

D^{DRJA} IVANA TAVČARJA
ZBRANI SPISI

UREDIL

DR. IVAN PRIJATELJ

V LJUBLJANI 1938

IZDALA IN ZALOŽILA „TISKOVNA ZADRUGA“

Ivan Tavčar (1851–1923)

Tavčar was a lawyer and successful politician, having been elected several times to public office, including the mayoralty of Ljubljana. Politically speaking he was liberal, opposed to both the clericalism of the Slovene right and the socialism of the left. At the same time he was a prolific prose-writer of very romantic orientation. He is particularly renowned for his historical novels, which tend to romanticize historical realities in the style of Sir Walter Scott. His most famous work without doubt is *Visoška kronika* (1919, *The Visoko Chronicle*). This excerpt is from *Slovenija* 3/4 (1989): 58–62. The Slovene text is from Ivan Prijatelj, ed., *Drja Ivana Tavčarja zbrani spisi*, vol. 6 (Ljubljana: Tiskovna zadruga, 1938).

Visoška kronika

I

1664

Rodil sem se v Gospodovem letu 1664. na dan sv. Izidorja, in sicer ravno tu na Visokem. Oče mi je bil Polikarp Khallan, tudi Khallain, lastnik dveh kmetij na Visokem, mati pa mi je bila Barbara Khallanin, tudi Khallainin, rojena na Suhi kot druga hči ondotnega kmetovalca Volka Wulffinga.

V mali cerkvi sv. Martina me je na ime svetnika Izidorja krstil gospod Karel Ignacij Codelli, takrat župnik v Poljanah. O krstu se je govorilo po vsej dolini. Imel sem osem botrov: štiri moškega in štiri ženskega spola. A pri krstni pojedini se je spilo toliko črnikalskega vina, da sta se boter Kožuh s hriba Sv. Sobote in boter Hmeljinec s hriba Sv. Volnika sporekla in skoraj do krvi stepla. Zaradi tega so previdne ženske že tedaj govorile, da otroče, ravnokar rojeno in na Kristovo vero krščeno, ne bo imelo sreče na svetu. Ta govoric—božji Porodnici bodi potoženo!—se je pozneje dobro izpolnila, kar bo vsakdo izprevidel iz tega mojega pisanja, h kateremu sem se odločil, ko sem bil, kakor drevo v zimi brez listja in soka.

Boga pa le hvalim, ker mi je podelil toliko moči, da mi ni odpadlo pero, dokler ni bilo zapisano, kako sem grešil, kako klical božjo jezo nase in kako sem delal premalo pokore zase in tudi za svojega očeta Polikarpa Khallana, ki ni živel ne pravično, ne Bogu dopadljivo.

Že otročja leta so mi bila v nadlego, in težo življenja sem občutil na sebi ko breme, mučno in grenko.

Kdo je bil moj oče Polikarp? Od kod je prišel? Kje je bil poprej? Bog ve!

O vsem tem takrat še ničesar nisem vedel, samo to sem občutil, da je bil Polikarp Khallan trd, teman in brezsrčen gospodar, kateremu ni nikdar posijalo sonce v dušo. Čez vse mere je delal grdo s svojo zakonsko ženo, katera mu je rodila mene in pet let mlajšega brata Jurija. Naša hiša ni bila hiša božjega blagoslova. Imeli smo več nego drugi, posedovali smo vsega dosti, a pod nobeno streho se ni tako malo molilo in tako obilo preklinjalo, kakor ravno pod našo. Gospodar je poznal kletvine celega sveta. Preklinjal je v jeziku, kakor ga govori ljudstvo v tej okolici, ali hudiča je klical tudi v jezikih, katere govore narodi po tujih deželah. Pozneje, ko me je zaneslo med tujce, sem se zavedel, da je preklinjal po nemško, po laško in celo po španjolsko. Ko je umrl, je nesel torej s sabo na koše samih krvavih grehov,

The Visoko Chronicle (Excerpt)

I.

I was born in the year of Our Lord 1664, on the feast of St. Izidor, in this very place—Visoko. My father was Polikarp Khallan, also Khallain, the owner of two holdings at Visoko, and my mother was Barbara Khallanin, also Khallainin, born at Suha, the second daughter of the local farmer Volk Wulffing.

Father Karel Ignacij Codelli, then the pastor at Poljane, baptized me in honor of St. Izidor in the small church of St. Martin. The baptism was talked about all over the valley. I had eight godparents, four male and four female. And at the baptismal feast such an amount of črni Kal wine was consumed that godfather Kozuh from St. Sobota hill and godfather Hmeljinec from St. Volnik hill quarreled and fought until they nearly drew blood. Because of that, even then, farsighted women used to say that the child just born and baptized into the Christian faith would not have happiness in this world. That talk—may the Mother of God have mercy—later came to full fruition, as anyone may conclude from these writings of mine, which I resolved upon when I was like a winter tree without leaf or sap.

