, and observations on life. A collection of poems, *Nehota* (1997), a novel, *Parker* (2001), and a collection of short stories, *Dvanásť poviedok a Ján Med* (2003), followed. Her short stories are marked by a poetical sensibility bound with poignant insights into the human mind and human behaviour.

In the spring of 2008, the L.C.A. publishing house published *Plán odprevádzania (Seeing People Off)*, subtitled *Café Hyena*. Her novel *Preč! Preč! (Get off! Get off!)* is marked by her original humour and ease of expression – precise, lively and spontaneous.

Synopsis

Café Hyena (Seeing People Off) is a novel, an unusual mosaic of observations, perceptions, self-reflections and memories. Two couples sharing a peculiar grant that allows them to live however they want. With some exceptions. Its heroine Elza lives in a huge apartment building in the borough of Petržalka. "Where all the walls play music and talk". "And where time is immaterial". "Here you can find creatures the rest of the world believes no longer exist and are extinct". The love story of Elza and Ian. Bratislava desperadoes not employed by an advertising agency, who have instead joined the carefree class of people who buy only what can be peed or pooped out or exhaled – recycled within twenty-four hours. Seeing people off means trying to protect them, to share the journey even when it leads to madness or death.

Café Hyena (Plán odprevádzania)

Jana Beňová

III Kalisto Tanzi

Elza. Jedli sme spolu hrozno a zapíjali ho ružovým vínom. Na druhý deň som nahmatala vo vrecku vlhkú hroznovú stopku. Vyzerala ako obratý vianočný stromček.

Kalisto Tanzi zmizol z mesta, ktoré zachvátila horúčava. Teplo sálalo z domov a ulíc rovno do tváre a rozpálené mesto sa ľuďom vtláčalo na čelo ako pečať.

Zastavila som sa pred divadelnou vitrínou, aby som si na plagátoch mohla prečítať Kalistovo meno a potvrdiť si, že existuje aj v skutočnosti. Mám pôžitok z vyslovovania mena, ktoré ho trápilo celé detstvo a pubertu a naozaj mu prestalo prekážať až s mojím príchodom. Pomaly kráčam na druhý koniec mesta, svaly na nohách sa mi zľahka chvejú v horúcom vzduchu. Je poludnie. Jediné, čo sa na tejto planéte skutočne pohybuje, sú kvapky potu. Stekajú ku koreňu nosa a opäť vyvierajú pod vlasmi.

Idem kúpiť jed.

Ian včera videl v záchode potkana.

Deratizér má pod obchodom pivnicu s vínom. V podzemí unikáme neznesiteľnej páľave a popíjame. Rozpráva mi, aké sú potkany inteligentné.

„Majú ochutnávača, ten prvý skúša potravu. Keď zdochne, ostatní sa nástrah ani nedotknú. Preto už ponúkame nástrahy druhej generácie. Potkan začne zomierať až po štyroch dňoch po skončení jedu. Zomiera na

následky vnútorného krvácania. O takejto smrti už Sene ca tvrdil, že je bezbolestná.

Ostatné potkany majú dojem, že ich druh zomrel prirodzenou smrťou. Ale aj tak – ak ich takto zomrie viac v krátkom čase, vyhodnotia lokalitu z hľadiska vysokej mortality ako nepriaznivú a sťahujú sa. Táto schopnosť hodnotenia úplne chýba niektorým ľuďom aj celým národom.“

Dokonalý hnusný svet. Usmievam sa nad tramínom červeným. Deratizér rozpráva veľmi rýchlo. Tvár má stále v pohybe. Akoby v nej mal priveľa svalov. Akoby mu pod kožou neustále pobehoval krdel' hlodavcov. Od jedné ho ucha k druhému. Od brady k čelu a späť. Cítim, ako mu pod stolom kmitajú nepokojné nohy a celý trup sa mu kláti v tanci.

