



© Edgars Jurjāns

Janis Jonevs – Latvia

Jelgava '94 (2013)

Publishing House **Mansards**

Biography

Born in 1980 in Jelgava, Latvia, Janis Jonevs was educated at the Jelgava State Gymnasium and the Latvian Academy of Culture where he was awarded a Master's Degree. Jonevs works as a copywriter and, since 2002, he has also worked as a reviewer and translator from French.

Synopsis

Even though *Jelgava '94* is Jonevs' debut novel, the book quickly proved to be a big hit and best-seller in 2013. The story is set in the 1990s in the Latvian city of Jelgava and looks at the craze during this period for the alternative culture of heavy metal music. Jonevs takes the reader deep inside the world described in the novel: combining the intimate diary of a youngster trying to find himself by joining a subculture, as well as a skilful, detailed and almost documentary-like depiction of the beginnings of the second independence of Latvia. This is a story that is even more captivating for the generation that lived through the events described in the book – Jonevs is the first writer to stir up memories of this period through a fully-fledged literary depiction.

Jelgava '94 is a portrait of a generation in the 1990s who are searching for their own identity and are fans of alternative culture. This is a touching story about us as youngsters, when everybody is against the whole world and tries not to become 'one of them'. But is it for real? Can one keep the promise?

Jelgava '94

Janis Jonevs

././ Tas ir neticami, viņš šo kreklu atrada humpalās. Tas bija brīnums. Mēs visi pēc tam metāmies pārmeklēt humpalu kaudzes. Es arī uzrakstīju mammai sarakstu, kādi krekli jāņem, tikko tos ierauga: Death, Cannibal Corpse, Anal Count, Brutal Truth, Carcass, Hypocrisy. Nevienu tādu viņa neatrada, viņa atnesa kreklu ar uzrakstu Michael Learns to Rock un trīs smaidīgu puisi à la Zaks Moriss fotogrāfijām. Par spīti dumpnieciskajam nihilismam, mana sirds gandrīz salūza no mīļuma. Tomēr to kreklu es uzvilkt nespēju.

Bet Nāve atrada humpalās Obituary kreklu par piecdesmit santīmiem. Un vēl viņam nebija labi. Viņš bija tāds kā drusku mānīticīgs un uzskatīja, ka ar šo kreklu nopircis nelaimi (tas, protams, viņu necik neatturēja to citīgi nēsāt). Tā arī tagad viņš teica:

— Es teicu! Es teicu! Vienmēr kaut kas neveicas, kad man mugurā tas kreklis!

Mēs nupat bijām izmesti no vilciena Jelgava–Rīga. Par niekiem. Mums nebija biļešu. Konduktoru brigāde nokomentēja mūsu matus un izlika mūs ārā, ka noplīvoja vien. Vilciens aizbrauca tālāk, bet mēs stāvējām šeit, Olainē.

— Ko darīsim, kungi?

Nāve paskatījās pakaļ vilcienam, nekas no tā vairs nebija saskatāms. Edgaram nekad netrūka padoma:

— Es domāju, mēs varam sist suņus un tirgot ādas!

Viņš neapšaubāmi bija jucis. Viņš dzīvoja Nāvem kaimiņos.

Jukuma un pārliemas mīlestības pret šausmu kino dēļ viņu dēvēja par Zombi.

— Drīz vietējie tirgos mūsu ādas.

Mēs ērgļu acīm nopētījām pilsētu, kas pletās mūsu priekšā, krūmiem aizaugusi. Nemanīja nevienu pašu cilvēku. Bet krūmi izskatījās aizdomīgi.

— Pazūdam.

Un mēs gājām uz šoseju.

