

BOOKS

Jan Erik Vold, *Briskeby blues – Antologie bilingvă de poezie norvegiană-română (Tospråklig norsk-rumensk diktantologi)*, traducere din limba norvegiană de Raluca-Daniela Duinea, Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2023, 432 p.

In the spring of 2023, the first bilingual Norwegian-Romanian anthology of poems, *Briskeby blues*, was published at Casa Cărții de Știință Pub-

lishing House in Cluj-Napoca, in the *Nordica* collection, coordinated by Sanda Tomescu Baciu and financially supported by Norwegian Literature Abroad (NORLA). The selection of the poems was made from the literary work of the Norwegian contemporary poet Jan Erik Vold (b. 1939) beginning with his debut volume in 1965, until 2011. This translation is a continuation of the translator's PhD thesis published in 2018, namely *The Poetry of Jan Erik Vold and the Norwegian Lyric Modernism in the 1960s*.

The publication of this anthology marked a special cultural event at the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literatures at the Faculty of Letters,



Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, in the sense that Jan Erik Vold was present at the launch of this anthology. Vold also took part in other two

events, including his lecture for the students who study Norwegian, entitled "Thoughts on Poetry", and a poetry recital on a jazz accompaniment within the Nordic Poetry Circle – *DiktLek*, another project of the department.

It is worth mentioning that Jan Erik Vold is one of the most prominent Norwegian writers who had an important contribution to the renewal of the Norwegian literature. Besides being a highly appreciated poet, he is also an essayist, translator, artist and performer. He often read his poems accompanied by great jazz and blues musicians such as Jan Garbarek, Egil Kapstad, Chet Baker, and many others.

The translator of this anthology, Raluca-Daniela Duinea is university lecturer of Norwegian at the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She is the author of several articles in the field of contemporary poetry, being specialised in Jan Erik Vold's concrete and *new simple* poems. Besides her didactic and research activities, she is also a translator of Norwegian literature, *Briskeby blues* being her first translation of Norwegian poetry.

The impressive 432 pages-long Norwegian-Romanian anthology contains 320 poems selected from eleven volumes disposed in chronological order: *mellom speil og speil* (*Between Mirror and Mirror*, 1965), *blikket* (*The Gaze*, 1966), *HEKT* (*Grab*, 1966), *Mor Godhjertas glade versjon. Ja* (*Mother Goodhearted's Happy Version. Yes*, 1968), *kykelipi* (1969), *spor, snø* (*Traces, Snow*, 1970), *Bok 8: LIV* (*Book 8: LIFE*, 1973), *S* (1978), *Sorgen. Sangen. Veien* (*The Pain. The Song. The Road*, 1987), *En som het Abel Ek* (*One Named Abel Ek*, 1988), *Store hvite bok å se* (*The Great White Book to See*, 2011).

As Raluca Duinea states in her foreword, "the title of this anthology, *Briskeby blues*, combines two essential concepts of Vold's literary work, concreteness and the *new simplicity*. The latter presents the poet's preferences for simple, concrete things and everyday life events, getting directly to the reader" (16). *Briskeby blues* is also the title of the first jazz and poetry recording, featuring Jan Erik Vold's voice accompanied by Jan Garbarek Quartet, released in 1969. The book cover is also suggestive, with two wooden houses illustrated with talent by the icon painter Codruța Melania Călușer (born Vasian), two representative buildings situated in the Briskeby neighbourhood, in Oslo, Norway. In his poem "Bo på

Briskeby blues" ("Living in Briskeby blues"), Vold writes about his struggle regarding the massive modernization of the city of Oslo, being against the demolition of several emblematic wooden houses from Briskeby.

The anthology opens with the portrait of the Norwegian poet conveyed with artistry by the same Codruța Melania Călușer, followed by Jan Erik Vold's text entitled "Not One Voice Missing" and two consistent contributions, those of professor Sanda Tomescu Baciu's, "Jan Erik Vold's Poetry in Romania", and of professor Henning Howlid Wærp's "Jan Erik Vold – den store fornyeren av norsk lyrikk" ("Jan Erik Vold – the Great Innovator of the Norwegian Poetry").

The bilingual Foreword (pp. 16-34 in English, and pp. 17-35 in Romanian) signed by Raluca Duinea is very well-structured. It provides an in-depth presentation of Jan Erik Vold and offers a comprehensive analysis of each of Vold's volumes of poetry, together with a few aspects related to the process of translation. Each volume opens with a suggestive illustration in pencil which completes the poetic message, drawn by Codruța Melania Călușer and by Raluca Duinea's childhood friend, Mihaela Maria Coman. In addition, the former Norwegian lecturer at the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature, Fartein Thorsen Øverland, arranged the typographical poems in different forms. At the end of the anthology there is also a bilingual interview, conducted with Vold by Raluca Duinea, during her five-month doctoral research scholarship at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, in 2015. The anthology ends with several photographs of the translator together with the poet in Tromsø and in Frankfurt during the international

book fair, where Norway was the Guest of Honour, in 2019.

Raluca Duinea has successfully accomplished this fruitful project also by adapting the translation of the poems to Vold's various approaches for each of his volumes. Almost every volume brings something new, a different perspective when referring to Vold's writing style. Thus, R. Duinea had the possibility to rediscover Vold's poems also as a translator, not only as a researcher. Besides, as she stated in the beginning of this anthology, "tongue twister poetry, in particular, allowed me to take part in the creative process. Here I am thinking, [...], to a series of poems from *kykelipi*, namely "Om kriveligheten", the word *kriveligheten* being one invented by the poet, [...]. In the case of the poem "kulturuke", I chose the word "culturalia", thus forming twenty-three other variants of words, most of them invented and meaningless" (30). The ludic aspect of the poems, with their ironic, simple, democratic, humorous and

Zen Buddhist – meditative dimension, together with "the oral tone" mainly present in the well-known volume *Mother Goodhearted's Happy Version. Yes*, turned this anthology into a work of art with Vold as a word architect.

Briskeby blues "aims to recognize the value of Jan Erik Vold's poetry within the Romanian cultural space as well" (34). These poems are a source of inspiration for everyone who wants to learn and to read Norwegian. The typographical poems, disposed in different forms, the meditative ones teeming with Eastern influence, the city poems resembling the map of Oslo, as well as those about friends and dear memories, all bring together the two concepts, *new simplicity* and *concretism* as two unique poetic features which invite the reader to discover the Norwegian culture from Vold's perspective, "since [his] poems are part of the surrounding world, containing plenty of common words and daily life expressions" (34).

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