Pri tom pohľade ma chytá závrat. Hlava sa mi točí ako pri prirýchlo postrihanom filme. Deratizér sa ku mne nakloní a zamotá sa mi do vlasov.

„Ste taká pekná myška,“ usmieva sa. Usmievam sa tiež. Cítim, že páchnem osamelosťou.

Vyprevádza ma a na cestu mi dáva igelitovú tašku plnú deratizačných prostriedkov. Namiesto kvetov. Zvieram ju pyšne v ruke. Možno to už bude takto vždy, pomyslím si. Ak mi muži budú chcieť kurizovať, darujú mi namiesto kvetov tašku s deratizačnými návnadami druhej generácie.

Keď som vyšla z chladnej pivnice, do tváre ma udrel horúci vzduch a svet bez Kalista Tanziho.

Prvýkrát som Kalista videla na jednej vernisáži. Veľa sa tam pilo a v priebehu večera vzniklo zopár nových dvojíc. Ako hovorí Ian – tam, kde sú muži, ženy a alkohol... – a udáva tým základné súradnice na lokalizáciu sexu.

Pozerala som mu do modrých očí a po prvýkrát som zatúžila po bytosti s farebnými očami. Ian ich má takmer čierne. Farby boli pre mňa vždy rozhodujúce. Ich kombinácia v Kalistovej tvári ma priťahovala. Sedeli sme spolu do rána a rozprávali sa. Ako vždy na začiatku: človek môže rozprávať svoj život znovu a všetko stojí za pozornosť. Rozpráva a pomaly sa točí sám okolo seba – tancuje a s ním celá miestnosť jemný trblietavý prášok mu sadá do vlasov.

Pred Kalistom Tanzim moje rozprávanie ožilo. Môj vlastný život plával pred našimi očami ako sklený vrch. Každým slovom som ho opäť tvorila. Rekreatovala. Rekreatovala som sa pri Kalistovi Tanzim. Určite by sa o tom dala napísať kniha. To by bol muzikál: *Ach, víločka, keby si ty vedela, čo som ja všetko prežila...*

Ale to už je obed. A ja sedím v kaviarni. Oblečená v hnedých šatách: stará žena. Sedím oproti Ianovi.

Stará dvojica. Ticho medzi nami prerušujú len novinové titulky. Ian mi ich občas prízvukuje ponad stôl. A číta ďalej. Noviny sú padací most. Občas ich sklopí a pozrie sa mi do tváre. Oči sa nám nestretnú. Víno chutí ako sušené slivky a čokoláda. Nápis Coca-Cola na obruse začína nebadane stúpať v ústrety mojej tvári. Zafažím ho tanierikom. Mám rada, keď všetko zostáva na svojom mieste.

Doma sedím za stolom a píšem list Kalistovi. Ian mi stojí za chrbtom. – Ach, taký dlhý list musíš písať, chúďatko? Nestačila by esemeska? Napríklad: Kde si?

Kalisto Tanzi nemá mobil ani mailovú adresu. Považuje tento spôsob komunikácie za výpalníctvo. (Starý anglický výraz black mail označoval vymáhanie neopodstatnených daní. Neexistujúcich dlhov, nedaných sľubov.)

Neexistuje jednoduchý spôsob, ako mu zasiahnúť do života, vliezť cez okná na obrazovke alebo displeji, zhmotniť sa mu rovno pred očami. Elza sa nemohla spoľahnúť na elektronické zvädzanie. Hoci mala naň talent – na reči a rečičky. Bola zručný Ketzalquatzel.

Ale nové možnosti jej priniesli aj silnejšiu konkurenciu. Bolo také ľahké s niekým sa zapliesť, skontaktovať. Zvädzaniu všetko nahrávalo. Najmä čas ušetrený rýchlou komunikáciou.

