

POKOJNÍ V
LIGHT

NEPOKOJI
IN DARKNESS

Ak nie si úprimný sám k sebe, tvoja tvár sa stráca v tme.
If you are not honest with yourself, you lose your own face in the darkness.





EUGÉNIA VYSKOČILOVÁ	10
RUDOLF DOBIÁŠ	20
MICHAL IVANKO	28
ŠTEFAN RUŽOVIČ	36
MICHAL VASIL	46
EUGEN JÁN KOČIŠ	52
JÁN ĎURO	56
ANTON SRHOLEC	62
DOROTA KRAVJANSKÁ	68
JOZEF TÓTH	76
IMRICH VANTA	84
IMRICH MRÁZ	92
JÁN CHRYZOSTOM KOREC	102
FRANTIŠKA MÚZIKOVÁ	108
JÁN ZEMAN	118
JOZEF MAŠLEJ	128
AKVINAS	136
LADISLAV ZÁBORSKÝ	142
JUSTÍNA	152
BERNARD PÁNČI	160
ANDREJ KONC	166

ÚVOD

Cieľom tejto knihy nie je poukazovať na zlo čohokoľvek či kohokoľvek. Jej cieľom nie je vyvolávať odpor k akejkoľvek politickej moci. Nechce poukázať na zločiny, ktoré človeku spôsobila vládnuca ideológia. A už vôbec nie je jej cieľom upokojsovať, prinášať ilúziu, ako nám je dobre v súčasnosti.

Táto kniha je o príbehu hrdinov, ktorí sa hrdinami stať nechceli. O ceste ľudí, ktorí sa nestratili ani v tých najväčších tmách. Cestu im ožiarovalo svetlo kdesi z hlbín ľudskej duše. Táto kniha je svedectvom ľudí, ktorí žili svoj údol kdekolevek, rovnako v teple domova ako v studenej väzenskej cele. Nezatrpkli, hoci na dlhé roky odlúčení od svojich blízkych prišli o všetko. Stratili nielen zamestnanie, svoju povest'. Stratili aj svoje meno. Neprišli však o svoju skutočnú identitu. O ľudskosť.

Prišli o roky najaktívnejšieho života, a predsa si zachovali to, čo ja, človek žijúci v slobodnej krajine, tak túžobne hľadám. Nikdy by mi nenapadlo, že to, čo ja hľadám v neko-
nečných regáloch knižníc, v posluchárňach univerzít či cestách do ďalekých krajín, to oni našli v studenom tichu väzenských cel.

The aim of this book is not to point out the evils of something or someone. The aim of this book is not to bring about resistance to any political power. It doesn't want to reveal crimes committed by the ruling ideology. And it is definitely not the aim of this book to soothe and to create an illusion of how well we live today.

This book is a story of heroes who did not want to become heroes. It is about the journey of people who did not get lost even in the thickest darkness. Their path was illuminated by light that comes from the depths of a human soul. This book is a testimony of people, who lived their lot in life wherever they were; the same in the warmth of their home as in the coldness of a prison cell. They did not become bitter, even though they were separated from their loved ones for years. They lost everything: not only their work; their reputation and their name, too. But they never lost their true identity. Their humanity.

They lost long years of their most active life and still, they preserved what I – a man living in a free country – so eagerly seek. I would have never thought that what I search for in endless bookshelves of libraries, in university lecture halls and in trips to faraway countries, they found in the cold silence of prison cells.

FOREWORD

Človek, ak má niečo v sebe, nemôže byť sám. A person who has something in their heart is never alone.



EUGÉNIA VYSKOČILOVÁ

23-ROČNÁ ŠTUDENTKA ODSÚDENÁ NA 3 ROKY VÄZENIA. VELEZRADA. RUZYNĚ, PANKRÁC A ŽELIEZOVCE. 23-YEAR-OLD STUDENT SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS IN PRISON. HIGH TREASON. RUZYNĚ, PANKRÁC AND ŽELIEZOVCE.



Rodina pani Eugénie bola na prenasledovanie zvyknutá. Jej otec Anoškin bol vysokým cárskym dôstojníkom a matka ruskou šľachtičnou z rodu Radziwill. Ako mnohých iných ich po bolševickej revolúcii vyhnali z rodnej zeme. Útočisko našli v Československu, kde sa im narodili dve deti: syn Juraj a dcéra Eugénia.