I only thank God that he endowed me with strength enough that my pen did not drop until it was written how I sinned, how I called God's wrath upon myself, and how I also did too little penance for myself and for my father Polikarp Khallan, who lived neither justly nor pleasingly to God.

Even my childhood years were a bane, and I felt the weight of life pressing me like a burden, painful and bitter.

Who was my father Polikarp? Where did he come from? Where had he been before? God knows!

At the time I as yet knew nothing about all of this, I only sensed that Polikarp Khallan was a hard, dark and heartless master, into whose soul the sun never shone. Beyond all bounds he maltreated his lawful wit who bore him me and my brother by five years younger, Jurij. Our house was not a house blessed by God. We had more than others, we possessed enough of everything, but beneath no roof was there less prayer and such plenty of cursing as beneath ours. Our master knew the curses of the whole world. He cursed in the language spoken by the common folk in our parts but he also called upon the devil in languages spoken by peoples in other lands. Later, when I came among foreigners, I realized that he cursed in German, in Italian and even in Spanish. Thus when he died he carried with him

tako da še danes molim, da bi v nebesih izpregledali Polikarpu Khallanu njegove grehe, ker drugače ne vem, kako naj izhaja na onem svetu pred svojim Sodnikom.

Ko sem se začel zavedati svojega življenja, je bil oče že petdeset let star. A visok je bil kakor jablana in hrust kakor medved, ki trga ovce po Blegašu. Govoril je malo besed, pa nobene prijazne, in na hlapce in dekle je prežal, da niso postopali in zanemarjali dela. Kogar je zalotil brez dela, ta je bil tepen, da se je Bogu smilil in da je dostikrat komaj življenje odnesel.

Bog mi je priča, da je bila mati Barbara najboljša gospodinja in da je z varčevanjem na vse mogoče načine množila imetek svojemu gospodarju. Ta pa se ni sramoval, pred otroki in pred posli udariti jo mnogokrat po tankem obrazu, da se ji je ulila rdeča kri po licu in suhih čeljustih. Koliko je prejokala ta mučena ženska, ve samo Mati božja, ki je štela v nočeh solze ponižne in v trdo usodo vdane moje matere. Usmiljenja ni poznal divji in razjedeni visoški gospodar; kričal je pod težkim bremenom, ki si ga je bil sam navalil nase, tako da je tudi on v nočeh ječal in stokal, kakor da bi pri živem telesu tičal globoko v črni zemlji.

Kar smo bili dobili Jurija, ni več spal pri svoji zakonski družici. Otroka z materjo sva prenočevala v gorenji hiši. Zase pa si je oče izbral svoje prenočišče v kleti. V to klet je podnevi prihajalo le malo svetlobe pri dveh nizkih in zamreženih oknih, pri stenah pa je vlažnost silila iz ometa in v debelih kapljah lezla po črnem zidovju. Tu si je—kmalu po rojstvu brata Jurija—stolkel nerodno ležišče, ki si ga je sam postiljal in h kateremu ni imela pristopa ne žena, ne dekla.

Ko sem postajal starejši in ko me je včasih zvabila svetla luna s postelje, sem se pritihotapil pred klet in čul sem, kako je oče kričal v spanju, kako je odganjal nekoga od postelje, kako je tulil in hropel. Ni ga užival počitka v nočeh in nekdo je moral valiti skalo po njem, tako da je starec obupaval pod njo, kakor da je zagazil pod mlinsko kolo, ki ga je globoko v vodi trlo in stiskalo, da ni mogel premakniti uda in ne dati duška zaprti svoji sapi.

Bil sem star dvanajst let. Takrat me je mati prvič peljala v mesto.

Takoj pri Poljanskih vratih je tržil nekdo z orožjem. Prodajal je meče, težke muškete in železne čelade. Vse je bilo bolj staro in obrabljeno, ker je bilo ostalo iz vojske, katera je zavolj krive vere razsajala po celem svetu, da

dossers of such bloody sins that even today I pray that Polikarp Khallan's sins may be overlooked in heaven, otherwise I do not know how he will come before his Judge in the other world.

When I began to be aware of life, my father was already fifty years old. But he was tall, like an apple tree, and sturdy, like the bear that rips sheep apart around Blegos. He spoke few words and no kind ones, and he stalked the hired youths and girls so that they would not loaf and shirk their work. Whomever he surprised was beaten to within an inch of his life and they often only just escaped unscathed.

