

„GDO KNIGE POČ'TUE  
DA E KNIGAMI  
POČ'TOVAN“.

ŽAKAN BROZ KOLUNIĆ, 1486.

## O kojoj je knjizi riječ?

Red paprikas from last year's crop were still hanging at the windows, cheese was drying in nets hung on stakes, cocks were crowing, and hens scurried panic-stricken across the road...

The atmosphere in the church was Shakespearean...

Fireworks on the eve of Carolina's wedding-day!

At the corner where as a boy he had played with his white lamb...

What a suggestive expression: "them girls!"

"Well, Yaga, ..., and now we should like to find out just where this happened, where you saw His Deceased Lordship".

"I don't really know that, Sir. I saw His Lordship with my own eyes, but all of a sudden..."

Why had he got stuck in this Pannonian mud and what was he expecting and why did he not move on somewhere?

Colours, for instance, the living source of his warmest emotions, were beginning to fade in his eyes...

...the fundamental question: is there any need at all to paint, and if this cannot be questioned, then how to do it?

How to paint that smell of roasted pork, the noise of the fair, the horses' neighing, the cracking of whips, how to depict that barbaric, Pannonian, Scythian, Illyrian instinct for dynamic movement which urges drunken cabmen to drive their horses and coaches across a rotting bridge...

Today, after a long break, he had again painted a picture.

... there was a tall, green, wooden door, shut and locked with a padlock and an iron bar, on which was a tin plate with the inscription: Licensed Retail Tobacconist.

The fundamental question, ... which had tormented him for the whole of his life....: who was really his father?

For the last twenty-three years he had been away from this little backwater...

It was dawn when Philip arrived at Kaptol railway station.

GKR - Središnji odjel

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KRLEŽA



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CROATIAN LITERATURE

# MIROSLAV KRLEŽA

The Return of Philip Latinowicz

Paris had its Balzac and Zola; Dublin its Joyce; Croatia, its Krleža...  
one of the most accomplished, profound authors in European literature.  
*Saturday Review*

Translated by Zora Depolo

IT WAS DAWN WHEN Philip arrived at Kaptol railway station. For the last twenty-three years he had been away from this little backwater, but it was all still familiar to him: the rotting, slimy roofs, the round ball on the Friars' steeple, the grey, windswept two-storied house at the end of the dark avenue, the plaster head of Medusa surmounting the heavy, iron-bound oak door with its cold latch. Twenty-three years had passed since the morning when he had slunk up to that door like the prodigal son: when a schoolboy in the seventh form, he had stolen a hundred-florin note from his mother and drunk and caroused with street-walkers and waitresses for three days and nights, and come home to find the door locked, and himself shut out in the street, and ever since then he had been living in the street, and nothing had really changed. He stopped in front of the unfriendly locked door and, just as on that morning, he could feel the cold, iron touch of the heavy, clumsy latch in the hollow of his palm: he knew how heavy the door would feel as he pushed it, how the leaves were quivering in the upper branches of the chestnut-trees, he heard the flutter of a swallow as it sprang into flight above his head, and he felt as if in a dream — as on that other morning —: he was all dirty, tired, in need of sleep, he could feel something crawling inside his collar — a bed-bug most likely. As long as he lived he would never forget that gloomy dawn, that third, last drunken night, and the grey morning.

## How to translate Krleža?

- **“Ogenj!”** Ta stara, zaboravljena riječ probudila je u Filipu jaki osjećaj panonske podloge. On ni sam nije znao zašto, ali u taj tren osjetio je neobično jako neku subjektivnu elementarnu pripadnost toj podlozi: osjetio se doma.  
**“Fire!”** The old forgotten cry awakened in Philip a vivid feeling of his Pannonian **background**. He himself did not know why, but at that moment he felt most intensely a kind of basic connection with that **region**: he felt at home.
- Stajao je tiho taj stari vrt...**The old garden was silent...**
- Sjedi tako Filip... **So Philip sat...**
- Zagledao se Filip u taj kanal pod drvenim mostićem...  
**Now Philip stood on the little wooden bridge looking down...**
- Promatra tako Filip... **Thus Philip in his café contemplated...**
- **Foringe** nikakve nije bilo.....**there was no cab...**
- To je bio **biškupečki foringaš**, Joža Podravec...  
**It was the bishop’s coachman, Joe Podravec...**
- „Hu, vrag ih dal i stvoril” prihvatio se Joža Podravec za svoj **gumb** na **lajbeku...**  
**“Ugh, devil take ‘em!” said Joe Podravec touching the button of his waistcoat...**
- Kakva sablasna riječ: **frajle!** What a suggestive expression: **“them girls!”**
- “Prosim vas, Jago, bute spametni! Mi bi šteli znati gdi ste vi vidili pokojnu ekscelenciju? Od prilike da nam rečete gdi je to bilo? Pri **glashauzu**, pri kapeli, vu **dvoru**, na **ganku**, gdi od prilike?  
**“Please, Yaga, be sensible! We should like to know where you saw His Late Excellency. Tell us where it happened. Near the greenhouse? The chapel? In the courtyard? In the corridor? Where?”**
- ...kojega su objesili kao **tata**.....**who was hanged like a thief...**
- Karolina stanovala je sa svojim ocem u pivnici... **Carolina lived with her father at the inn...**
- Zapitala ga je što želi? I to u pluralu: “Što želite?”  
**And she had addressed him formally, like a stranger: “What do you want?”**
- Da, tu je ležao pred Filipom u miru jutarnjem Kaptol...  
**And there in front of Philip lay Kaptol in its morning calm...**
- ...te se vrapci pod krošnjama platana **uznemiriše** glasno...  
**... the sparrows on the branches of the poplar trees twittered loudly...**

Svitalo je, kada je Filip stigao na kaptolski kolodvor. Dvadeset i tri godine nije ga zapravo bilo u ovom zakutku, a znao je još uvijek sve kako dolazi: i truli slinavi krovovi i jabuka fratarskoga tornja i siva, vjetrom isprana jednokatnica na dnu mračnog drvoreda, Meduzina glava od sadre nad teškim, okovanim hrastovim vratima i hladna kvaka

Vjetar u dimnjaku, tmina i mamin plač u tmuni.