Te Zemgales līdzenums bija aplūkojams vēl labāk, Jelgavas puses pamale šķita vēl mīļāka, mīļāka nekā ilgotā Rīgas puse. Rīga mūs neinteresēja, bet, izbraucot tai bezmaz cauri, varēja nonākt Biržā. Tā bija pasaules galvenā vieta. Dažkārt sauksa arī par Panku Biržu. Mamma stāstīja, ka tur jau septiņdesmitajos hipiji mainījušies ar platēm. Biķernieku mežā, līdz kuram varēja tikt ar astoņpadsmito trolejbusu vai varbūt tramvaju. Cilvēki pulcējās mežā — atstumtie, ārpus likuma esošie, kuri negribēja citu vietu, pulcējās mežā un darīja tur savas lietas, par kurām nenojauta pilsēta un pasaule apkārt.

Ko viņi tur darīja? Pagaidām zinājām tikai, ka mainījās ar kasetēm. Ar to pietika. Kasetes mums vajadzēja. Vairs nepietika ar Nirvana un Pearl Jam.

Es pa klusam vēl dažreiz klausījos Nirvanu. Tomēr biežāk jaunās kasetes. ././ Mūzika, kurai līdzīgu es nekad agrāk nebiju dzirdējis. Es vispār nekad nebiju spējis iedomāties, ka kaut kas tāds pastāv. Šī patiešām bija cita pasaule. Bija labi sēdēt te uz asfalta, kopā ar Nāvi un Zombi, ceļa vidū uz citu pasauli.

— Sprāgala! Pērtele! ! Ibanāts! ! !

Zombis lādējās tīrā deviņdesmito manierē. Atkal mašīna slaidi aizšalca mums garām. Lai cik atraktīvi Zombis vicinājās un

ieņēma teatrālas pozas, stopēšana nevedās. Un tā jau minūtes piecpadsmit, spriežot pēc saules (mums nevienam nebija pulksteņa). Nāve drūmi pareģoja:

— Tā mēs uz biržu netiksim. Tur sākas desmitos.

— Tad varbūt beidziet sildīt kules uz asfalta un nāciet kaut ko darīt? Man jau roka nopuvusi.

Es gan neticu, ka Zombis jelkad nogura. Tagad viņš ceļmalā plūca garākās nātres un slānīja ar tām neredzamus pretiniekus.

Pie stopēšanas ķēros es. Nāca satiksmes mikriņš, un es atrāvu roku, aizliku aiz muguras un novērsos no ceļa. Naudas taču mums nebija. Tad nāca otrais žigulītis, vīrs stabili turēja abas rokas uz stūres un skatījās tikai uz ceļu, sieva smaidīja un noraidoši kratīja galvu. Bet aizmugure viņiem taču bija tukša. Viņi izskatījās viena gadagājuma ar maniem vecākiem, kuri vienmēr ņēma stopētājus. Tad nāca pavisam vienaldzīgs auģiks vai kas tamlīdzīgs (es neatšķiršu mašīnu markas, zinu tikai tēta žigīti). Vēl kāds ārzemju lūznēns, tajā sēdēja kāds pieklājīgs cilvēks, viņš parādīja ar īkšķi pa labi, sak, tūlīt griežos, citādi paņemtu. Īss, cilvēcīgs kontakts. Nākošās mašīnas vadītājs man pamāja pavisam mīklainu garāmbraucēja žestu. Ko tas nozīmēja? Audz, zēn, nelien ārā no mājas, kamēr nav pašam savs fordiņš?

Tā es sarunājos ar autobraucējiem, manai sarunai bija ilgstamība un attīstība, bet viņiem — tikai mirklis. Es sarunājos ar pašu tūkstošgalvaino ceļa gājumu, apturēts savā punktā — lūk, mašīna mums pamirkšķina un sāk bremsēt, Nāve jau griežas skatīties, kur Zombis pa pļavu aizcīnījies, bet iekšā pilns knapi par mums vecāku deģenerātu, noteikti no Olaines, viņi smejas un uzgāzē, viņi tikai gribēja mūs pieminēt, un prom ir, pat viņi, kas veltīja mums uzmanību, jau ir mūs aizmirsuši pēc divām minūtēm, pēc trim kilometriem.

— Man piegriezās. Neķeras. Pamēģini tu.