Prvú veľkú životnú skúšku zažila Eugénia v pätnástich rokoch. V apríli 1946 prichádzali sovietske „osloboditeľské“ vojská: „Všade vyhládávali ruských emigrantov a deportovali ich rovno na Sibír. Mali presné zoznamy.“ Anoškinovci chceli nájsť útočisko na severe Talianska. V poslednej chvíli mama poslúchla vnútorný hlas a vyhlásila, že nikam nepôjdu. Rodina sa na úteku na pár dní uchýlila do Prahy a odtiaľ pokračovala na Myjavu: „Boli sme len my štyria a rodinná súdržnosť bola pre nás prvoradá.“ Viezli sa transportným vlakom, ktorý sa stal terčom sovietskych bombardérov: „To, že nastali útoky, nám oznámil vlakvedúci pískaním. Rodičia nás prikryli vlastnými telami a takto sme prečkali nálet. Keď sme otvorili oči a uvideli roztrhané telá, kúsky ľudského mäsa na drôtoch, to bola hrozná skúška. Tak som oslávila deň, keď som mala svoje šestnásť narodeniny. Dlhé roky som sa z toho nemohla spamätať. Každý zvuk mi evokoval nálety. Spomienky na tie telá ma neustále prenasledovali.“

Posledné „slobodné“ voľby v roku 1946 boli druhou skúškou. Eugéniin otec si pri hlasovaní všimol, že každá obálka má svoje evidenčné číslo. Ani to mu však nezabránilo, aby sa rozhodol podľa svojho svedomia a hlasoval proti komunistom. Tí však obálky otvárali: „Všetci, ktorí do urny vhodili prázdny papierik, čo znamenalo, že nepodporili komunistov, dostali nariadenie, aby sa do dvadsiatich štyroch hodín vysťahovali z Myjavy.“ A tak sa Anoškinovci opäť museli sťahovať – na opačnú stranu Slovenska, do Rožňavy. A pani Vyskočilová dodáva: „Iba vlni nám vrátili čestné občianstvo Myjavy. Do minulého roku sme boli z Myjavy vyhostení na doživotie. Celý život sme ju museli obchádzať.“

Po skončení strednej školy v Košiciach začala Eugénia študovať slovenský a ruský jazyk v Bratislave. S bratom Jurajom bývala v malom prenajatom bytiku. Juraj Radziwill Anoškin ako vášnivý motorkár brázdil krížom-krážom krajinu a pani Vyskočilová spomína, že sa mu neraz pošťastilo neúmyselne prekročiť hranice. Anoškinovci mali známeho, ktorý odmietol odovzdať rodinné majetky svojvôli komunistickej kolektívizácie, a tak mu vymerali trest nútených prác v Pomocných technických práporoch. Po troch rokoch utiekol a útočisko hľadal v byte Eugénie a Juraja. Oni

na seba vzali toto riziko a nielenže ho u seba ukryli, ale keďže Juraj presne vedel, kde a ako sa dá prejsť cez hranice, pomohli mu emigrovať. Ľudia, ktorí utekali, pomáhali utekať ďalej, za zapadajúcim slnkom. Onedlho Anoškinovci dostali od tohto známeho pohľadnicu z Rakúska.

Vysokoškolský čas trávili nielen nad knihami, ale – ako sa patrí na mladých Rusov – aj bohatým spoločenským životom. Po ťažkom detstve a neustálom sťahovaní to bol konečne čas, keď si mohli nájsť priateľov. Vždy v stredu sa stretávali a spoločne vítali prvé slnečné lúče. Pripomínali im rodný východ, ktorý ich rodina musela opustiť. Mladých vysokoškolákov nezdužovala iba túžba po kultúre a poznaní, ale i spoločný nesúhlas s ideológiou, ktorá presakovala všade navôkol.

Znenazdajky sa ich „známy“ vrátil z Rakúska. Už nebol sám, ale o šiestej ráno prišiel aj s celou rodinou. Eugénia si bola vedomá rizika a odmietla ukryť toľko ľudí. „Nameril na mňa pištoľ a vošiel dnu.“ A tak opäť pomáhala, hoci nedobrovoľne.

Rok po tejto návšteve chcel opäť prekročiť hranice, no niekto ho udal: „Čakali na nich vojaci a ten blázon začal po nich strieľať. Samozrejme, počas vyšetrovania všetko vyzradil, aj svoj pobyt u nás,“ spomína pani Vyskočilová.

Jedného rána zazvonila súrodencom neohlásená návšteva. ŠtB. Všetko prehľadali, obrátili váľandy, vyhádzali skrine. Eugénia nevedela, prečo prišli; na starého známeho už dávno zabudla. „Zbalte si nevyhnutné veci a poďte s nami. Musíme si niečo vyjasniť,“ počula prekvapená študentka. Nevedela ešte vyhodnotiť situáciu a prosila o chvíľku strpenia, o pol hodiny mala mať skúšku zo staroslovienčiny, na ktorú sa celú noc učila. Bol to už jej opravný termín. „Urobíte ju, keď sa vrátite,“ odvetil príslušník Štátnej bezpečnosti. Ale pani Vyskočilová túto skúšku nemá zapísanú dodnes...

Totalitný zásah ju vytrhol zo sveta, ktorý milovala. Chcela byť učiteľkou, a namiesto toho ju viezli so zaviazanými očami do neznáma. Sprevádzalo ich ešte jedno auto. To však dostalo poruchu, a tak mali dlhšiu nútenú prestávku kdesi pri diaľnici. Spomína si na milého policajta, ktorý jej daroval cukrík a na obed jej kúpil zemľu. Dokonca jej aj rozviazali oči. Vyrozumela, že sú vo Valašskom Meziříčí. Neskôr sa dozvedela, že v pokazenom aute sedel jej zatknutý brat, skúsený mechanik. Paradoxne, auto, ktoré ho viezlo do väzenia, opravil práve on. A tak pokračovali ďalej do pražskej väznice Ruzyně.