Nikada se nije usudio da bilo što zapita tu šutljivu ženu, ali te noći, već više u zagrljaju smrti, on je zapitao majku sasvim prirodno, zašto plače?

Nije odgovorila ništa. Tihi jecaji.

Ustao je i pošao do mamine postelje.

“Mama! Što je tebi? Zašto plačeš?”

A zatim je počelo dosađivanje s njenim portraitom.

Da je presvijetli Liepach čitao jednu Filipovu knjigu o slikarstvu (i njoj donio, ali ona nije dospjela dalje od treće strane), da je ona svima najavila, kada se njezin sin vrati iz inostranstva, kako će naslikati njen portrait, kako je to prirodno da sin slika svoju rođenu majku (“ako već ne iz umjetničkih, a ono bar iz obiteljskih razloga – sebi na uspomenu”), da on njoj to ne smije da odbije, i tako je konačno razapeo svoje platno i otvorio paletu. Mučenje je počelo.

Filip je htio da se objasni s njom. Govorio je nešto o subjektivnoj stvaralačkoj komponenti, osjećajući kako mu te fraze lažno zvuče, ali ona nije mogla da se svlada, a glas joj je bio ranjav i slomljen.

“Da jedan sin može da gleda svoju majku na takav način, kao njen jedini sin nju, to je žalosno!”

Tu je on složio svoje kistove u kasetu, odnio započeto platno u svoju sobu, okrenuo ga iza ormara spram zida, i tako je kod toga ostalo.

Nije ni ručao slikajući sve do bijele kave, i stojeći sada na mjesecini, u prostoru, među zvijezdama, noćnim pticama i treperećim krošnjama, njega podilaze trnci od uzbuđenja: iz njegovih tuba još teku boje, u njegovim živcima još ima snage i u krvi zanosa! Živi i osjeća, kako je dobro biti živ.

“Ali, obratno, puk gleda sablasti! Plebs živi u petnaestom stoljeću! Onda su ljudi još bili vrlo intimni s duhovima! Ja apsolutno vjerujem, da je ona vidjela pokojnoga grofa. Ona se samo nije znala pred nama izraziti! Između nas leži najmanje četiristo godina i prilično je – čini se – daleko sa jedne na drugu obalu!”

U ekstazi olujne, sulude Rokove noći taj se njihov san zapalio kao fantastičan vatromet. Sveti Rok kostanjevečki bio je već više od stotinu godina zaštitnikom svih gubavaca i padavičara, ranjenika, luđaka i bogalja između Bikova i Kravodera do Jame i Turčinova sve do pod Blatnju, a ispod Blatnje, do žabokrečkih vinograda.

Wind in the chimney, darkness, and his mother weeping in the dark.  
He had never before dared to ask that silent woman anything, but that night, when almost in death's grasp, he asked his mother quite naturally why she was crying.  
No answer. Hushed sobs.  
He rose and went up to his mother's bed.  
"Mum, what's the matter? Why are you crying?"

Philip wanted to explain things to her. He said something about the subjective creative factor, feeling how false his phrases sounded, but she could not suppress her tears, and her voice was broken and hurt.

"That a son could look upon his own mother in such a way as he, her only son, had on her, was a sad thing indeed!"

And so he put his brushes back into the paint-box, carried the unfinished painting to his room, turned it to the wall behind the wardrobe, and so it remained.

In the excitement of a tempestuous and frenzied St Rock's Eve, their dream caught fire like some fantastic firework. St Rock of Kostanjevec had been for more than a hundred years the patron saint of all lepers and epileptics, all injured, insane and crippled persons from Bikovo and Kravoder to Jama and Turčinovo, and further down below the Blatna as far as the vineyards at Žabokrek.

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And then the fuss about her portrait began.

His Excellency Dr. Liepach had read a book of Philip's about painting – and had brought it to her, but she had never had time to read more than the first three pages – and she had told everybody that as soon as her son returned from abroad, he was going to paint her portrait, and it was natural for a son to paint a portrait of his own mother "if not from artistic motives, then at least for family reasons – to have something to remember her by", and he could not refuse to do that for her, and so at last he stretched his canvas and opened his paint-box, and the torture began.

"But, on the other hand, the common people can see ghosts! They live in the 15<sup>th</sup> century! At that time people were still on very intimate terms with ghosts! I'm absolutely certain that she did see the dead count. Only she couldn't find words to describe it to us! A gap of at least four hundred years separates us, and apparently it is rather far from one shore to the other!"

He skipped his lunch and went on painting until tea time, and now, standing in the moonlight, in the open, under the stars, the night-birds, the quivering branches, his flesh crept with excitement: paints still flowed from his tubes, there was still strength in his nerves, and ecstasy in his blood. He was alive and felt how good it was to be alive.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white rectangular background. The signature consists of a stylized 'M' followed by 'Kler'. The 'K' is written with a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right, and the 'l' is a simple vertical stroke. The 'e' and 'r' are also written in a cursive style.

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Vera Katalinić, siječanj 2015.