God is my witness that my mother Barbara was a most fine housewife who increased the wealth of her master by all manner of frugalities. He, however, was not ashamed to strike her frequently across her thin face before the children and laborers so that red blood flowed down her cheek and over her drawn jaws. Only the Mother of God, who counted the tears of my humble mother, reconciled to her harsh fate, knows how often that tormented woman cried in the night. The savage and fretted master of Visoko did not receive any mercy; he cried out from beneath the heavy burden that he had taken upon himself, and he too groaned and sobbed in the nights, as if in his living body he were buried deep in the black earth.

After we received Jurij he no longer slept with his lawful wife. My brother and I and our mother passed the night in the upper quarters. And father took for himself a resting place in the cellar. By day only a little light came into that cellar through two low, barred windows, wetness exuded from the plaster on the walls and crept in large drops down the black masonry. There, not long after Juri's birth, he pounded out a crude lair which he made up himself and to which neither his wife nor the maid were permitted.

As I grew older and the light of the moon at times called me from my bed, I would steal up to the cellar and I would hear how my father called out in his sleep, how he drove someone from his bed, how he howled and rasped. The nights did not bring him rest, and someone must have been rolling a stone over him, can using the old man to despair beneath it, as if swagging under a mill wheel that crushed and pinned him deep in the water, not allowing him to move his limbs or draw a breath into his sealed throat.

I was twelve years old. At that time my mother took me to town for the first time.

Right at the Poljane gates a man was trading in weapons. He was selling swords, heavy muskets and iron helmets. Everything was rather old and used since it had been left over from the war that had raged over the whole world because of a false faith—everywhere there was murdering and the

so se povsod morili ljudje in zažigala človeška stanovanja. Po tej vojski so ostala dolga pokopališča in celi tovari orožja. Nekaj tega orožja so zanesli odpuščeni vojaki in tudi prekupci v mesto našega škofa.

Tiste dni je bila gorka moja želja, postati vojščak, in kar pegrelo me je, ko sem pri loškem trgovcu ugledal samokres z debelim, svetlo okovanim kopitom, ki pa je bil tako velik, da bi ga bil jaz, otročaj, komaj mogel nositi. Ta samokres je v hipu napolnil mojo dušo in moje srce je poželelo po njem. "Kupite mi ga!" sem vzdihnil k materi. Položila mi je roko na ramo in odgovorila: "Kako naj ti ga kupim, ko bi morala zanj plačati beneški cekin!"

Kmalu nato je napočil zame najhujši trenutek zapuščenega življenja, ki me je pozneje preganjal pri svetlem dnevu ter me budil iz spanja divjih sanj.

Popoldne sva prišla z materjo iz Loke. Že na brvi pod visoškim domom sva čula vpitje jeznega očeta. Bil je na njivi, kjer mu niso deklice nekaj pogodu opravljale. V največjem strahu sva se stisnila okrog hleva v hišo. Tam je mati odhitela navzgor, da bi se prejkone skrila na izbi, kakor je to vselej storila pri enakem divjanju.

A jaz sem obstal ravno pri kleti ter takoj opazil, da so bila vrata priprta. Ko je oče v jezi odrohnul na polje, je pozabil vrata pri kleti zapreti, kar se ni zgodilo ne prej ne slej nikoli. Kakor stržek sem švignil v mračni prostor, kamor me je gotovo sam satan vlekel proti volji moje bojzljive duše!

Najprej mi je udarila mračnost na oči, da moj onemogli pogled ni razločeval reči od reči. Ali privadil sem se kraja in takrat sem opazil na nemarno skupaj nastlani postelji črn, železen zaboj. Bil je zaklenjen in s svojo ročico ga niti premakniti nisem mogel, dasi sem to poskušal. Pot mi je zalil obraz in telo, da sem že hotel pobegniti, ker se mi je dozdevalo, da preži name v temačnem kotu nekaj grozovitega. V tistem trenutku se je prikradel od nekod sončni žarek—Bog-sodnik ga je poslal, da bi udaril grešnika v lastnem otroku—ter zasijal skozi mrežo pri oknu, da se je na temni ilnati zemlji pred mojo nogo napravila svetla lisa. Sredi lise je ležalo nekaj rumenega. Jezus in Marija! Ko sem se sklonil, mi je tičal v roki cekin, rumen beneški cekin! In zopet sem stal pred prodajalno v Loki ter gledal na svetlo okovani samokres, ki je bil tisti mah želja vseh mojih otroških želj.