The family of Mrs Eugénia was used to being persecuted. Her father Anoškin was a high-ranking Czarist officer; her mother, a Russian aristocrat from the Radziwill family. Like many others, they were banished from their homeland after the Bolshevik revolution. They found their refuge in Czechoslovakia, where their two children were born: son Juraj and daughter Eugénia.

Eugénia was put to test for the first time when she was fifteen years old. In April 1946, Soviet “liberation” troops arrived. “Everywhere they searched for Russian emigrants and deported them straight to Siberia. They had detailed lists.” The Anoškin family wanted to take refuge in the north of Italy. At the very last moment her mother listened to her inner voice and said they weren’t going anywhere. This family on the run escaped to Prague for a few days and from there continued to Myjava. “There were only four of us and so our family unity was paramount.” They travelled in a transport train that was targeted by Soviet bombers. “The whistling of the train conductor informed us that there had been attacks. Our parents covered us with their own bodies, and we survived the raid. When we opened our eyes and saw torn bodies, pieces of human flesh on wires, it was a terrible test. That is how I celebrated the day of my sixteenth birthday. I could not recover from it for years. Every sound evoked air raids for me. The memories of those bodies kept chasing me.”

The second test was the last “free” elections in 1946. While casting his vote, Mr Anoškin spotted that each envelope had its own registration number. Not even this prevented him from making a choice of conscience and voting against the Communists. But they opened the envelopes. “Everyone who cast an empty ballot into the urn, which meant that they did not support the Communists, was ordered to move out of Myjava within twenty-four hours.” And so the Anoškin family was again cast out across Slovakia, to Rožňava. And Mrs Vyskočilová adds: “We were only given back the honorary citizenship of Myjava last year. Until last year we were banished from Myjava for life. We had to pass around it all our lives.”

After finishing her high school in Košice she started to study the Slovak and Russian languages in Bratislava. She lived in a small apartment she rented with her brother Juraj. Her brother Juraj Radziwill Anoškin was passionate about his motorcycle and travelled all around the country. Mrs Vyskočilová recalls how he accidentally crossed the state border many times. The Anoškin family had a

friend who refused to hand his family property over for communist collectivisation. He was punished by forced labour in the PTP (Translator’s note – PTP stands for Technical Auxiliary Battalions, which were military camps of forced labour). He fled after three years and sought refuge in the apartment of Eugénia and Juraj. They took the risk of hiding him. Because Juraj knew exactly where and how to cross the border to the West, they helped him to emigrate. People who fled helped others to flee, towards the setting sun. Soon they received a postcard from him from Austria.

As befits young Russians, they did not spend their time at university only with books, but lead a rich social life. After a difficult childhood and constant moving, it was finally time for them to find friends. They met with their friends on Wednesdays and together welcomed the first rays of sun. They reminded them of their native East, which they had to leave. These young college students did not only share their passion for culture and knowledge, but also their disagreement with the ideology that was overwhelming everything.

Out of nowhere, their “friend” came back from Austria. He was no longer alone: he came at six in the morning with his entire family. Eugénia was aware of the risk and refused to hide so many people. “He pointed his gun at me and walked in.” And so, she was helping again, even though this time against her will.

One year after their visit someone informed on this man that he wanted to cross the border. “Soldiers were waiting for them, and this fool started shooting at them. Of course, during interrogation, he told them about everything, his staying with us, too,” remembers Mrs Vyskočilová.

One morning the brother and sister had unannounced visitors. The ŠtB secret police. They searched everything, turned the beds upside down, threw clothes out of the closets. Eugénia didn’t know why they came, because she had long forgotten about the friend. “Pack essential things and come with us. We need to clarify something,” heard the astonished student. She could not make the situation out and asked them to wait a little. In half an hour she was going to have an exam in the Old Slavonic language, and she had studied all night for it. It was her second attempt already. “You will do it when you return,” replied the ŠtB officer. But until this day, Mrs Vyskočilová has not passed that exam...

