

Inese Zandere

1. Biographical information on the candidate

Inese Zandere

Born in Dobele, Latvia, on 15 September 1958.
Address: Baldones 4-4, Riga LV-1007 Latvia
Phone: +371 29131706
E-mail: zandere@lielsmazs.lv

Education

1976–1981 University of Latvia, Department of Philosophy

Work Experience

1981–1987 Editor at the Avots Publishing House
1987–1990 Editor at the Pionieris (later – LaBA) Newspaper for children
1990–1993 Editor at the Diena Newspaper
1993–2011 Editor and Editor-In-Chief at the Rīgas Laiks Magazine
From 2004 to date Editor-in-Chief of the liels un mazs publishing house

Has worked as a compiler, editor and scriptwriter for the Dienas Grāmata, Neputns, Mansards publishing houses, AtomArt, SKUBA Films studios, etc. Taught the creative writing classes organized by the Rīgas Laiks Magazine (2012). Has compiled the 'Garā pupa' (The Tall Beanstalk) yearbook of children's poems (2014, 2015, 2016).

Writer's Work

Has published 5 collections of poems for grownups, over 30 books of poems and prose for children, documentary prose, articles, interviews and essays in a number of collections. Has written the scripts for the 'Shammies' animation series (director Edmunds Jansons, AtomArt Studio), librettos for several musical-dramatic works, created stage versions of literary works and lyrics for song cycles.

Public Organization Membership

Inese Zandere is a member of a number of public organizations: the Latvian Writers' Union; the Latvian PEN Club; the Board of IBBY Latvia; AKKA/LAA (Latvian Authors' Society), etc. Formerly – member of the Board of Latvian Authors' Society; Board of the Latvian Writers' Union; Board and Scholarship Board of the Latvian Cultural Foundation; Artistic Board of the XXIV Latvian Song Celebration and XIV Latvian Dance Celebration; Consulting Board for Publishing at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia; Extraordinary Advisor to the Minister of Culture for literature. In 2011–2012 was a member of the National Board for Culture.

2. Portrait photograph of the candidate



Photo by Kristaps Kalns



Photo by Kristaps Kalns

3. A statement on the candidate's contribution to literature for children and young people

Inese Zandere (1958) is Latvian poet and writer, editor-in-chief of the liels un mazs publishing company, engaged and creative member of IBBY-Latvia and an eager participant of the reading promotion programs.

She has graduated from the University of Latvia with a degree in philosophy. Inese Zandere has written more than 30 books for children and young people, and during the last 20 years is actively involved in projects related to children's literature and cultural education. Alongside creative writing, she frequently reviews works of others, and is a strong presence on the culture scene, providing well-balanced opinions. She is one of the founders of the Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art, which since its inception in 2005 has become the highest Latvian award presented to an author, an illustrator, a foreign author from Baltic Sea states and a translator of children's and youth books.

Her conceptual book of poems for children 'Innies and Outies' (*Iekšīņa un ārīņa*, 2002, 2004, 2008) embodies the intention of thinking characteristic for contemporary Latvian children's poetry in general: feel first, think and understand afterwards. These poems, in which humorous characters and great seriousness live side by side on the same page, encourage the young reader to think honestly about difficult matters as well, to observe closely the outward manifestations of each thing, phenomenon or creature, and examine its essence with equal care, to rejoice in the world and reveal its multi-layered nature, from outside to the innermost and deepest levels with enthusiasm and enjoyment. "Anything that has its innies has also outies around it," that's a funny line from a children's poem and a classic principle of philosophy at the same time. Zandere's poems are musical and easy to memorise, frequently used as song lyrics. "For a child, reciting poems, singing and chanting are an instinctive endeavour to arrange the world into small comprehensible structures that stick in one's memory. Rhythmic organisation of the text, permitting the magic of formulas and game to take over, has always been the attempt of a human being to somehow overcome the chaos around," says Inese Zandere.

Her collections of fairy tales make the reader experience the involvement of all living beings in the great mystery of nature's course, animate the emotions, as well as the intellect.