Nāve nāca, skumjš uz visu pasauli, nošņaukājās un ietrieca roku telpā virs ceļa. Viņš skaitīja mantru:

— Stājies taču, idiot!

Mašīna bija gara kā zvaigžņu kuģis, tās mirdzošajam, garāmslidošajam sānam nemanīja gala. Mašīna apstājās. Tas laikam bija no dārgajiem auto, spīdīgs. Monsieur paliecās ārā un jautāja:

— Kur tad džekiņiem jābrauc?

Uz Plakanciemu, man nez kāpēc nikni iešāvās prātā, bet Nāve atbildēja lietišķi:

— Uz Biržu.

— Hā, hā. Birži uz otru pusi, džekiņi. Lietuvā.

— Uz Rīgu.

— Nu kur tad?

— Uz Rīgu!

Šis atkal pasmējās.

— Nu, pavedīsim. Varam pavest.

Zombis skrēja no pļavas, aplipsis zaļumiem kā jukušais Līrs, un pirms iesēšanās saņēma norādījumu:

— Nopurinies.

Automobilis slīdēja klusāk par žiguli, un pār otra priekšējā sēdekļa pleciem kaskādē plūda brīnišķīgi mati, to spožums cirta acīs, kad trāpīja saule, bet ēnā tiem piemita asinskrāsas romantika — blakus saimniekam sēdēja metālists! Nē, es paskatījos spogulī, tur skatījās meitenes acis. Viņas tēvs piespieda gāzīti, un es piespiedu degunu logam, lai atsāktu

sarunu ar ceļu. Lūk, deģenerātu auto, viņi sēž klusi, katrs skatās citur, viņiem nav ko darīt bez mums, lūk, es pašaujos viņiem garām un parādu slepenu fakucīti. Tad mēs apdzenam mīklaino mājēju, viņš ir tikpat nopietns. Tad pieklājīgais pagrieziena kungs, kāpēc viņš nav nogriezies? Lūk, arī žigulis ar padzīvojušo pāri, sieviete groza galvu un pamana mani, un atkal smaidot krata galvu, nē, nē.

— Ko tad Rīgā džekiņi darīs?

To, protams, jautāja mūsu laipnais pavedējs. Katrs no mums klusēja, gaidīdams, ka atbildēs kāds cits.

— Ko?

Viņš jautāja vēlreiz. Nāve un Zombis atbildēja reizē, pie kam Nāve teica:

— Iesim uz veikalu.

Bet Zombis:

— Skaitīsim pensionārus.

Neviens vairs negribēja pieminēt Biržu, nez kāpēc tā šajā pēc „Wunderbaum“ un ādas smaržojošajā mašīnā šķita neaizsargāta.

— Hā, hā. Jociņi džekiņi jūs esat.

Vispār jau ir tāds likums, ka stopētājiem jāsarunājas ar laipno vadītāju. Lai darījums sanāk savstarpēji izdevīgs. Es jau domāju pateikt, ka labs laiks vai ko tādu, bet viņš pats nelikās mierā:

— Kas jūs tādi esat?

Eksistenciāls jautājums. Tiešām, kas mēs esam? Zombis lēni atbildēja:

— Zē-ni.

Balsī, kas signalizēja, ka viņam nenormāli nāk zviēdzienš.

— Nu, es domāju, kas jūs esat, nu, visiem mati, jūs esat no kaut kādas vienības, vai?

Mēs raustijām plecus — ko nu mēs, mēs tāpat vien.

— Jūs taču neesat tie trakie metālisti?

Bznn, nu, kā lai pasaka... Esam it kā, vai kā? Čāļi, sakiet kaut ko? !

— Kādu mūziku jūs klausāties?

Nāve vairs negribēja izlocīties.

— Cannibal Corpse.

— Ko, ko?

Saimnieks pat pagrieza klusāk savu mūziku, tā bija visklasiskākā no klasiskās mūzikas, turklāt baisi samiksētā popūrijā. Viņš pagrieza klusāk un pagriezās uz mūsu pusi, ko?