Nik už nemusel hliadkovať v noci na tmavej ulici, cestovať v koči, v aute, v búrke. Opravovať kolesá, vymieňať vriacu vodu v chladiči, pochodovať okolo domov a kaviarní, krúžiť bezmocne v uliciach miest, kde je nádej na stretnutie s milovanou osobou. Mapovať možnosť jej výskytu. Sledovať, striehnuť, schovávať sa, zotrvať nehybne celé roky na jednom mieste či putovať bez prestávky.

Maily a rýchle esemesky boli oknami a zrkadlami, ktoré na svete rýchlo pribúdali. Dalo sa cez ne vliezť do izby, na strechu, toaletu, ponoriť pod vodu, vzlietnuť. Hocikam zavesiť vlastný lákavý obraz – inštaláciu.

Elza. Do vzduchu, do cesty. Vystavovať ťa môjmu obrazu.

Elzino ráno sa začínalo písaním. Pustila si hudbu a polho dinu náruživu pokračovala v písaní knihy. Často počas práce vstávala zo stoličky, spotená, lebo pri písaní pije litre čaju a púšťa si hudbu príliš hlasno do uší, a píše, píše. Píše, ako by utekala z kopca. Potí sa a mrazí ju. Celý život sa jej telesná teplota pohybuje medzi 37,1 a 37,6 stupňov Celzia a to nahráva ľahkej triaške a slabým nervom. Okrem toho, že horúčka prospieva tvorbe a erotickej vášni, umožňuje človeku aj nerušený pobyt doma. Lekári sa zväčša boja poslať pacienta s teplotou do víru pracovných dní.

Keď dopíše, je hladná, smädná a pozornosť má celkom vyčerpanú. Elze chýba schopnosť vytrvavej tvorby – zicflajš. Jej pracovný deň trvá tri hodiny. Vtedy, keď Elza vstáva od pracovného stola, muž vstáva z postele. Sedia spolu na kanapke v kuchyni a rozmyšľajú, čo budú jesť a čo pôjde Elza nakúpiť. Zväčša obedujú obložené chlebíčky a pijú džin s grepovou šťavou. Elza čítala, že na tom, ako sa človek cíti, sa z osemdesiatich percent podieľa jeho žalúdok. To v ňom. Obložené chlebíčky a džin sú stravou súvisiacou s oslavami. Preto jej celé roky v živote pripadali ako jedna nepretržitá a poctivá oslava. Deň po dni. A ako počas každej nefalšovane prežívanej – neodfláknutej oslavy – podvečer alebo nadránom – keď je svetlo dlho neurčité a krajina pripomína plasticky nasvietenú scénu – niekde na koreni jazyka a na podnebí sa objavovala decentná trpkastá chuť – chuť konca oslavy. Mala ovocný buket, izbovú teplotu, plné telo a dlhý chvost. V noci ju prebúdzala čoraz častejšie: chuť smutného konca. Ako keď na Silvestra pár sekúnd po polnoci odíde na chvíľu Ian von s inou ženou a Elza si na hrud', hlavu a plecía čupne za rastený trol: nočná mora, a ciká jej horúčavu rovno na ploché prsia.

Po ceste domov sa Elza nadránom rozplače rovno uprostred ulice:

„Ja nechcem pochodovať. Nechcem už ďalej pochodovať. Celý život len pochodujem!“

„Tak nemusíme ísť pešo. Zavolám taxík,“ tíši ju Ian.

„Nerozumieš tomu. To je jedno. Peši alebo v taxíku. Človek aj tak furt len pochoduje.“

Elza. Ale práve pochodovanie ma udržiavalo v bdelosti. Problémy v našom meste niektorí riešili chôdzou, iní plávaním, cvalom na koni či strelbou.