V najboljšem premišljevanju, kako si hočem kupiti ponosno orožje, je pograbila železna pest mojo roko, v kateri sem stiskal beneški denar. Kakor bi zašel v past, tako mi je stiskal oče malo ročico, da sem kar čutil, da mi na dlani sili cekin v kožo in meso. Oče se je bil vrnil v klet, ali v svojem zamaknjenju nisem opazil njegovega prihoda. Z desnico se je oklenil moje

burning of men's dwellings. Vast cemeteries and whole stockpiles of arms were left after that war. Discharged soldiers as well as traders brought some of those arms to our bishop's town, Škofja Loka.

In those days it was my burning desire to become a soldier, and I was pricked when I saw the Loka trader's flintlock with a thick stock inlaid with bright metal. However, it was so big that I, a lad, could barely have carried it. That pistol instantly filled my soul, and my heart yearned for it. "Buy it for me," I sighed to mother. She placed her hand on my shoulder and answered, "How can I buy it for you when I would have to pay a Venetian ducat for it!" Soon thereafter struck the worst moment of my desolate life, which later tormented me in broad daylight and woke me from my sleep filled with wild dreams.

In the afternoon mother and I returned from Loka. Already at the footbridge below our Visoko home we heard the screaming of my angry father. He was in the field, where the maidservants had failed to do something as it pleased him. In greatest fear we stole around the barn and into the house. There mother hurried upstairs to hide quickly in her room, as she always did during such wildness.

But I stood right before the cellar and noticed at once that the door was ajar. When father had stormed off to field in anger he forgot to lock the cellar door, which did not happen before nor ever after. Like a wren I shot into the gloomy space, surely drawn by Satan himself against the will of my timid soul!

At first the gloominess hit me in the eyes and my weakened sight could not distinguish one thing from another. But I became accustomed to the place and when I did I noticed a black chest made of iron on the carelessly made bed. It was locked and try as I might my little arm could not even budge it. Sweat covered my face and body and I was ready to run because it seemed that something horrible was stalking me in the dark corner. At that moment a ray of sunlight stole up from somewhere—God the judge sent it to strike the sinner in his own child—and it shone in through the grate on the window creating a bright spot on the dark clay earth at my feet. Something golden lay in the spot. Jesus and Mary! I bent over and a ducat lay in my hand, a gold Venetian ducat! And again I was standing before the trader in Loka and looking at the pistol with bright inlay that at that moment was chief of all my youthful desires.

While I was in very deep thought about how I would buy the proud weapon, an iron fist seized the hand in which I clasped the Venetian money. As if I had been caught in a trap, so hard did my father press my hand, and I could feel the ducat piercing the skin and flesh of my palm. My father had returned to the cellar, but in my rapture I had not noticed his

roke, z levico pa je pograbil cunje ter jih nametal na zaboj. Moja roka se je tresla, ali tudi očetova pest se je tresla, ker ga je morila najhujša jeza. “Diavolo!” je zakričal, “ti se vlačiš okrog postelje očeta, ki ti daje jesti in piti!” Potegnil me je za sabo in niti za trenutek ni izpustil moje roke. Zunaj je s težavo izvlekel ključ ter še z večjo težavo zaklenil z njim vrata od kleti.

“Krasti si hotel!”

Kri mu je napolnila obraz in iz njegovih oči je bliskalo, da sem pričel od groze jokati, kar je starega še bolj razkačilo. Po stopnicah me je vlekel v vežo, iz veže v hišo in k mizi, s katere so se dvignile muhe v tolpah. Celo sobo je obsevalo sonce, da se je žarila bela stena in rumenkasti strop nad njo. V tem žaru je ugledala moja trepetajoča duša križ v kotu in na njem belo podobo Odrešenika v trnju in krvi. “Kristus, pomagaj!” sem zastokal ter skušal izviti roko iz očetove pesti. “Hudič ti pomagaj!” je zarjul ter mi pritisnil ročico k mizi, da so odnehali prstki in da je odletel cekin izpod njih, kakor odleti zrno iz klasa, kadar se mlati žito na podu.

“Kradel je, svojemu lastnemu očetu je kradel!”

V megli sem videl, da so se mu penila usta. Jaz pa sem ihtel: “Oče, ne bom več!”

“Ne boš,” je zakričal hripavo, “bom že skrbel, da ne boš!”

V tujem jeziku je nekaj zaklel. Z levico mi je skupaj stiskal štiri prste, tako da se je samo meziniec nahajal na mizi. In tedaj se je zgodilo!

“Da si zapomniš, kdaj si kradel!” S temi besedami je pograbil furlansko ostro sekirico, katero je bil nekdo pozabil na stolu. Zamahnil je z njo in mi odsekal polovico malega prsta, da je kri porosila v gostih kapljicah mizo, kakor da je padel rdeči dež po nji. Zasukalo se mi je v glavi, zavrteli so se okrog mene miza in strop in Kristus v kotu.