— Cannibal Corpse.

— Ko tas nozīmē?

— Tulkojumā no angļu valodas – kanibāla līķis.

— Domā, es nemāku angļiski?

Un pagrieza skaļāk ar bumsīgu ritmu piesmieto Bēthovenu. Pēc minūtes viņš jautāja atkal:

— Tu domā, es neprotu angļiski?

— Nedomāju.

— Tad kāpēc tu tā saki?

— Nesaku.

— Kā, nesaki? Tie bija tavi vārdi!

— Atvainojos.

Šis stūrēja tālāk, cik nu pa Jelgavas šoseju vispār jāstūrē.

— Man, piemēram, patīk laba mūzika. Jūs tādu zināt? Zināt vispār, kas skan?

Bēthovena piektā bija neticamā veidā pārmiksējusies uz Brāmsa „Ungāru dejām“. Bet es neko neteicu.

— Nezināt!

Nez vai meitene viņam blakus, droši vien viņa meita, joprojām skatījās spogulī ar savām meitenes acīm? Es neskatījos.

— Un kāpēc jums nepatīk laba mūzika?

Nāve bija skaidri apņēmies neko vairs neteikt, pat skatienu bija izslēdzis, to viņš mācēja perfekti. Zombis kaut ko mēģināja:

— Gribas kaut ko interesantu.

Saimnieks tikai piespieda gāzīti, es gribēju iemest aci spidometrā, lai piedzīvojums nepaiet garām un vēlāk varētu pastāstīt, uz cik mēs nesāmies ar šo trako, bet neuzdriksējās, jo tā es noteikti ieskatītos spogulī, un tur varbūt būtu meitenes acis. Skatījos atkal uz ceļu. Tur bija lapsa, sabraukta.

— Un kāpēc jūs neizskatāties normāli? Zini, kāpēc? Es pateikšu, kāpēc!

Komandieris bija uzvilcis:

— Jūs nemaz negribat būt normāli. Jums tas liekas stulbi. Jūs domājat, ka esat par visiem gudrāki.

Viņš vairs nebija valdāms. Un mēs vēl necik nebijām pietuvojušies Rīgai.

— Tagad jūs iesēdāties manā mašīnā, redzat, laba mašīna. Vai es ar to izpelnījos kaut kādu jūsu cieņu? Nē!

Tagad man palika pa īstam baigi. Jo viņš runāja tieši to, ko es šobrīd domāju.

— Jums vienalga, ka cilvēks ir kaut ko sasniedzis. Jūs domājat — nu un, ka cilvēks labi dzīvo, gan jau zaglis vai pārdevies, nē, jūs vispār par to nedomājat. Jums viss ir vienalga.

Es jutos ļoti neērti par šo savu monologu.

— Šitā pasaule jums nav laba diezgan. Jūs esat tie īpašie. Normāli dzīvot, censties — tas jums liekas stulbi! Lai tie lohi paved mašīnā, lai uzsauc aliņu! Bet mums vajag kanibālus studēt.

Viņš uzmanīgi pārvietojās uz labo joslu, tad apturēja mašīnu šosejas malā.

— Esam atbraukuši.

Mēs paskatījāmies ārā. Tā noteikti nebija Rīga. Parasta šosejas mala. Ievērojamākais objekts te bija krūmi. Mēs laikam kavējāmies pārāk ilgi.

— Ko tieši es pateicu nesaprotami?

Mēs kāpām ārā. Vai Nāve nepateica paldies? Tas būtu viņa garā. Auto aizbrauca. Zombis saldi smējās, it kā būtu noticis kaut kas ļoti labs. Bet Nāve rezumēja:

— Es jums teicu — kreklis! Nu mēs uz Biržu nepaspēsim.