„Kam ideš, Elza? Aha. Túlaš sa, čo? Ja tiež. Ale kam? Nechceš mi povedať, čo? Mal som takého kamaráta, ani ten nikdy nechcel povedať. Len sa ku mne naklonil a pošepol: Vieš, kamarát, ja teraz práve idem na jedno také *míústo*. Tak aj ty to tak hovor, Elza. Že ideš na jedno také *míústo*.“

Mesto je malé. Len čo sa vydáte na cestu, máte už jej väčšiu časť za sebou. Kto sa chce u nás túlať, musí chodiť dookola – ako koník – a po ceste stále naráža na ďalšie túla júce sa koníky.

Túlame sa v snahe vyhnúť sa spoločnosti a trpezlivo krok za krokom si navodiť pocit slobody. V skutočnosti sme však členmi konskej sekty s tvrdými pravidlami kruhu.

Radšej skáčem do bazéna. Ruky a nohy pracujú ako dva mlyny. Dych sa zrýchli, prehľbi a ustáli. Menšie i väčšie bazény v hlave sa postupne zaplňajú plavcami: striedavo sa v nich preteká a topí, ponára a splýva.

Dnes je na plavárni priveľa ľudí. Ledva sa vyhýbam najprv náručiam roztvárajúcim sa pod hladinou a vzápätí kopajúcim nohám. V strede stoja v kruhu deti a hádzu si loptu plnú piesku. Zo steny bazéna mi v ústrety vystreľujú tučné nohy cvičiacej panej. V šatni sa slepé dievča neisto prezlieka do plaviek. Strpnu mi zuby. Akoby som po tvári dostala palicou.

Oproti východu z plavárne je byt Kalista Tanziho. Nespúšťam ho z očí. Toto leto z mesta neodcestujem. Nemením obzor. Nehľadám more. Lipnem na oknách opustené ho bytu.

S Ianom sa stretávame náhodou v meste. Pijeme celý dlhý letný večer víno. Rozpráva mi, ako si kedysi myslel, že si bude svoj život pamätať tak nejako podrobnejšie.

„Vypadli mi celé úseky, panely. A udalosti sa nevzďalujú lineárne s pribúdajúcim časom. Nie je to ustupujúca línia, sú to serpentíny. Niektoré časovo vzdialené úseky sa v zákrutách tesne primkávajú, ohyby sa pretnú a záblesk sa vynorí nad hladinu: ruka pokrčená v lakti, mokré vlasy, zastreté okno, ústa ako kruh napäté v nádychu.“ Rozprávam Ianovi, čo som dnes čítala o jednej nebezpečnej chorobe. Prepukne v strednom veku a prejaví sa tak, že človek začne tancovať. „Tak k tomu už len nájsť nejakú dobrú hudbu,“ povie Ian.

Ian doviedol Elzu k stanovištu taxíkov. V snahe vyhnúť sa ďalšej fľaši vína a pochodu cez rozpálené nočné mesto. Posadil ju vedľa šoféra a pozrel mu do tváre. Sám zostal stáť na chodníku. Zabuchol za Elzou dvere a ruky mu bezmocne zostali visieť popri tele, zbytočné a pridlhé. Musel dávať pozor, aby ich nevláčil po zemi. Aby si ich nepostúpil.

O chvíľu taxík na konci ulice zastaví a Elza vysadne. Vyskočí ako srnka. Vnára sa späť do mesta. Roztvára náruč, kope nohami. Muž na chodníku sa díva za jej vzdalujúcim sa chrbtom a pozvoľna začína tancovať. Orchester nehrá.

Kalisto Tanzi, spieva si Elza. Tak sa volá to malé prítulné zviera, ktoré vo mne lenivo rastie. Spieva si Elza.

A ženy by ho chceli kúpiť mužom a muži ho chytajú do oka. Pozerajú na mňa a vidia ho, ako sedí vnútri a dozrieva. Spieva si Elza. Rovno za dverami. A najradšej by mi rozpárali brucho a prelomili chrbát na dvoje. Len aby ho mali oni. Spieva si Elza. Najradšej by mi odtrhli hlavu a zalovili vo mne rukami. Spieva si Elza. Nehľadiac na krv: pokojne aj pred deťmi. Elza si spieva.