Ko sem se zavedel, sem se zavijal na klopi in ubogo obsekano ročico sem stiskal med noge; srajčica, obutev in nogavice nad njo—vse je bilo krvavo!

V hiši se je bila nabrala družina. Mati je slonela pri peči ter padala iz omedlevice v omedlevico. Ko je začula moj jok in očetovo kričanje, si je ravno spletala lase. Z razpletenimi lasmi je torej prihitela v hišo in sedaj je omagovala pri peči. Kako so že bili sivi ti lasje in kako je bil prepadel njen obraz!

approach. With his right hand he clung to my hand and with his left he grabbed some rags from the bed and threw them over the chest. My hand quivered, but so did my father's fist because a most terrible anger was ravaging him. "Diavolo," he he yelled, "you creep about your father's bed, who gives you to eat and drink!" He dragged me along, not releasing my hand for an instant. Outside he pulled out his key with difficulty and with even greater difficulty locked the door to the cellar.

"You meant to steal!"

The blood flowed to his face and his eyes flashed. I began to cry in terror, which only enraged my elder more. He pulled me up the stairs and into the hallway, from the hallway into the room, and to the table, from which arose clouds of flies. The sun illuminated the whole room, setting the white wall and the ceiling above it aglow. In that glow my quivering soul caught sight of the crucifix in the corner and on it the white likeness of the Savior, bloodied and with a crown of thorns. "Christ help me," I groaned and tried to wrench my hand from my father's fist. "The devil help you," he roared and pressed my hand to the table so that my tiny fingers opened and the ducat flew out from under them, as the kernel flies from its ear when grain is threshed on the floor.

"He stole, he stole from his own father!"

In a haze I saw that his mouth was foaming. And I sobbed, "Father, I won't do it again!"

"You won't," he yelled hoarsely, "I'll make certain you won't!"

He uttered some curse in a foreign tongue. With his left hand he pressed four of my fingers together so that only my little finger lay on the table. And then it happened!

"So you remember when it was you stole!" With those words he grabbed the sharp Friulian hatchet that someone had left on the table. He swung it and cut off half of my little finger, and the blood bedewed the table in thick droplets, as if a red rain were falling on it. My head whirled; the table, the ceiling and Christ in the corner spun about me.

When I regained consciousness I was writhing on the bench, pressing the poor mangled hand between my legs; my shirt, shoes and the stockings above them—everything was bloody!

The family had gathered in the room. Mother was leaning against the stove, swooning again and again. She had been plaiting her hair when she heard my crying and my father's yells. Thus with her hair still loose she had hurried down—stairs and now she lay fainting by the stove. How grey that hair was already, and how sunken was her face!

Dekla Mica je namakala predpasnik v loncu ter brisala z njim mater po čelu in licih, da bi jo spravila k življenju. Mala dekla in volar sta glasno molila. Pastir Tonček pa je tulil, kakor bi ga kdo z brezovcem tepel.

Oče je še vedno stal pri mizi in tiščal sekirico v svoji desnici. Hlapec Lukež, o katerem se je govorilo, da je bil z očetom v nemških vojskah, je stal brez strahu pred njim. Gledala sta se ko dva gada, oko v oko. Oba mogočnih udov, in moč sta imela, kot jo ima v plug vprežena živina!

“Polikarp,” je ukazal ostro, “deni jo iz rok! Bog nama grehe odpusti: otroke smo morili po Švabskem in po Saksonskem—tukaj jih ne boš več! In še celo ne, če so bili rojeni iz tvojega telesa!”

Družina se je spustila v krik, brat Jurij pa je ležal na tleh ter se ondi valjal v joku in stoku.

“Položi jo iz rok,” je ponavljal Lukež, “sicer se ti s silo uprem in naj si desetkrat moj gospodar! Kdo ti je pomagal takrat, ko ti je hotel glavo razklati švedski kirasir? Kdo mu je prestrelil vrat, da si ostal pri življenju? Na to misli, pa bodi človek in ne živina, Polikarp!”

Pri tisti priči je vrgel oče sekirico pod klop, dvignil obe roki, ju pritisnil h glavi ter pri tem—pobegnivši iz hiše—tako grozno in grdo zakričal, da ne vem, sem li še kdaj pozneje slišal tak krik.

Pač, enkrat sem ga še slišal! Že vem! Pri Luzzari je bilo. Vodil nas je gospod Eugenius in Francoze smo topli. Pred našo vrsto je skakljal mlad kornet in s svojo halebardico je kazal na sovražnika. Pa je v hipu padel in se valjal po prahu! Takrat sem čul ravno tak krik, ker je bil strel iz topa zdrobil in odtrgal kornetu obe nogi!

1676

To se mi je pripetilo, ko je teklo 1676. leto po rojstvu našega Gospoda Izveličarja.