Es atkal skatījos uz ceļu, ko citu lai es darītu. Aizbrauca žigulītis, auģiks, fordiņš, tā vadītājs mums atkal mīklaini pamāja, varbūt nu jau kā paziņām, bet varbūt bija mūs aizmirsis, jo mājiens bija tieši tāds pats. Bet pieklājīgo cilvēku, kurš solīja nogriezties, vairs neredzēja. Viņš tiešām bija nogriezies. Tolaik cilvēki bija godīgi un atcerējās, ko nolēmuši darīt. Arī deģenerāti, kuriem tūlīt vajadzēja būt klāt, noteikti nebija aizmirsuši manu fakucīti.

Jelgava '94

Janis Jonevs

Translated from the Latvian by Ieva Lešinska

././ Incredible, I know, but he found that shirt in a used clothing shop. A real miracle. The rest of us rushed to dig through the piles. I even made a list for Mum of shirts that she should buy as soon as she sees them: Death, Cannibal Corpse, Anal Cunt, Brutal Truth, Carcass, Hypocrisy. She did not find any of these, she brought me a shirt with Michael Learns to Rock on it and pictures of three smiling guys à la Zack Morris. My rebellious nihilism notwithstanding, my heart almost broke to pieces, I felt such a surge of love for her. That didn't mean I could ever wear that shirt, however.

So Death found an Obituary shirt in a used clothing pile and paid 50 santims for it, and still he was not happy. He seemed to be a little superstitious and felt he had bought a disaster in the shape of this shirt (that, of course, did not prevent him from wearing it all the time). So now again he said, "I told you! I told you! I always have bad luck when I wear this shirt!"

We had just been kicked off the Jelgava-Riga train. For nothing, really. We did not have tickets. Having made comments about our hair, the team of conductors kicked us out, hair flying. The train continued on, whereas we were stuck here, in Olaine.

"What are we going to do, gentlemen?"

Death looked at the train, which had already disappeared from sight. As usual, Edgars had a plan: "We could kill dogs and sell their pelts!"

He was certifiably crazy, no doubt about it. He lived next-door to Death. Because of his craziness and excessive love of horror movies, he got the nickname Zombie.

“Soon the locals will sell our pelts.”

We trained our eagle’s eye on the town that spread before us, overgrown with bushes. Not a single soul seemed to be around. Yet the bushes looked suspicious.

“Let’s roll.”

And we started walking towards the highway.

Here the Zemgale plain offered an even better view of itself, the horizon on the Jelgava side seemed even more loveable – much more loveable than the much-coveted Riga side. We were not interested in Riga, but once you got almost through the city, you got to the Burse. That was the place to be in this world. Mum told me that hippies had exchanged records there as early as the 1970s. It was in the Biķernieki Forest, which could be reached by trolley-bus No. 18. Or was it by tram? People gathered in the woods: the outcasts, the ones on the other side of the law, the ones who did not want another place, just gathered in the woods and did their thing, about which the city and the outside world had not the slightest idea.

What did they do there? For now we only knew that they exchanged cassette tapes. That was all we had to know. We needed cassette tapes. Nirvana and Pearl Jam were not enough anymore.

Sometimes, I still secretly listened to Nirvana. More often to the new cassettes, however. ././ It was music like nothing I had ever heard before. No, I had not even thought it possible that such music existed. It was a totally different world. It was good to sit here on the tarmac together with Death and

Zombie on our way to another world.

“Tasser! Slag! Dickfuck! ! !”

Zombie was cussing in a pure nineties style. Another car swished elegantly by. No matter how attractively Zombie was flailing his arms, no matter how theatrical his poses, hitchhiking was a bust. Judging by the sun (nobody had a watch), this situation had lasted a quarter of an hour. Death had a dire prediction to share:

“We won’t make it to the Burse. They start at ten.”

“So maybe you should stop warming your bollocks on the tarmac and get to work? My arm is falling off.”

Though I found it hard to believe that Zombie would ever tire. Now he made himself busy plucking the tallest nettles and whipping invisible opponents with them.

