

## CONTEMPORARY SLOVENIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

Slovenia - as you probably know - is one of the states springing from former Yugoslavia, and has been independent since 1991. The language spoken in Slovenia is Slovene or sometimes referred to as Slovenian - one of the Slavic languages. Together with the inhabitants of Italy and Austria who have Slovenian nationality - including a number of renowned *hommes de lettres* - Slovene is spoken by slightly more than two million people.

The first book - *Katekizem* (Catechism) - in Slovene was published in 1550, and was immediately followed by *Abecedarij* (Abecedarium) - a primer for teaching people to read - by a Protestant priest Primož Trubar. In the spring of the following year, the book was smuggled into the present capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana, in wine barrels. Now, around 1500 books are published in Slovene every year, many of which contain literature.

Although original Slovenian books are usually published in 500 copies, quite a few of them come out in ten times that figure, and bestsellers even in 50,000 copies - despite a relatively limited readership.

This book was published by *The Slovenian Writers' Association* - an independent writers' organization with about 300 members. The Association occasionally issues a publication entitled *Litterae Slovenicae* - from 1962 to 1991 published under the title of *Le livre slovene* - containing Slovenian literature translated into the most widely spoken world languages. The Association welcomes subscribers; the address is DSP, Tomšičeva 12,

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61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; fax: 38 61 214 144, phone: 38 61 152 340.

This special edition of *Litterae Slovenicae* was published in order to introduce those members of the Writers' Association whose books have been published abroad and/or translated into foreign languages. It was the first time we gathered this sort of information, and we are afraid that it may be incomplete (missing, for example, is the information about the translated works of important authors like Janez Menart, Tone Pavček, Dimitrij Rupel, Branko Šömen and Maruša Krese), but it is the starting point for similar future publications. We have limited our choice to living Slovenian authors, although Slovenian literary past offers a number of interesting texts. France Prešeren, Srečko Kosovel and Vladimir Bartol were writers from three different periods, and their works received great critical acclaim in Europe.

The texts marked *Available translations* are ready for publications; for the books already published, the authors mostly sold their rights for a single run. In Slovenia, copyright owners are mostly the authors of the books themselves.

If your business includes publishing, let us inform you that there are funds available in Slovenia to support publication of Slovenian authors' works in foreign languages. One of the institutions granting financial aid for translation and promotion of Slovenian literature is the *Trubar Fund* at the Slovenian Writers' Association. Please, do not hesitate

to inform them of your possible publication plans, and they will let you know what the conditions for receiving financial aid are. The forms of this aid include financial support for foreign publications, scholarships for translators, accommodation for foreign translators and writers in Slovenia, distribution of books and magazines abroad, and legal and organizational counselling.

The Slovenian Writers' Association and the Slovenian P.E.N. annually organize two international events to publicize Slovenian literature and culture. The *VILENICA* writers' gatherings are organized every second weekend in September in Lipica, Sežana and the vicinity of Trieste, and *P.E.N. meetings* are held every May in Bled. Additional information is available from the Writers' Association.

The authors presented in this book belong to different generations, and adhere to different aesthetic orientations. We believe that you will find the works of many of them interesting reading, so why not try? (We would like to point out that many samples have been translated into Croatian or Serbian, for those of you fluent in the two languages.) Please, contact the authors directly, or the Slovenian Writers' Association at the above-mentioned address. The aim of this publication is to enable you to discover or rediscover Slovenian literature which is probably less known than it deserves.