Café Hyena (Seeing People Off)

Jana Beňová

Translated from the Slovak by Heather Trebaticka

III Kalisto Tanzi

Elza: Together we ate grapes and washed them down with rosé. The next day I discovered a damp grape stalk in my pocket. It looked like a Christmas tree, upside-down.

Kalisto Tanzi disappeared from the town, which was gripped by a heat wave. The heat radiating from the houses and streets burned people's faces and the scorching town seared its mark on their foreheads.

I stopped in front of the theatre's display case so I could read Kalisto's name on the posters and reassure myself that he actually did exist. I derive pleasure from uttering the name that had tormented him throughout childhood and puberty and only really stopped annoying him after my arrival. I slowly walk to the other end of the town, the muscles in my legs tingling slightly in the hot air. It is noon. Drops of perspiration are the only thing really moving on this planet. They run down to the bridge of my nose and spurt out again from under my hair.

I'm going to buy poison.

Yesterday I saw a rat in the lavatory.

The rat-catcher has a wine cellar under his shop. We go underground to escape the unbearable heat and sip wine. He tells me how intelligent rats are.

“They have a taster, who is first to try the food. If he dies, the others won’t even touch the bait. That’s why we use second generation baits. The rat begins to die only four days after consuming the poison. It dies as a result of internal bleeding. Even Seneca claimed that such a death is painless. The rest of the rats get the impression that their comrade has died a natural death. But even so – if several of them die in a short time, they decide the locality is unfavourable on account of the high mortality rate and they move elsewhere. Some people and even whole nations completely lack this ability to assess a situation.”

A perfect, repulsive world. I smile over red Tramin. The rat-catcher speaks very fast. His face is in constant motion. As if he had too many muscles in it. As if a pack of rodents were running around under his skin. From one ear to the other. From his chin to his forehead and back. I can feel his restless legs jiggling under the table and his whole trunk sways in a dance.

The sight of this makes me feel dizzy. My head spins like when watching a film that flashes too quickly from one scene to the next. The rat-catcher bends forward and gets tangled in my hair.

“You’re such a pretty little mouse,” he smiles. I smile back. I sense I stink of loneliness.

He sees me out and on the way he gives me a plastic bag full of rat poison. Instead of flowers. I clutch it proudly. Perhaps it will always be like this, I think to myself. If men want to court me, instead of flowers, they will give me a bag of second generation rat bait.

On emerging from the cool cellar, hot air and a world without Kalisto Tanzi hits me in the face.

I first saw Kalisto at a private preview. A lot was drunk there and a few new couples were formed in the course of the evening. As Ian says – where there are men, women and alcohol... – and he thus gives the basic coordinates for the localisation of sex.

I looked into his blue eyes and for the first time I longed for a being with coloured eyes. Ian's are almost black. Colours have always been a decisive factor for me. Their combination in Kalisto's face attracted me. We sat together and talked until morning. As always in the beginning: you can once more give an account of your life and everything is interesting. You talk, slowly revolving around yourself – the whole room dances with you – fine sparkling powder settles in your hair.

In Kalisto Tanzi's presence my account seemed more exciting. My own life swam before our eyes like a glass mountain. With every word I created it anew. Recreated. I recreated in Kalisto Tanzi's presence. No doubt I could write a book about it. It would be a musical: *Ah, little fairy, if you only knew all the things I've been through...*

But it's lunchtime now. I am sitting in a coffee bar. Dressed in brown: an old woman. I am sitting opposite Ian. An old couple. The silence between us is broken only by the newspaper headlines. From time to time Ian reads one out to me over the table. Then he reads on. The newspaper is a drawbridge. He occasionally lets it down and looks at my face. Our eyes do not meet. The wine tastes like prunes and chocolate. The coca cola inscription on the tablecloth begins to rise imperceptibly to meet my face. I hold it down with a plate. I like things to stay in their place.