Inese Zandere's poems, fairy tales, plays and scripts have inspired the creation of several animation films, theatre plays and operas for children. Many poems have inspired composers to compose songs. Her short fairy tales about the curious characters called the Shammies - Sockie, Hankie, Mitten and Pillow - have earned wide recognition and love, and have been turned into eight colourful, witty and musical animation films.

Inese Zandere's books for children have earned particular acclaim both among her readers and literary critics. Her writing, considered honest, informed, warm-hearted and well-rounded, is often awarded important literary prizes - Latvian Children's Jury Award; Annual Latvian Literature Award for the best original children's book; Award of the Ministry of Culture for contribution to the development of children's literature; the Three Star Order - the highest state award of Latvia - and others. In 2007 Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art went to her fairy tale 'Sister and Brother' (*Māsa un brālis*, 2007); this book was included in the IBBY Honour List 2008, European Picture Book Collection II, and was also turned into an animated film. As the result of very successful collaboration with illustrators, several of her books have won the 'Zelta Ābele' (Golden Apple Tree) Award of the National Book Art Contest as the most beautiful books of the year.

Ilze Stikāne, President of IBBY Latvia

4. List of awards and other distinctions

State awards

- 2008** The Three Star Order (the highest state award of the Republic of Latvia)
- 2007** Award of the Ministry of Culture for contribution to the development of children's literature.

Awards for works of literature for children and young adults

- 2015** Imants Ziedonis Memorial Prize 'Life In Literature'
- 2013** The Annual Latvian Literature Prize for children's literature
- 2012** The Copyright Infinity Award
- 2011** Nominated for the Baltic Assembly Prize for literary works for children
- 2010** The Latvian Children's Jury Award
- 2009** Nomination for the Diena Newspaper Annual Culture Award
The Latvian Children's Jury Award
- 2008** IBBY Honour List 2008
The Latvian Children's Jury Award
- 2007** Annual Baltic Sea Region Jānis Baltvilks International Prize in Children's Literature and Book Art 2007
The Latvian Children's Jury Award
- 2003** Pastariņš Award for children's literature
The Copyright Infinity Award
- 2002** A prize at the 'Prese nama grāmata' original literature competition
The Annual Latvian Literature Prize for children's literature
- 2000** The Copyright Infinity Award

5. Complete bibliography of the books for children and young people by the candidate

Books

Annas pasakas (Anna's Fairy Tales) / sentences by Inese Zandere; drawings by Andra Štāla. Rīga : Karogs, 1994. 72 p. : ill.

Jaunajās mājās : veltīts kaķa Mrs. Līzes piemiņai (**The New Home : In memory of Mrs Līze the Cat**) / Inese Zandere ; [il. B. Mitins]. Rīga : Aka Print, 2000. 8 p. : ill.

Iekšīņa un ārīņa : dzejoļi (**Innies and Outies : Poems**) / Inese Zandere; [illustrations by Ūna Laukmane]. Rīga : Preses nams, 2002. 159 p. : ill.

Lidojošie burti : dzejoļi (**Flying Letters: Poems**) / Inese Zandere ; [illustrations by Ūna Laukmane]. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC, [2003]. 79, p. : ill. Series 'Skolas bibliotēka. Sprīdi pa sprīdim'.

Iekšīņa un ārīņa : dzejoļi (**Innies and Outies : Poems**) / Inese Zandere ; [illustrations by Ūna Laukmane]. New enlarged edition. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2004, 2008. 175 p.. : ill.

Limonāde (Lemonade) / Inese Zandere, [poems] ; Edmunds Jansons, [drawings]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2005. 30 p. : il.

Ceļojums ar lielo Šarloti (Travels with Big Charlotte) / Inese Zandere, Ūna Laukmane. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2006. 12 p. : ill.

Pingus Posta piedzīvojumi (Adventures of Pingus Posts) / Inese Zandere, illustrations by Kristians Šics. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, [2006]. 47 p. : ill.

Māsa un brālis (Sister and Brother) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Juris Petraškevičs. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2006. 32 p. : ill.

