



## Milo Janáč (Slovakia)

Milo JANÁČ studied culturology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prešov in Prešov. During his studies, he published his first literary works in the magazines *Dotyky* and *Nové slovo*. He worked in various media (*Východoslovenské noviny*, SITA, the daily *Pravda*) and in the marketing department of the telecommunications company. After returning to his hometown, he was unemployed for a long time, then worked as a bartender. He is currently the head of the culture department at the Gelnica Municipal Office. He published short stories in *Denník N* and *Prague A2*. The book *Milo nemilo* is his debut.

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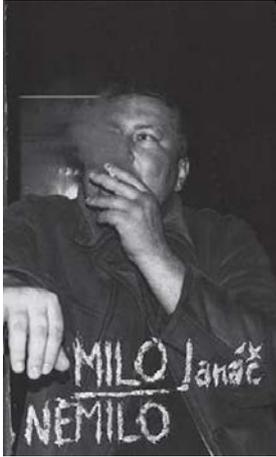
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Contacts:

Yury Zavadsky  
INTERNATIONAL LITERARY AGENCY

yuryzavadsky.com  
dryuryzavadsky@gmail.com  
+380984950027



## Milo nemilo

*a fragment*

A bitch from telecom wakes me up at nine terribly curious to know if I want to make cheaper phonecalls.

I tell her I don't want to make any calls, I just want to sleep. The girl correctly guesses she's dealing with a job and, to my surprise, puts the phone down before I have chance to badmouth her, her bosses, the company shareholders and humanity in general.

But I can't find my way back to the land of dreams. I turn over six or seven times and then decide that's enough exercise for one day.

I crawl over to the net and check my inbox.

NASA have written to me again. They've been doing it ever since I sent my name to Mars.

Have you sent your name to Mars?

If not, you have probably made a mistake and will never get to Mars. My name landed on Mars together with the Curiosity probe. I have official confirmation of it; NASA allowed us to print it out at home.

They also gave us – even before the landing – opportunity to travel over the surface of the planet in the largest vehicle we have ever sent there. I tried it for a few minutes but it was no big deal – there was nothing to see except dust and rocks. One day everything is supposed to change and people will start going to live on the red planet – or so the experts tell us.

I then look at my favourite pornsites and very successfully pull myself off twice.

I close my eyes and take a long look at my inner self. But what I see's not great. And some socks nearby really stink.

I make myself an instant coffee and go onto the balcony for a smoke. The street is deserted. Those losers who have nothing better to do are already hard at work. The more normal section of the population are still snoring into their duvets.

The sun is moving round to Majales Platz as I blow out smoke and study the clouds. Some are like animals: I can see three dogs, a bear, a camel, a hen and a dinosaur. An aeroplane carrying passengers somewhere south east bisects the clouds leaving a white trail behind it.

A lot of people think that aeroplanes are deliberately showering us with heavy metals, viruses and bacteria in order to reduce the world population. They first talked about it back in the 1990s and then the internet came along and now the chemtrails theory has reached a global audience.

If it's true, those geniuses who want to limit the number of people on the planet are actually pretty stupid because in the meantime the world population has now gone up to well over seven billion.

I stub out my ciggy, sip the rest of the coffee and start activating my bowels.

I take the Czech poet, Krchovský, to read while I take a dump. In the occasional interviews he gives, he admits that what he likes most is consciously doing nothing, a nice attitude to life which I can fully identify with. He also writes entertaining poems with a strong existential flavour. He enjoys casting himself in the role of a corpse, for instance, or a mummy.

Some Jehovah's Witness rings the bell while I'm sitting there.

He needs to know if I use the extended cable television package; I tell him I'm not even interested in the basic one. He's obviously been well trained somewhere though because he presses on undeterred and tells me I can now buy the complete package with a 75% discount.

I feign the pleasant surprise of an idiot and ask him what I've done to deserve such a kind offer: what if his company has made a mistake? I add that I'm an egalitarian at heart and would be sorry to get special treatment at the expense of others.

When the dealer admits the offer is the same for everyone in the country, I counter by expressing my regret that his company doesn't provide an individual approach to its clients. I then add to the chaos in his door-to-door head by trying to cadge some money from him so that I can free my telly from the pawnshop and try his irresistible offer.

At which he leaves to go and bother my neighbours while I go back to the bog with my poetry. I have to say I'm sometimes nostalgic for the days when poems shaped history. During their attack on the Winter Palace, the crowd apparently chanted Mayakovsky's couplet: Eat your pineapples, chew your grouse/Your end is near, you bourgeois louse.

Today poetry doesn't have the same power.

A poet is just a ridiculous figure on the sidelines, someone whose creation is of no interest to anyone.

Afterwards I decide to have a shower.

At first I alternate between running hot and then cold water – I have heard somewhere that it's good for your health. I prefer warm water, though, and so after a while stick with that. I then put the plug in the bath and pour some gel with an ocean fragrance into the water. The water foams up enough to cover my less than perfectly formed body. For a moment I think about indulging my solitary vice but I can't properly concentrate and so give up the plan.

Smelling nice and fresh, I go back to the comp. It's time to knock up a pub fanpage, an important link between us and the customers. I'd like to put a photo from one of the concerts held in the amphitheatre here on the title page. I should be able to find something at home.

The first picture I come across is of some bright-eyed girls and boys from the Jadlovec folk ensemble. On the wall at the back of the stage is a sign saying: Fulfilling the Resolutions of the XV. Czechoslovak Communist Party Congress, We Celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Slovak Soviet Republic.

I've never cared much for folklore. I go on looking.

I find a photo from a performance by Turbo, a Czech pop-rock group. In the 1980s they came second once in the *Zlatý slávik* awards. Their biggest hit was *Hráč* and a lot of people compared them to the Swedish group Europe. They were probably right to: they were equally as crap.

The singer cultivated the image of a football fan from Iliašovce, Bijacovce, or Granč-Petrovce. In the photo from my collection you can't see his face; he's leaning right down creating the impression he's really *into* the show.

The other group members are just shadows and smudges – the photographic equipment for ordinary people back then was just junk. Or perhaps the guy who pressed the shutter button just didn't know what he was doing.

Again I go through the box and this time find a photo of Prorock, a foursome that used to round off the show at the Gelnica Rock festival every year. Fans and visitors always used to look forward to the special lighting effects which the group used to play along with.

I remember how sparklers worked their way down wires from the audience to the stage where they then set off a little fireworks display. This was a signal to the studded heavy metal fans in their baggy denim jackets to start headbanging and throw themselves on the ground

Prorock were the only group from the valley to do well in the *Triangel* song competition; I think it was with their laconically-titled song, *Ahoj*. I don't think it was their best, though. I preferred *Omyl*.

For the 1980s, it had quite a daring text: Mistakes happen, oh yeah, in the radio and in the papers.

I go through the rest of the photos, most of which were taken in pubs and restaurants.

At the end I come across a photo taken on a Sokol, a Soviet camera. Kubko and I are in Prague and wearing t-shirts with the name of the Ferdinand brewery on them. It is the summer of '97.

In the *Slováč* bar, we are serving the real élite.

*Translated by Jonathan Gresty*