Back home I sit at the table and write a letter to Kalisto. Ian stands behind me – Ah, do you have to write such a long letter, you poor thing? Wouldn't an SMS do? For example: Where are you?

Kalisto Tanzi doesn't have a mobile or an e-mail address. He considers this form of communication threatening. (The old English term blackmail referred to extorting unjustified taxes. Non-existent debts, promises not given.)

There did not exist a simple way of interfering in his life, climbing through the window of a monitor or display, appearing in person before his very eyes. Elza could not rely on electronic seduction. Although she had a talent for it – for chatting and sweet nothings. She had the gift of the gab.

But the new possibilities also brought her stronger competition. It was so easy to get involved with someone, to contact them. Everything played in favour of seduction. In particular the time saved by rapid communication.

Nowadays no one had to patrol a dark street at night, travel in a coach, a car, a storm. Repair a wheel, change the water boiling in a radiator, walk around homes and coffee bars or helplessly roam streets where there was a hope of meeting the loved one. Map the possibility of their being there. Follow, track, hide, stay in the same place for year after year or travel endlessly.

Emails and quick SMS messages were windows and mirrors rapidly multiplying in the world. Through them it was possible to climb into a room, onto a roof, into a lavatory, plunge under water and fly into the air. Hang up your own alluring picture – install yourself – anywhere.

Elza: In the air, in someone's path. Expose you to my picture.

Elza's morning begins with writing. She puts on some music and for half an hour eagerly gets on with her book. While working she often gets up from her chair damp with

perspiration, because when writing she drinks litres of tea and has the music on too loud and she writes and writes. She writes as if she were running downhill. She sweats and that chills her. All her life her body temperature has ranged between 37.1 and 37.6 degrees, which tends to produce slight shivering fits and weak nerves. Apart from the fact that a fever is good for creative work and erotic passion, it enables one to stay at home undisturbed. Doctors are usually afraid to send a patient with a temperature into the whirlwind of working days.

When she has finished writing, she is hungry, thirsty and her concentration is completely exhausted. Elza lacks the ability to keep at creative work for a long time – *sitzfleisch*. Her working day lasts three hours. When Elza gets up from her desk, Ian gets out of bed. They sit side by side on the couch in the kitchen and think about what they will eat and what Elza will go to buy. They usually have open sandwiches for lunch and they drink gin with grapefruit juice. Elza has read that your stomach – what is in it – contributes eighty per cent to how you feel. Open sandwiches and gin are food associated with celebrations. That is why whole years in her life have seemed to her like a really good, endless celebration. Day after day. And, as during every celebration genuinely enjoyed and properly done – in the early evening or early morning, when the light has long been vague and the scenery looks like a lit-up stage setting, somewhere at the back of the tongue and on the roof of the mouth a discreet bitter taste would appear – the taste of the end of a celebration. It had a fruity bouquet, room temperature, full body and long tail. It woke her up in the night more and more often: that taste of a sad end. Like when at New Year, just a few seconds after midnight, Ian goes outside for a while with another woman and a hairy troll

crouches on Elza's chest, head and shoulders: a nightmare, and it tinkles a wave of heat right onto her flat breasts.

On the way home in the early hours of the morning, Elza bursts into tears in the middle of the street:

"I don't want to march. I don't want to keep marching on any more. All my life I have done nothing but march on!"

"Then we needn't walk. I'll call a taxi," Ian tries to calm her down.

"You don't understand. It's all the same. On foot or by taxi. One way or another, all we do is just keep marching on."

Elza: But in fact it is marching that has kept me awake. Some people solve the problems in our town by walking, others by swimming, horse riding or shooting.