Kos odsekanega mojega prsta je mati Barbara skrivoma in tajno zakopala na pokopališču pri cerkvi sv. Martina v Poljanah. Vse skupaj pa ni ostalo tajno. Družina je sicer molčala, a počasi je nekaj vendarle pririlo na dan in raznesla se je govorica, da je nekdo na Visokem, ki je že pokopan, ki pa še vendar hodi živ okrog.

Mica the maid kept wetting her apron in a pot and wiping mother's forehead and cheeks with it, trying to bring her to life. The little maid and the ox-driver were praying out loud. Tonček, the herdsman, wailed as if someone was beating him with a birch rod.

Father remained standing at the table, squeezing the hatchet in his right hand. The servant Lukež, who people said had been in the German wars with my father, stood fearlessly before him. They eyed each other like two vipers. Both were large of limb and had the strength of beasts harnessed to the plow!

"Polikarp," Lukež commanded sharply, "lay it down! May God forgive our sins: we slew children in Swabia and Saxony—you won't kill any more here! Especially not those born of your own flesh!"

The family began yelling, my brother Jurij lay on the floor and rolled about, crying and moaning.

"Put it down," Lukež kept repeating. "or I'll defy you with force, be you ten times my master! Who helped you when the Swedish cuirassier would have split your head? Who shot him through the neck so you could live? Think of that and be a man, not a beast, Polikarp!"

At this argument father threw the hatchet under the bench, pressed both hands to his head, and, having run out of the room, screamed so terribly and horribly that I do not know if ever afterwards I heard such a scream.

Yet once I did! I am certain! It was near Luzzara. Lord Eugenius was leading us and we were beating the French. A young cornet pranced before our ranks, pointing out the enemy with his halberd. But in an instant he fell and rolled in the dust! That time I heard exactly the same scream, because grapeshot fired from a cannon had shattered and ripped off both of the cornet's legs!

1676

This happened to me in the 1676th year after the birth of our Lord and Savior.

My mother Barbara clandestinely and in secret buried the piece of my severed finger in the cemetery by St. Martin's church in Poijane. However, all of this did not remain secret. The family was silent, but nonetheless something of it slowly came out and talk spread that there was someone at Visoko who was buried yet was still walking about alive.

Bil sem dolgo časa bolan. Dvanajstletnega otroka šibko telesce ni moglo prenesti nečloveškega in grdega ravnanja. Polastila se me je slabost in me je mučila nekaj tednov grda bolečina. Rešila me je molitev—cela hiša je molila zame—a gotovo mi je pomagalo tudi mazilo, katero je prinesel Lukež iz nemških vojsk. Drugim ga je prodajal za drag denar, materi pa je odstopil neznatno kepico za božje plačilo, ker je imel usmiljenje z mano, ko mi je bila usekana tako težka rana.

S tem zdravilom me je mati, če se mi je mešalo od vročine in bolečine, mazilila pod pazduho dve noči zaporedoma. To maziljenje mi je gotovo služilo v korist, ker je bilo mazilo skuhanoma iz človeške masti—katera se je v nemški vojski lahko dobivala—vmes pa se je kuhal bel las iz repa mlade mačke, katera je bila črna po vsem telesu.

Bog ima svoja pota, če hoče grešnika ozdraviti. Živimo v časih, ki so prekleti in hudobni in na vse strani grozni, najsi je že tudi preteklo veliko časa, odkar so sklenili mir na Nemškem in z njim končali vojsko, katera je trideset let divjala po pokrajinah, od nas oddaljenih in po Martinu Lutru v krivo vero zapeljanih. V takih časih mora Gospod Jezus posegati po vseh sredstvih—in najsi je človeška mast—če nam bodi pomagano!

Kakor zapisano, sem ležal dolgo časa bolan in v bolečinah. Skaljena je bila zavest mojega telesa, da sem ležal kakor v spanju, ki ga prepletajo hude sanje.

Nekega dne sem se zavedel. Bil sem v gorenji hiši in prijetno sem ležal v materini postelji. V sebi nisem čutil ne bolečine, ne kake težave.

Na odeji mi je ležala desnica, zavita v debelo obvezo, da je bila podobna konjskemu kopitu. Obvezana roka mi je poklicala v spomin, kar se je bilo zgodilo, in milo se mi je storilo, da sem pričel tiho ihteti.

Naenkrat se mi je položila voljna roka na čelo in nekdo je vprašal: “Ali me poznaš? Veš, kdo sem? Ti uboga moja revščina!”

Da bi tega ljubega obraza ne poznal, ko ga bom vendar sodnega dne že iz dalje spoznal med neštetimi množicami! “Mati!” sem radostno zaklical in poskušal dvigniti obvezano roko, da bi jo objel. Ali roke nisem mogel dvigniti, ker so se vnele hude bolečine v nji.