Ja tu esi sivēns : 25 mīklupanti (If You Happen to Be a Little Pig : 25 Riddle Rhymes) / Inese Zandere [poems], Edmunds Jansons [illustrations]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2006 51 p. : ill.

Ko teica Gaiļa kungs? (What Mr Rooster Told) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Ilze Vītoliņa. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2007. 47 p. : ill., music sheets

Briņumbēbīša gads : dzejoļi mūsu ģimenei (**Wonderbaby's Year : Poems for our family**) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Edmunds Jansons. Rīga : Liels un mazs, 2008. 50 p. : ill.

Dzejoļi mātai un brālim (Poems for Sister and Brother) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Juris Petraškevičs. Rīga : Liels un mazs, 2008. 39 p. : ill. + 1 DVD.

Vārdurati (Word-Cart) / Inese Zandere ; [drawings by Dina Ābele]. Rīga : Jumava, 2008. 63 p. : ill.

Karalis ezis (King Hedgehog) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Laima Eglīte. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2009. 21 p. : ill.

Latviešu zvēri (Latvian Animals) / Inese Zandere, Mārtiņš Grauds, photos by Kristaps Kalns. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2009 143 p. : ill.

Princešu piedzīvojumi (Adventures of Two Princesses) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Irēna Lūse. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2010. 45 p. : ill.

Dieguburti (Threadletters) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Ūna Laukmane. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2011 86 p. : ill.

Kā Lupatiņi mainījās (How the Shammies Swapped) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Reinis Pētersons. [Rīga] : liels un mazs : Atom art, 2011. 32 p. : il.

Līze Analīze un citi slimnīcas skaitāmpanti (Medicine Maddy and Other Hospital Nursery Rhymes) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Reinis Pētersons ; [editor Inese Zandere ; design by Reinis Pētersons, Rūta Briede un Artis Briedis]. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2012. 30 p. : ill.

Pūces svinības (Owl's Celebration) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Ieva Jurjāne. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2012. 32 p. : ill.

Lelles raduraksti (The Doll's Family Tree) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Līga Kichen ; [series of selected poems compiled by Inese Zandere]. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2012. [22] lpp. : il. ; Bicki-Buck Books : a series of selected 100 poems for children; 004 .

Sapnis par Ziemassvētkiem : dzejoļi (A Dream of Christmas : Poems) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Irēna Lūse. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2012. 32 p. : ill. + 1 CD.

Zirgs (Horse) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Reinis Pētersons. [series of selected poems compiled by Inese Zandere]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2013. 24 p. : ill. ; Bicki-Buck Books : a series of selected 100 poems for children; 024

Pūķa ceļojums (The Dragon's Journey) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Gundega Muzikante. Rīga : Rīgas Doma pārvalde, 2013. 44 p. : ill.

Pasaciņa asaciņa par sēņošanu blēņošanu (A Fairy Tale about Mushroom Hunting) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Edmunds Jansons ; [series of selected poems compiled by Inese Zandere]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2014. 28 p. : ill. ; Bicki-Buck Books : a series of selected 100 poems for children; 039.

No zvaigznītes (From a Little Star) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Gita Ruģēna ; [series of selected poems compiled by Inese Zandere ; design by Rūta Briede, Artis Briedis]. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2014. 20 p. ; ill. ; Bicki-Buck Books : a series of selected 100 poems for children, 1990 ; 053.

Trīs draugi vienas upes krastā (Three Friends on the Coast of the Same River) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Juris Petraškevičs. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2014. 32 p. : ill.

Dailās krustmātes (The Beautiful Aunties) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Andrejs Lavrinovičs ; [series of selected poems compiled by Inese Zandere ; design by Rūta Briede, Artis Briedis]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2015. 19 p. : ill. ; Bicki-Buck Books : a series of selected 100 poems for children; 072.

Kaķis brīvdienās : un citas pasakas (Cat on Vacation : And Other Fairy Tales) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Aleksejs Naumovs ; [design by Artis Briedis, Rūta Briede]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2015. 84 p. : ill.