"Where are you going, Elza? Aha. You're just wandering, are you? So am I. But where to? You don't want to tell me, do you? I had a friend who never wanted to say either. He would just lean over towards me and whisper: you know, mate, I'm just going to one of *those places*. So you just say the same, Elza. That you're going to one of *those places*."

It's a small town. You've only just set out and the greater part of your journey is already over. If you want to roam here, you must go in a circle – like a pony and on the way you keep bumping into other roaming ponies.

We roam in an attempt to avoid company and to patiently evoke, step by step, a feeling of freedom. But in fact we are like members of a pony sect with the rigid rules of the circle.

I prefer to jump into a swimming pool. My arms and legs work like two mills. My breath grows more rapid, deeper and then steadies. The smaller and larger pools in my head are gradually filled with swimmers: they take turns to race and drown, submerge and float.

There are too many people in the pool today. First I can hardly manage to avoid the arms opening wide under water, and then the kicking legs. There is a circle of children standing in the middle of the pool and throwing a ball full of sand. The fat legs of a woman exercising shoot out towards me from the wall of the pool. In the changing room a blind girl uncertainly changes into her swimming costume. It's as if someone has hit me in the face with a stick.

Opposite the exit from the pool is Kalisto Tanzi's flat. I can't take my eyes off it. I'm not leaving town this summer. I will not change my horizon. I'm not going in search of the sea. I cling to the windows of the deserted flat.

Ian and I meet by chance in town. We spend the whole long summer evening drinking wine. He tells me how he somehow used to think he would remember his life in more detail. "Whole sections, whole panels, have fallen out. And events don't move into the distance in a straight line with the passing of time. It's not a receding line; it's like a serpentine road. Some sections miles from each other in time come together at the bends, the curves intersect and suddenly something breaks through the surface of the water: an arm bent at the elbow, wet hair, a curtained window, a mouth stretched in a circle as it gasps for breath." I tell Ian what I have read today about a dangerous disease. It breaks out in middle age and manifests itself in such a way that a

person begins to dance. “Then all you need is to find some good music to go with it,” says Ian.

Ian led Elza to the taxi stand. In an effort to avoid a further bottle of wine and a walk through the sweltering night town. He sat her next to the driver and looked at his face. He himself remained standing on the pavement. He slammed Elza’s door shut and his arms were left hanging limply beside his body, useless and too long. He had to be careful not to drag them along the ground. Not to trip over them.

A while later the taxi stops and puts Elza down at the end of the street. She leaps out like a young deer. She dives back into town. She opens her arms, kicks her legs. A man on the pavement looks at her retreating back and slowly begins to dance. The orchestra is not playing.

Kalisto Tanzi, Elza sings to herself. That is what the cuddly little animal that is lazily growing in me is called. Sings Elza.

And women would like to buy it for men and it catches men’s eyes. They look at me and see it, sitting inside me and maturing. Sings Elza. Just behind the door. And they would like to slit my belly and break my back in two. Just so they can have it. Sings Elza. They would like to tear off my head and grope inside me with their hands. Sings Elza. Not minding the blood: happily, even in front of the children. Sings Elza.



EUROPEAN UNION
PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

2012

Jana Beňová – Slovakia

Café Hyena (Plán odprevádzania)

Café Hyena (Seeing People Off)

148 pp, 2012

Translations: The book has not been translated yet.
(Last Update – September 2012)

Publishing House **Marencin PT, spol. s r.o.**

Jelenia 6 – 811 05 Bratislava – Slovakia

Mobile: +421 905 210 644 – Tel.: +421 2 2072 3752

www.marencin.sk

Contact: marencin@marencin.sk

ISBN: 978-808-114-128-7

EUPL / FEP-FEE – Rue Montoyer, 31 – B-1000 Brussels – T. +32 (0)2 770.11.10

info@euprizeliterature.eu – www.euprizeliterature.eu



Culture
Programme



european
booksellers
federation



FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN PUBLISHERS
FÉDÉRATION DES ÉDITEURS EUROPÉENS