Vprašala je: “Kaj bi rad jedel?” Jesti nisem hotel, ali ona je le tarnala, da skoraj nič ne jem.

Z največjo rahlostjo mi je izvlekla zdravo ročico izpod odeje, in res so bili prsti na nji same koščice!

Hotela je oditi, da bi mi skuhala mleka. Tudi mi je rekla, da bo v mleko nadrobila belega kruha, ki smo ga sicer imeli v hiši samo ob največjih praznikih.

Pa se nisem dal pomiriti; zajokal sem in v muki zaklical: “Oče naj pride!”

I was ill for a long time. The frail body of a twelve-year old child could not endure such inhuman and rough treatment. Weakness overcame me and a terrible pain tortured me for several weeks. Prayer saved me—the whole house prayed for me—and the salve that Lukež brought from the German wars surely helped some too. He sold it to others for a pretty penny but charitably sacrificed a small wad to mother because he pitied me for having received such a cruel wound.

Mother applied the salve to my armpits for two nights in a row when I was delirious from the fever and pain. The treatment surely benefited me because the salve was concocted primarily from human fat—which was easy to come by in the German wars—boiled together with a white hair from the tail of a young cat that is black all over.

God has his ways when He wants to cure a sinner. We live in times that are cursed and evil and in all manner terrible, although many years have passed since peace was agreed upon in Germany, thus ending the war that had raged for thirty years in lands distant from us and seduced by Martin Luther into a false faith.

In such times the Lord Jesus must act in possible ways—even through human fat—if we are to be aided! As I have written, I lay ill and in pain for a long time. The feeling in my body was impaired and I lay as if in a sleep woven of bad dreams.

One day I regained my senses. I was in the upper room, lying pleasantly on my mother's bed. I did not feel any pain or discomfort in my body.

My right hand lay on the covers, wrapped in a thick bandage, looking like a horse's hoof. The bandaged hand reminded me of what had happened, and I felt so woebegone that I began to sob quietly.

Suddenly a soft hand touched my forehead and someone asked, "Do you recognize me? Do you know who I am? Poor sufferer of mine!" How could I not know that beloved face when on Judgment Day I will recognize it among the countless multitude even from a distance! Mother!" I cried joyfully and tried to raise my bandaged hand to embrace her. But I could not lift the hand because it burned with terrible pain.

She asked, "What would you like to eat?" I did not want to eat, but she lamented that I was taking almost nothing.

With great tenderness she drew my good hand out of the covers, and indeed the fingers on it were only thin bones!

She wanted to go and warm me some milk. She also told me that she would crumble in some white bread, which we only had in the house on the greatest holidays.

But I would not be consoled; I began to cry and in agony I cried out, "Have father come!"

Tedaj se je ti revi nekaj odkrilo, kar ni nikdar pričakovala. Kri ji je zatrepetala k srcu, bila je vsa bleda in podobna mrliču. Jezno me je zavrnila:

“Tiho, moj ljubi, in ne govori o tem, o tem...”

Podila se je za besedo, pa je doteči ni mogla. Hotela je nekaj spregovoriti, ali premislila si je in zatorej je samo vzdihnila: “—o tem luteranu!”

Opazivši mojo preplašenost, je zaihtela:

“Nič ti nisem povedala, nič—!”

Potrta je zapustila sobo. V moji razbeljeni glavici pa je delovalo, kakor delujejo kolesca v uri.

Oče—luteran! Nikdar ne bo prišel v nebesa! Njegova vera ni moja vera! Če se izve, ga bodo zaničevali vsi ljudje! Glavar z loškega gradu pošle ponj in na smrt ga obsodijo! Potem mu odsekajo glavo! In ravno ta glava je bila zame najlepša, kar jih je bilo na svetu! O Jezus! O Jezus! O Jezus!

Tresel sem se pred njim, a če je prekladal hlode, ki jih dva človeka nista preložila, ali če je krotil konja, ki je vsakega drugega vrgel s sedla —takrat sem bil srečen, da sem imel takega očeta!—

Oče je vendarle prišel!

Neko popoldne, ko je mati molzla v hlevu, je vstopil. Videlo se mu je, da je postal še bolj siv; proti svoji navadi je bil pustil brado rasti in ta je bila čisto bela.

Za trenutek je obstal pri vratih; z mogočno svojo postavo je segal skoraj do stropa. Korak za korakom se mi je bližal.

Zastajala mi je zavest in oziral sem se proti njemu, kakor se ozira golobica na jastreba.