Číslo 3264, cela 342 v najhoršej väznici pre politických väzňov. „Nikto mi nič nepovedal. Varila som sa vo vlastnej šfave. Samotka, v rohu záchod, hadička so studenou vodou na umývanie. Až po dni mi povedali, že dôvodom uväznenia je môj pôvod.“

Ťažko znášala, keď ju, dvadsaťštyriročnú študentku, dozorcovia sledovali, ako sa polonahá umýva. Smiech spoza dverí sa ozýval aj pri toalete. Aké to bolo ponižujúce. Najväčším spestrením nového života boli neustále výsluchy, ktoré jej „umožnili“ prejsť viac ako sedem rokov od jednej steny väzenskej cely k druhej: „Vliekli ma ako kozu so zaviazanými očami. Počula som, ako sa o mne rozprávali: ‚Aha, to je ta ruská kněžná ze Slovenska...‘ smiali sa. Tak by som im dala po papuli, keby som mohla! Vyšetrovateľ bol veľmi sympatický, ale iba kým bol sám, čo bolo málokedy. Pýtala som sa na brata, a on ma upokojil, že je tu a je v poriadku.“

Sestra na svojho brata myslela neustále. Strach o neho bol jej najväčšou slabosťou. Vzťah s ním jej pripomínal krajinu, z ktorej museli nespravodlivo utiecť. V ňom videla korene svojej rodiny čerpajúce bohatstvo z mnohých generácií. „Tak som sa po častiach dozvedela, ako to bolo. Jožko, ten náš známy, ktorého sme ukrývali, nás udal. A my sme ho nikdy neprezradili.“

Celé dni musela Eugénia „šliapať“ po cele. Sadnúť si mohla iba v presne určený čas, aj to iba na krátku chvíľu; v predpísanej polohe, s rukami vyloženými na stôl. Toto jej spôsobovalo fyzické utrpenie, ale situácie urážajúce ľudskú dôstojnosť boli oveľa bolestivejšie. V rohu cely bola diera, ktorá slúžila ako záchod. Odvážila sa ho použiť, až keď na chodbe nastalo úplné ticho. Smiech ukrývajúcich sa dozorcov spoza dverí bol tým najväčším utrpením: „Mali tam okienko a sledovali ma, ako som sa hadičkou umývala... Rýchlo prišli na moju taktiku, tak na mňa čumeli potichu. Horšie to bolo, keď prišli ženské dni. Akoby ma fackovali. Ani nohavičky mi nedali, musela som chodiť s prekříženými nohami.“

Ticho prerušované výkrikmi a kvílením bitých väzňov, keď ich vliekli z vyšetrovania späť do cely. „O tom, prečo ste tam, hoci ste nikoho nezabili, bolo zbytočné rozmýšľať. Urobila by som všetko ešte raz a znovu. Keď človeku treba pomôcť, tak mu pomôžete. Ale horšie je, keď začnete spomínať. Prídu všelijaké myšlienky. Začala som si vyčítat, ako som sa správala k rodičom. Spytovala som si svedomie, čo som urobila dobre a čo zle. Či mi vôbec priniesli obed, to ma nijako netýrало, ani tá samotka, ale trpela som týmito myšlienkami.“

Myšlienky prerušoval iba hluk lietadiel, ktoré vzlietali a pristávali na neďalekom letisku. To bol Eugéniin jediný kontakt s okolitým svetom. „Tam získate veľa. Len treba chcieť. Samota mi dala silu, ktorú mám doteraz. Práve preto, že ste si prebrali a prehodnotili svoj život, prišli ste aj na to, kde ste urobili chyby, prečo sa tak stalo, i že ich už nechcete zopakovať. Urobíte pevné rozhodnutia. V tej samote sa trápate a nájdate, ako z toho von. Najväčšiu silu mi dávala nádej, že budem žiť to všetko, na čo som tam osamote prišla.“



This totalitarian intervention pulled her out of the world she loved. She wanted to be a teacher, but instead, she was driven blindfolded by the secret police into the unknown. They were accompanied by another car. But it broke down, forcing them to stop for some time on the side of the highway. She remembers a kind policeman who gave her candy and bought her a sandwich for lunch. They even took the blindfold off. She understood that they were in Valašské Meziříčí. Later, she learned that her brother, an experienced mechanic, was sitting in custody in the other broken car. Paradoxically, it was he who repaired the car that drove him to prison. And so they continued on to the Ruzyně prison in Prague.

Number 3264, cell 342, in the worst institution for political prisoners. “Nobody told me anything. I was cooking in my own juice. Solitary confinement, a toilet in the corner, a small hose with cold water for washing. It took them a day to tell me that the reason for my imprisonment was my origin.”

It was very hard to bear when the guards were watching her, a twenty-four-year-old student, washing herself half-naked. She heard laughter behind her door also when using the toilet. How humiliating it was. The greatest diversion in her new life were constant interrogations that allowed her to walk more than the seven steps from one end of the prison cell to the other: “They were leading me like a goat, blindfolded. I heard them talking about me: ‘Look, it is that Russian princess from Slovakia...’ they laughed. I would have slapped them so, if I could! The investigator was very nice, but only when he was alone, which was not often. I asked him about my brother, and he reassured me that he was in here and that he was OK.”

The sister thought about her brother constantly and fearing for him was her biggest weakness. Their relationship reminded her of the country she had to unjustly flee. In him she saw the roots of her family, drawing from the wealth of many generations. “And so I learned how it was, bit by bit. Jožko, our friend who we helped to hide, informed on us, but we never gave him away.”