Then it was my turn to try to stop someone. A public transportation van was coming. I lowered my arm, put it behind my back and turned away from the road. After all, we had no money. It was followed by a second-generation Lada; the man kept both hands firmly on the wheel and his eyes on the road while his wife was smiling and shaking her head. Yet their back seat was empty. They looked to be about the same age as my parents, who always picked up hitchhikers. Then a totally indifferent Audi or something like that drove by (I don’t really know the makes of cars, the only one I recognize is a Lada, like my Dad’s). Then came some foreign heap with a polite man inside: he pointed right with his thumb, meaning, I am turning in just a moment, otherwise I’d take you. A brief, civilized interaction. The driver of the next car waved at me in a totally mysterious way. What was that supposed to mean? Grow up, lad, don’t leave the house unless you have your own little Ford?

That's how I kept conversing with the drivers, and this conversation possessed sustainability and development, whereas for them it was just a passing moment. I was talking to the manifold denizens of the road, having been stopped right here and now, and look, a car blinks at us and begins slowing down. Death is already turning to see where Zombie is fighting his enemies on the field, but it turns out that the car is full of plonkers just slightly older than us, definitely from Olaine; they are laughing and then step on the gas, they'd only wanted to have some fun at our expense, so now they're gone; even they who paid us some attention will forget us in two short minutes, after three short kilometres.

"I'm fed up. They just don't bite. You try."

Death came over; sad about the entire world, he sniffled and pierced the space over the road with his hand. He kept reciting a mantra:

"Stop, you idiot!"

The car was long like a starship, there seemed to be no end to its gleaming side that was sliding by. Then it stopped. Must be one of the expensive cars, very shiny. Monsieur leaned out the window and asked:

"So where are you lads going?"

To Plakanciems, I thought, for some reason annoyed, but Death was all business:

"To the Burse."

"Ha. Biržai is the other direction, lads. In Lithuania."

"To Riga."

"So where then?"

"To Riga!"

The driver laughed again.

“All right. We’ll take you for a ride then.”

Zombie was running out of the field, all covered with green stuff like some demented Lear and received an admonishment before getting into the car:

“Shake it off.”

The car glided more quietly than a Lada, and beautiful hair cascaded over the shoulders of the other front seat passenger; its brilliance hurt the eyes when hit by the sun, whereas in the shade they took on a romantically blood-red tinge: a metalhead was sitting next to the owner! But no, I looked in the mirror and met the eyes of a girl. Her father stepped on the gas and I pressed my nose to the window to resume my conversation with the road. See, there’s the plonkers’ car, they are sitting there quietly, each looking in a different direction, they are bored without us, and see, I whizz by them flipping a secret bird at them. Then we overtake the mysterious waver, and he is just as serious as before. And after that it’s the turning gentleman, so why hasn’t he turned? And finally here’s the elderly couple, the woman is turning her head this way and that, then she sees me and again shakes her head with a smile, no, no.

“So what are the young lads going to do in Riga?”

That of course was a question asked by our kindly driver. Each one of us kept silent, expecting someone else to reply.

“Huh?”

He asked again. Death and Zombie answered at the same time. Death said:

“We’ll go shopping.”

But Zombie said:

“We’ll count pensioners.”

No one was inclined to mention the Burse; for some reason it seemed too vulnerable in this car whose interior smelled of Wunder-Baum and leather.

“Ha, ha, funny lads you are.”

There is of course the rule that hitchhikers have to keep up a conversation with the nice driver. So that the deal is to the advantage of both parties. I was about to say something about the nice weather or such, but he was not going to let go.

“Who are you?”

An existential question. Really – who are we? It was Zombie who slowly answered:

“We’re boys.”

He did it in a voice that suggested that he is really cracking up.

“No, I mean, who are you, like you all have this hair, are you from some group or something?”

We just shrugged: whatever.

“You’re not those crazy metalheads, are you?”

Duh, what can we say, man... We kinda are, you know? Hey, guys, say something.

“What kind of music do you listen to?”

Death had decided to stop trying to wriggle out of this.