Pomaknil je stol k postelji, predme na odejo pa je položil usnjato, deloma z železom okovano rokavico, ki so jo nekdam nosili švedski jezdec. Sédel je prav k meni ter me zamolklo pozval:

“Izidor, vrzi mi jo v obraz!”

Nisem se premaknil, nakar je glasno zavpil: “Vrzi!”

Okrog ustnic so se mu napravile čudne poteze, a v čelo se mu je vrezala globoka guba, kar je govorilo, da postaja srdit.

V strahu sem prijel rokavico ter jo zavihtel k obrazu, s katerim je oče silil proti meni.

In res je moralo železo zadeti starega moža, ker se je prikazalo nekaj krvi na njegovem obrazu. Polikarp je zaječal:

“Pravično je, da me z zaničevanjem kaznuje moj lastni otrok!”

Posegel je po moji ročici ter sklonil nad njo svojo kakor iz železa skovano glavo. Ni spregovoril besede; samo telo mu je včasih zatrepetalo, ker ga je pretresalo kesanje.

With that something was revealed to the poor woman which she had never suspected. The blood rushed to her heart and she was as white as a corpse. Angrily she refused me:

“Quiet, my dear, and do not speak of that...”

She chased after the right word but could not seize it. She meant to say something else but changed her mind and then simply sighed, “... of that Lutheran!”

Noticing my fright, she sobbed:

“I told you nothing, nothing!”

She left the room downhearted. And my feverish head was like a clock with gears inside.

My father, a Lutheran! He would never enter heaven! His faith was not my faith! If he were found out, he would be despised by everyone! The magistrate of the Loka castle will send for him and they will condemn him to death! Then they will cut off his head! And for me that head was the most beautiful in all the world! Oh Jesus! Oh Jesus! Oh Jesus!

I trembled before him, but when he moved logs that two men could not move, or broke a horse that threw everyone else from the saddle, then I was happy that I had such a father!

And father did come!

One afternoon, when mother was milking in the barn, he entered. It was apparent that he had gone even greyer; contrary to his custom he had let his beard grow, and it was pure white.

He hesitated for a moment at the door; with his large build he almost reached the ceiling. Step by step he came closer to me.

I was losing consciousness and I contemplated him as a dove contemplates a hawk.

He moved the chair towards my bed and on the covers before me he placed a leather gauntlet, partially covered with iron, of the kind the Swedish cavalry once wore. He sat right in front of me and in a hollow voice called on me:

“Izidor, throw it in my face!”

I did not move, at which he loudly yelled, “Throw it!”

Strange lines formed around his mouth and a deep crease cut his forehead, which meant that he was becoming angry.

In fear I took the gauntlet and hurled it at my father's face, which he was craning towards me.

And the iron must have struck the old man well since some blood appeared on his face. Polikarp groaned:

“It is right that my own child punishes me with disdain!” He reached for my small hand and bent his ironlike head over it. He uttered not a word; only his body trembled from time to time as he shook with remorse.

Zasilile so mi solze v oči, tako da sem ihté spregovoril: "Oče, saj nisem več hud!"

Odhítel je od mene. Ko je stopal po čumnati, so se mu pletle noge, kakor da bi bil izpil preveč vina. Dobro vem, da je Polikarp Khallan malokdaj pil čez mero in da je bil trezen tudi tisto popoldne.

Moja levica je bila mokra, mokra od solz, ki jih je pretil ponosni moj oče!

Nikdar ni govoril z mano o tem dogodku. Ali nekaj dni pozneje, ko sem se zjutraj prebudil, je ležal na moji odeji samokres z debelim, okovanim kopitom.

Tako so se pričeli časi moje pokore! Opravljal sem jo vse dni svojega življenja za svoje, pa tudi za pregrehe očeta, ki mi je bil oster in hud zapovednik. Vsemu, kar osrečuje človeka, sem se moral odreči; a vedno še prosim Boga, našega Stvarnika, da bi mu zadostovala moja pokora in da bi me v večnem življenju ne ločil od njega, ki me je rodil.

Tears welled up in my eyes and I sobbed: "Father, I'm not upset anymore."

He hurried away from me. As he crossed the room his legs got entangled, as if he had drunk too much wine. I know well that Polikarp Khallan seldom drank to excess and that he was sober that afternoon too.

My left hand was wet, wet from the tears that my proud father had shed!

He never spoke to me about that event. But several days later, when I awoke in the morning, a pistol with a thick, metal inlaid stock lay on my covers.

So began the days of my penance, which I did for my whole life for my own trespasses and also for the trespasses of my father, who was my severe and unsparing master. I had to give up everything that makes a man happy, and still I continue to beg God Our Creator to be pleased with my penance and in eternal life not to separate me from the one who fathered me.

Timothy Pogacar