For days Eugénia had to “walk the cell”. She was only allowed to sit down at a specific time and only for a short while. She had to sit in a prescribed position, with her hands on the table. That was physical suffering, but situations that took away human

dignity were much more painful. There was a hole in the corner that served as a toilette. She only dared to use it when the corridor was completely quiet. Laughter of the guards hiding behind the door was the greatest suffering. “They had a small window and they were watching me when I was washing myself with a hose... They quickly discovered my tactics and so stared at me without making a noise. It was worse when my time of the month came. It was like if they were slapping me in the face. They did not even give me underwear. I had to walk with my legs crossed.”

Silence, only interrupted by the screams and wailing of prisoners who were being beaten, when they were being dragged from the interrogation room back to their cells. “It was useless to think about why you were there, even though you did not kill anyone. I would have done everything over again. When someone needs help, you help them. But it’s worse when you start to think about the past. All kinds of thoughts come. I began to blame myself for how I treated my parents. I asked my conscience what I did right and wrong. I did not mind if they brought me lunch at all, not even the solitude, but I suffered because of these thoughts.”

Her thoughts were only interrupted by the sound of airplanes taking off and landing at a nearby airport. That was Eugénia’s only contact with the outside world. “In there you gain a lot. You just have to want to. Solitude gave me a strength that has stayed with me ever since. It is because you have reflected on and reevaluated your life, that you can figure out where you made mistakes, why it happened and that you do not want to repeat them. You make firm decisions. You suffer in the solitude and you find a way out. My biggest strength came from the hope that I would one day live out everything that I had come to understand during my solitude.”