“Cannibal Corpse.”

“Whaat?”

The owner even turned down his music; it was the most classical of classical music, plus it was mixed in a terrible potpourri.

He turned it down and turned to us, what?

“Cannibal Corpse.”

“What does that mean?”

“To translate: it’s the dead body of a man-eater.”

“You think I don’t know English?”

And he turned up his Beethoven that had been adulterated with an oompah rhythm. A minute later he asked again:

“You think I don’t understand English?”

“I don’t.”

“Then why are you saying this?”

“I don’t.”

“What do you mean you don’t? Your exact words.”

“I am sorry.”

The man kept on steering. As much as you really need to steer down the Jelgava highway.

“I, for one, like good music. Do you know of such a thing? Do you know what we are listening to?”

Beethoven’s Fifth had somehow transformed into Brahms’ Hungarian Dances. But I kept my mouth shut.

“You don’t!”

I wonder if that girl next to him, probably his daughter, was still looking into the mirror with her girl’s eyes? I didn’t look.

“And why don’t you like good music?”

Death had apparently resolved not to say a word, he had even turned off his gaze, he was perfect at that. Zombie gave it a try:

“Just feel like something interesting.”

The owner of the car just stepped on the gas again. I felt like glancing at the speedometer, so as not to miss the adventure and later be able to tell everyone how we were just flying down the highway like crazy, but I didn't dare, because then I would probably glance into the mirror and there I would probably meet the girl's eyes. So I turned back to the road. There was a fox, run over.

“And why don't you look normal? You know why? I will tell you why.”

The captain was all whipped-up.

“You simply don't want to be normal. You think it's stupid. You think you are smarter than anyone.”

He could no longer contain himself. And we were still far away from Riga.

“Now you got into my car, and you saw that it was a really nice one. Did that earn me any respect? No!”

Now I was really horrified. Because he was saying exactly what I was thinking at the moment.

“It is all the same to you if a person has achieved something. You are thinking: so what if this chap is living well, he's probably a thief or has sold out. But no, you don't even think about that. It's all the same to you.”

I felt very uncomfortable with this monologue.

“This world is not good enough for you. Like you are something special. To live a normal life, to try for something – you think it's stupid! Let these nincompoops drive you around, let them treat you to a beer! Whereas we must study cannibals.”

He carefully changed lanes to the right one, and then stopped the car by the side of the road.

“We’re here.”

We looked out the window. That most assuredly was not Riga. It was just a side of the road. The most noteworthy object here was bushes. We must have taken our time.

“What exactly did you not get from what I said?”

We got out of the car. Did I hear Death saying thank you? That would be exactly like him. The car took off. Zombie was laughing his head off, as if something great had happened. But Death summed it up:

“I told you, it’s that shirt! Now we’ll be late for the Burse.”

I stared at the road again, what else could I do? There was the Lada, then the Audi, then the Ford, whose driver once again waved at us mysteriously, perhaps even in a familiar way now, as if we were acquainted, but maybe he had already forgotten about us, because the wave was exactly the same. The polite one, the one who said he was turning, was nowhere to be seen. He must have turned. People were honest then and remembered what they had set out to do. Even the plonkers who must be here any second, surely had not forgotten my bird.



EUROPEAN UNION
PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

2014

Janis Jonevs – Latvia

Jelgava '94

312 pp, 2013

Translations: The book has not been translated yet.
(*Last Update – August 2014*)

Publishing House **Mansards**

Dzirnavu street 82-34 – Riga, LV-1050 – Latvia

Tel. +371 29145879

www.apgadsmansards.lv

Contact: Publishing House – info@apgadsmansards.lv

Aija Rozensteine – aija@apgadsmansards.lv

ISBN: 978-9984-872-85-8

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

info@euprizeliterature.eu – www.euprizeliterature.eu



Creative
Europe



european
booksellers
federation



FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN PUBLISHERS
FÉDÉRATION DES ÉDITEURS EUROPÉENS