



Bienvenidos



Pavol Janík



Nacionalidad: Eslovaquia

E-mail: janik2@stonline.sk

Biografía

Pavol Janík

A DICTIONARY OF FOREIGN DREAMS - ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mgr. art. Pavol Janík, PhD., (magister artis et philosophiae doctor) was born in 1956 in Bratislava, where he also studied film and television dramaturgy and scriptwriting at the Drama Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (VSMU). He has worked at the Ministry of Culture (1983-87), in the media and in advertising. He was President of the Slovak Writers' Society (2003-07), Secretary-General of the SWS (1998-2003, 2007-2013) and Editor-in-chief of the literary weekly of the SWS Literarný týždenník (2010-2013). He has received a number of awards for his literary and advertising work both in his own country and abroad.

This virtuoso of Slovak literature, Pavol Janík, is poet, dramatist, prose writer, translator, publicist and copywriter. His literary activities focus mainly on poetry. Even his first book of poems, which appeared a quarter of a century ago, attracted the attention of the leading authorities in Slovak literary circles. He presented himself as a plain-spoken poet with a spontaneous manner of poetic expression and an inclination for irony directed not only at others, but also at himself. This style has become typical of all his work, which in spite of its critical character has also acquired a humorous, even bizarre dimension. His manner of expression is becoming terse to the point of being aphoristic. It is thus perfectly natural that Pavol Janík's literary interests should come to embrace aphorisms founded on a shift of meaning in the form of puns. In his work he is gradually raising some very disturbing questions and pointing to serious problems concerning the further development of humankind, while all the time widening his range of themes and styles. Literary experts liken Janík's poetic virtuosity to that in the work of Miroslav Valek, while in the opinion of the Russian poet, translator and literary critic, Natalia Shvedova, Valek is more profound and Janík more inventive. He has translated in poetic form several collections of poetry and written works of drama with elements of the style of the Theatre of the Absurd. Pavol Janík's literary works have been published not only in Slovakia, but also in Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, India, Israel, Jordan, Macedonia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, South Korea, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

ON THE LINE MAN – WOMAN AND BACK

You escape from me

like gas.

With astonishment I watch

how with a single scrawl of your legs

you ignite your silk dress.

With such blinding nakedness you pre-empt sky-blue flame.

Blazingly ablaze and perhaps wholly otherwise

I address a fire

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which you will no longer damp down.

That time I wanted to declare at least what was essential
to all chance passers-by,
to all chance passing aircraft.

So under such circumstances who wouldn't have spoilt it?

(1981)

NIGHT BUS

I admire the smiles
of the wax figures
and the drunks.

Their faith.
Their humility.
Their precision.
Their infallible wisdom
determined by the office of normalization.

I admire
their wallpapered souls
full of light and brocade.
Their responsibility and legality
surpassing
the price of taxis and wine.

I'm terrified by the indifference
with which they listen
to the heavy breathing of the last trolley buses.

(1981)

SUMMER

The sun smashes our windows.
An urgent song reaches us from the street.

On the cellophane sky
steam condenses.
Unconfirmed reports are reproduced
about the wind.

The trees are the first to begin to talk

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about the two of us.

(1981)

THE MOMENT BEFORE TOUCH

The air grows still.

As in an illustrated weekly

I leaf through your eyes.

To hear silence

as it walks in new shoes

and lulls the buzzing bees.

Somebody furiously addresses us with wings.

It's said that you've seen

burning birds tumble from the sky!

It's just at the base of your breasts

there's something making a ceaseless hullabaloo.

(1981)

TO YOU

You come from a scent.

A crumpled flower.

I inhale you tangled like smoke.

You inhabit the starry sky

and dials of digital watches.

You stupefy me dependably

and faster than light.

My head aches from you

and to this moment I mistake you for music.

(1981)

VIVACE MA NON SOLTANTO COSI

Barefoot

you leap from star to star.

And each time there's a chime

like the kiss of crystal glasses.

Thousands of your faces
skate with perseverance
on frozen ponds.

I open you with a violin's clef
and seek the bow
whose elasticity can equal you.

Deep in you
instead of strings
I've touched tears.

(1981)

PIANO

The moment we each have our own key
To the same flat
I'll shift a piece of the garden
To the second floor.

Sometimes I'll come personally.
Clean
And carefully shaved
To listen to home concerts.

I'll come for sure
Clumsily like a piano,
And always well-tempered.

(1981)

FAMILY STUDY

Always when I think of you
dawn breaks above Buenos Aires
and the Atlantic has the inexplicable color of your eyes.

Exotic birds
nest on out TV aerial
until the announcer
has a pearly hairdo
and complete blonde smile.
She claims that eternity has already lasted a whole year.
The weather forecast

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announces in her place
a rainbow parrot.

For our wedding route
it wishes us little cloudiness
and success at least as large as the discovery of America
or the record flight of the ostrich from Australia
to the zoological gardens of Europe.

Always when I think of you
dawn breaks above Buenos Aires
and the wind whirls the pamphlets
of all the airlines in the world.

The Atlantic does not admit any other continent.
It's clear as a stone of precious clarity.

Despite its twinkling depth it resembles a question
which posed passionately by your body.

Children search tirelessly for an answer
till now unwritten in books
and cut out colorful pictures from it.

It happens at home
behind whose windows fireworks blaze every evening.

Always when I think of you
dawn breaks above Buenos Aires.
And today, too, the Atlantic is completely upset.
It's completely bashful
as its accustomed only to invisible phenomena.

(1981)

ASTONISHMENT

I stretch out the water
in which you are reflected.

With a shout to stop
all possible outflows.

I address you by breath
such release of speech.
Until you are glassy with ice before me

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as before a draught.

Tirelessly you quiver under the numb surface

and on the bottom for a moment gleam

so that I glimpse the day,

which will only light up in you.

(1981)

NAME

By just a point

you surpass successful fortune.

By just a drop

you outdo sparkle.

By sobbing

you surmount aquarelle.

You spread pollen.

We put our faces to yours

as to a flower's corolla

weary of so much circumstance.

You'll gain a name from us,

which you'll consider as your own.

(1981)

Translated into English by James Sutherland Smith

The Report from the End of the Cold War

Translated into English by Pavol Janik Junior

Translated into English by James and Viera Sutherland Smith

Translated into English by Zuzana Sasovova et al.



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