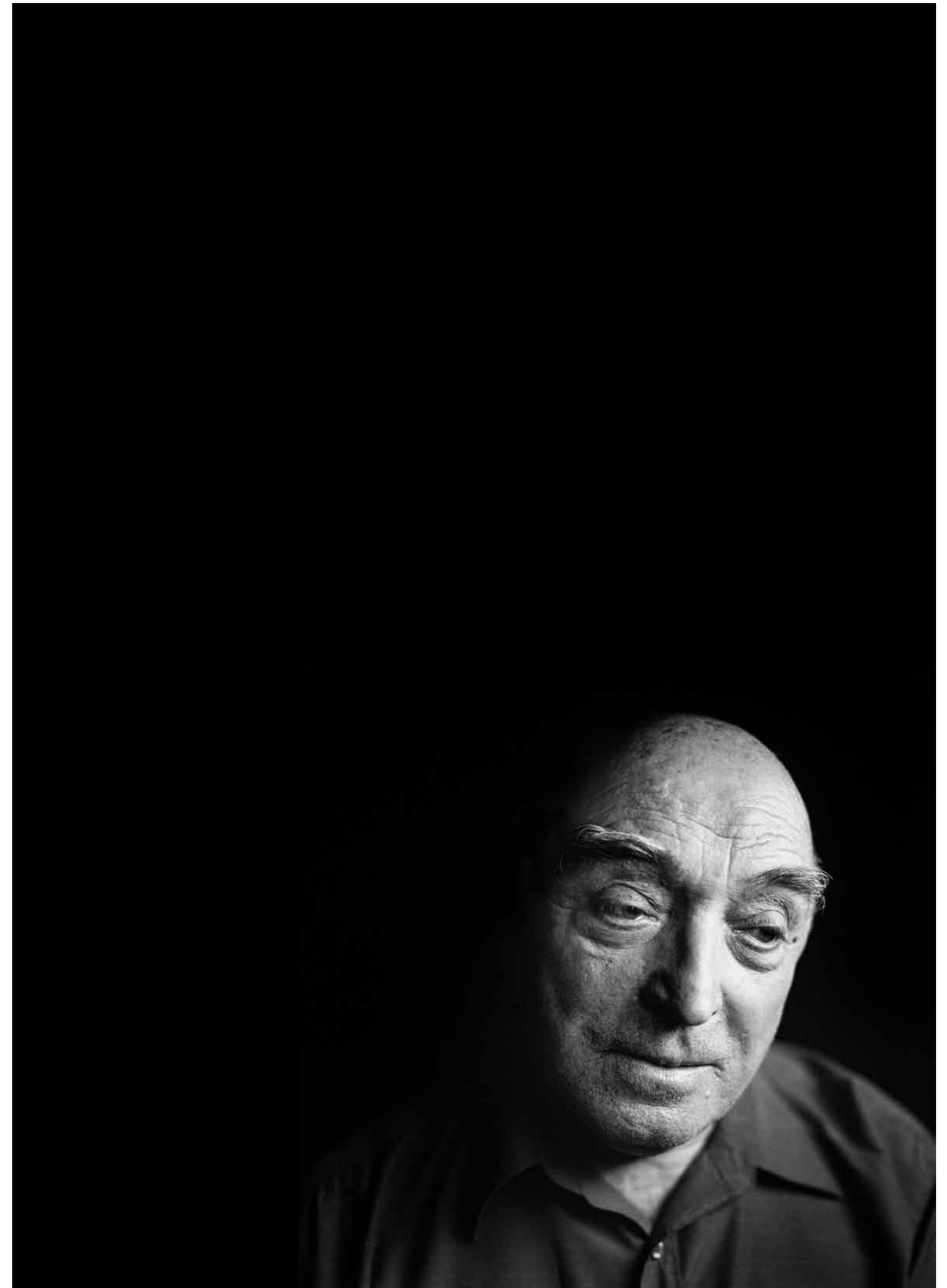


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RUDOLF DOBIÁŠ

19-ROČNÝ MATURANT ODSÚDENÝ ZA VELEZRADU NA 18 ROKOV VÄZENIA. URÁNOVÉ BANE V JÁCHYMOVE. PREPUSTENÝ PO 7 ROKOCH. 19-YEAR-OLD SECONDARY-SCHOOL STUDENT SENTENCED TO 18 YEARS IN PRISON FOR HIGH TREASON. URANIUM MINES IN JÁCHYMOV. RELEASED AFTER 7 YEARS.



„Timotej? To je tvoje meno? To je krásne meno... Vieš o tom, že si ho nezaslúžiš?“ privítal ma básnik Rudolf Dobiáš pri bránke v dedine s pekným názvom Dobrá.

Táto obec nie je iba jeho súčasným bydliskom; tu sa Rudolf 29. septembra 1934 aj narodil. Ako študent trenčianskeho gymnázia viedol skautskú družinu. V 50. rokoch však skauting prestal vyhovovať komunistickému režimu. Skauting zrušili a ako náhradu vytvorili akúsi jeho redukovanú, umelú formu, skôr karikatúru – pionierov. Rudolfova skautská skupina na zákaz reagovala ilegálnym vydávaním letákov s protikomunistickou osvetou.

Dňa 23. decembra niesol Rudolf drevo z kôlne. Prechádzal popri bránke, keď ho zastavili dvaja muži. Hľadali ho. Prehľadali celý dom. Zobrali básne a s nimi aj Rudolfa. V teplákoch a flanelovej košeli. Bolo mínus dvanásť stupňov.

Ticho ležalo nad trenčianskym krajom. Akoby sa hluk schoval pod hrubú vrstvu čerstvého snehu. Ulice boli úplne prázdne. V domoch sa piekli medovníky na oslavu Narodenia Spasiteľa. Rudolfa odvážali do Bratislavy. „Vtedy som sa konečne po prvýkrát v živote viezol v aute, bol to aj zážitok,“ spomína spisovateľ Rudolf Dobiáš.

Ako devätnásťročný bol odsúdený na osemnásť rokov väzenia. Ako inak – „za protištátnu činnosť“: „Povedali mi, z čoho som obžalovaný, to bolo všetko. Z velezrady. Ja som ani netušil, čo je to velezrada, ani čo ma to môže stáť. Že či ľutujem? Vtedy som povedal, že neľutujem.“

Rudolf strávil sedem rokov v pracovných táboroch. V Jáchymove, Slavkove a Příbrami. Osamelé noci. Čiernu banskú rudu striedal chlad väzenskej cely. Stolík s drevenou lavicou mal počas dňa zamknutý k stene. Celé dni mohol iba stáť. Stáť a premýšľať. Najväčšou oporou mu boli spoluväzni. Mladý chlapec tam našiel svojich „otcov“: kňazov, ktorí ho naučili, čo to znamená skutočná štedrosť, keď mu zo svojho kúska chleba dávali tú väčšiu časť. Ujali sa ho a on vďaka nim neostal sirotou. „Na zlé si neviem spomenúť. V tom čase bola radosť „sedieť“. Mám na mysli prežívanie väzenských dní, mesiacov a rokov v spoločnosti týchto vznešených väzňov svedomia. Všetko to bola úžasná škola, príležitosť na rozšírenie kultúrneho obzoru,“ pomaly artikuluje. Tam, v bani, dostal kus zlomenej rudy svoj tvar; svoju tvár.

Po siedmich rokoch bol na základe amnestie prepustený. „Dovolenku“ trávil aktívne v pracovných jednotkách armády. Po skončení trestu za charakternosť a úprimnosť si Rudolf išiel hľadať robotu. Mal banícku prax, a tak aj napriek svojmu citlivému srdcu a vnímavému intelektu mohol ísť iba tam, kde mu to dovoľovala jeho minulosť. Späť do tmy. Trestanec z Jáchymova sa však báli zamestnať aj hlboko v podzemí. Keď v bani videli, že so žiadosťou fárať prichádza človek z Jáchymovska, zľakli sa. Takú povesť mali jáchymovské uránové bane! Veď tam posielali najväčších zločincov.

Napokon sa mu „našťastie“ podarilo zohnať prácu. Mohol ísť späť do bane, mohol si opäť spomínať na najkrutejšie obdobie svojho života. Bol vo veku, keď je človek najaktívnejší a vie prijať najviac podnetov a vnemov. Má dosiahnuť postavenie, z ktorého bude celý život ťažiť. On ale dostal curriculum vitae, životopis, ktorý bol jeho celoživotným trestom. Nie život spoza písacieho stola, ale chladné banské šachty sa mu stali základom, ktorý naplnil biele háčky papiera... Až v roku 1990 bol už ako profesionálny spisovateľ Dobiáš rehabilitovaný a mohol vydať svoje svedectvo.

„Pán Dobiáš, ako si mám zaslúžiť svoje meno?“ pýtam sa pri odchode. „Na to nie je jednoduchá odpoveď. Kým je človek ešte dieťa, je slobodný. Ale postupom času, výchovou a vonkajšími okolnosťami, tým, čo sa na človeka nalepí – nie na jeho telo, ale na dušu –, postupom času človek zahádže sám seba blatom života. Tak postupne prichádzame o slobodu. Stávame sa človekom, ktorý akoby ochutnáva život. A zakusujeme pýchu, niekedy ťižiadosť, a ony neraz nepoznajú hranice.“

Skromnosť, ticho, pokora.

Rudolf Dobiáš radosť našiel. Hostinu o kôrke chleba ako o hlavnom chode. O kuse chleba, o ktorom stále vie, že je mu darovaný.



“Timotej? Is that your name? That is a beautiful name... Do you know that you don't deserve it?” the poet Rudolf Dobiáš welcomed me at his gate in a village with a lovely name: Dobrá (Translator's note – ‘Dobrá’ in Slovak means ‘good’).

This village is not just his current place of residence, Rudolf was born here on 29 September 1934. As a student of a secondary school in Trenčín, he led a scout group. During the 50s, scouting became inconvenient to the regime. Scouting was banned and replaced by an ersatz substitute – the Pioneers. Rudolf's scout group responded to the ban by publishing illegal flyers with anti-communist messages.

On 23 December, Rudolf was carrying wood from his shed. He was passing the gate when two men stopped him. They were looking for him. They searched his entire house. They took his poems, and they took Rudolf. Wearing his home trousers and a flannel shirt. It was minus 12 degrees Celsius.

Silence lay over the Trenčín region that day, a thick layer of fresh snow blanketing the noise. The streets were completely empty. People in their homes were baking gingerbread to welcome the Birth of the Savior. For his part, Rudolf was on his way to Bratislava. “It was my first time sitting in a car, at last. Just that was an experience,” recalls the writer Rudolf Dobiáš.

Though only 19 years old, he was sentenced to 18 years in prison for, as it was often the case, “anti-state activity”. “They told me what I was charged with, that was all. High treason. I did not even know what high treason meant or what it could cost me. ‘Do you regret it?’ I told them that I don't.”

Rudolf spent seven years in work camps. In Jáchymov, Slavkov and Příbram. He spent his nights in cold cells. The ore of the black mine alternated with the cold of the cell. There was a table with a wooden bench which was fastened to the wall during the day. He was compelled to stand all day long. Stand and think. He found the greatest support in his fellow inmates. There, as a young boy, he found his “fathers”. Priests who taught him about real generosity, when they gave him the bigger part of their bread. They “took him in” – he was not left an orphan because of them. “I cannot remember anything bad. In those time it was a pleasure to serve time. What I mean is spending my prison days, months and years in the

company of noble prisoners of conscience. All of that was a great school of life, an opportunity to widen one's cultural horizons,” he recalls slowly. There, in the mine, a piece of broken ore received its final shape, its face.

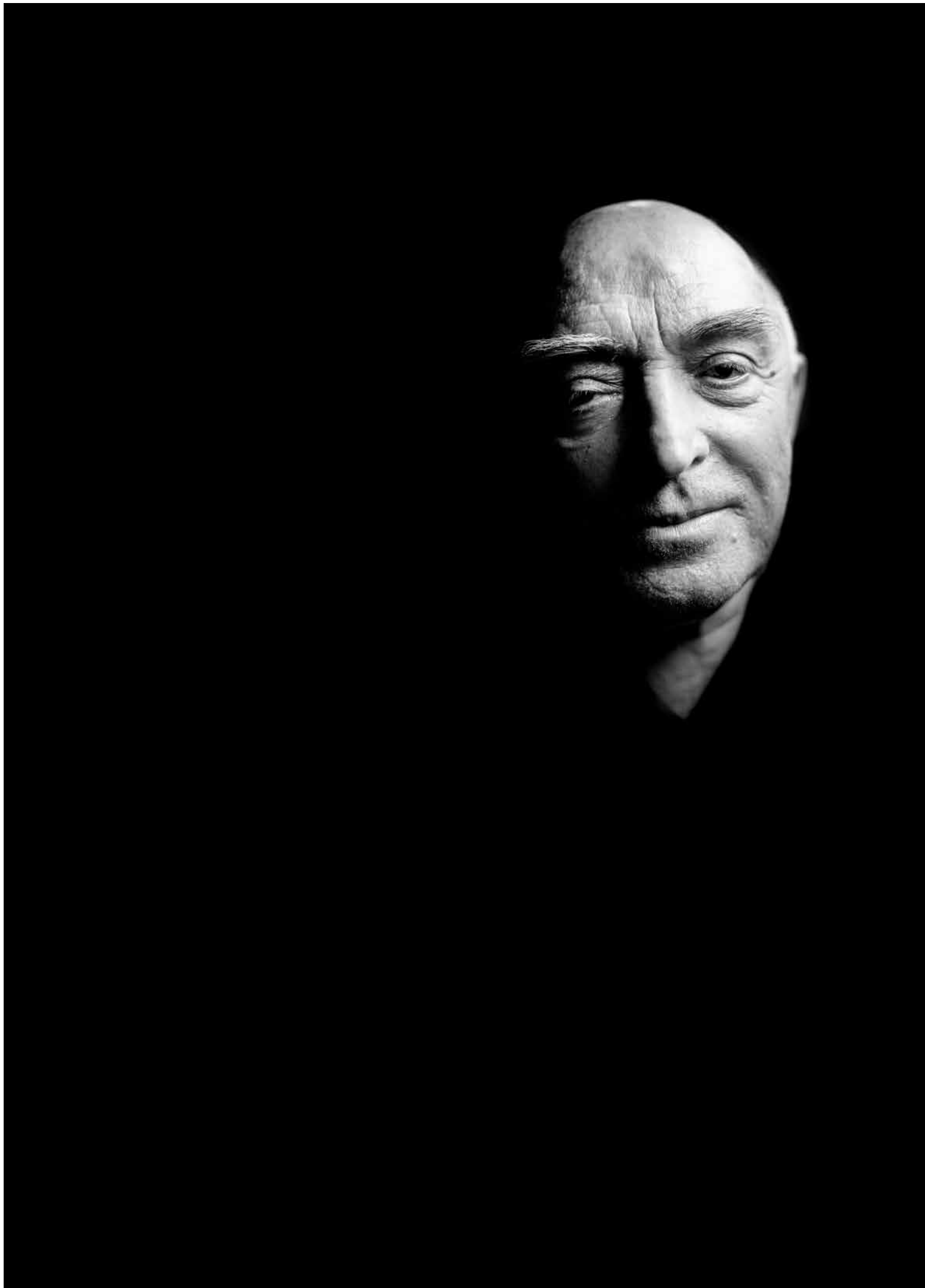
He was granted amnesty and released after seven years. He spent his “holiday” being active in army working units. After being punished for his character and honesty, Rudolf went searching for work. He had experience with mining, so even though he had a sensitive heart and perceptive intellect, he could only go for work where his past allowed him to go. Back to the darkness. However, employers were afraid to give work to a convict from Jáchymov, even deep underground. When the mine operators saw that the request for work came from a man who served in Jáchymov, they got scared and refused to take him. That was the reputation of the Jáchymov mines! Only the worst criminals were sent there.

In the end he was “lucky” to find a job and go back to the mine, where he could recall the cruelest period of his life. He was at the age when one is most active and open to stimuli and perceptions. When one should find a position that will be the basis for the rest of his life. But Rudolf received a curriculum vitae that was to be his life-long punishment. It wasn't a life behind a writing desk, but rather cold mining shafts that became the basis for his work and filled white sheets of paper... Only in 1990, when they rehabilitated Dobiáš, he could, as a professional writer, give his testimony.

“Mr Dobiáš, how should I deserve my name?” I ask him on my way out. “There isn't an easy answer. When a person is still a child, he is free. But slowly, with time, bringing up and external circumstances, with what gets attached to him – not to his body, but to his soul – over time he covers himself with the mud of life. That is how we lose freedom. We become people who only try to taste life. And we experience pride, sometimes ambition and they often know no limits.”

Modesty, silence, humility.

Rudolf Dobiáš found joy. A feast consisting of a small bread crumb as the main course. A piece of bread, which he knows, is always given to him.



Som sám. Predpoludním konečne zazriem na cementovej podlahe vlastný tieň. Ten sa nadhlo stane mojím jediným priateľom a nie je vylúčené, že v tej chvíli by som iného na celom svete ani nenašiel. Nevidím mu však do tváre. A vtedy si uvedomím, že som sa už dávno nevidel v zrkadle. Keby mi ho niekto teraz nastavil, možno by som nespoznal sám seba. A keby mi vtedy niekto prikázal: „Napľuj do ksichtu tomu individu, tej kreatúre!“ asi by som ho poslúchol, oplľul by som svoj obraz, svoju zabudnutú podobu. I am alone. Before noon, I finally see my own shadow on the cement floor. For a long time, it is my only friend and, in this moment, it is possible that I wouldn't find any other in the entire world. But I can't see his face. And then I realize I haven't seen my own face in the mirror for a long time. If someone set one in front of me I might not recognize myself. And if someone were to then command me: "Spit in the face of that somebody, that creature!" I would probably obey and spit on my own forgotten likeness.