Lupatiņu rīts (The Shammies' Morning) / Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Reinis Pētersons ; [design by Rūta Briede, Artis Briedis ; text edited by the author]. [Rīga] : liels un mazs : Atom art, 2015. 96 p. : ill.

Audio books for children

Pingus Posta piedzīvojumi (Adventures of Pingus Posts) [audio recording] : audio book for children / Inese Zandere. [Rīga] : liels un mazs, 2007. 1 CD (53:17) : digital, stereo.

Iekšīņa un ārīņa (Innies and Outies) [recording] / Inese Zandere ; music by Juris Kulakovs, Līga Celma, Arnis Miltiņš, Ingus Baušķenieks. Rīga : Upe tt, 2005. 1 CD (40:00) : digitāls, stereo ; + text booklet.

Musical-dramatic works for children

Sūnu ciema zēni (The Boys of Moss Village), a musical (based on the story by Andrejs Upītis); a LTV video film (director Harijs Beķeris, 1995); a theatre production at Dailes Theatre (director Ģirts Nagainis, 1999)

Kaķīša dzirnavas (The Cat's Mill), a play (based on fairy tales by Kārlis Skalbe; songs by composer Valdis Zilveris to original lyrics by Inese Zandere; director Ivars Lūsis; premiere at the Liepāja Theatre in 2003)

Princese ar trim galvām (The Three-Headed Princess), a musical radio play (based on fairy tales by Karel Čapek; c songs by composer Līga Celma-Kursiete to original lyrics by Inese Zandere; director Irēna Cērmāne; a Latvian Radio production, 2006)

Sniega karaliene (Snow Queen), a musical (based on the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen; composer Jānis Lūsēns; director Inese Mičule; the ARS NOVA musical theatre, 2011)

Kartupeļu opera (The Potato Opera), opera for children (composers Lolita Ritmane, Evija Skuķe, Rihards Dubra, Līga Celma-Kursiete, Mārtiņš Brauns, Andris Sējāns; director Margo Zālīte; featuring the Tiara Girls' Choir; premiere at the Latvian National Opera in 2014)

A translation in verse from English: libretto by Tim Rice for Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' (the Latvian production 'Jāzeps un raibais brīnumsapņu mētelis' at Dailes Theatre, 2008)

Animation

Nikno lapsēnu maršs (The March of the Angry Fox Cubs) [video] (director Roze Stiebra, based on poem by Inese Zandere, art director Dzintra Aulmane, composer Juris Kulakovs, Dauka Studio, 1995. (2 min) : sound, colour. DVD: Dauka Collections 2006

Miega vilcieniņš (The Sleep Train) [video] (director Roze Stiebra, based on fairy tale by Inese Zandere, art director Juris Petraškevičs, composer Ingus Baušķenieks, Dauka Studio, 1996. (2 min) : sound, colour. DVD: Dauka Collections 2006

Māsa un brālis (Sister and Brother) (director Roze Stiebra, based on fairy tale by Inese Zandere, Juris Petraškevičs, composer Gunārs Kalniņš,) [video] [Rīga] : Dauka Studio ; liels un mazs, 2008. 1 DVD (7 min) : sound, colour.

Kā Lupatiņi mazgājās (How the Shammies Bathed) [video] : animation / director Edmunds Jansons ; screenplay by Inese Zandere ; artist Reinis Pētersons ; composer Jēkabs Nīmanis. [Rīga] : [Atom art], 2011. 1 DVD (7 min) : sound, colour.

Lupatiņi (The Shammies) [video] : animation series / director Edmunds Jansons ; screenplays by Inese Zandere ; concept by Inese Zandere, Ūna Laukmane, art director Reinis Pētersons. [Rīga] : Atom Art ; liels un mazs, 2015. 1 DVD (40 min) : sound, colour + text booklet (7 [1] lpp. : il.) (Animation shorts: 'How the Shammies Bathed' (2010); 'How the Shammies Got Married' (2014); 'How the Shammies played Hide-and-Seek' (2015); 'How the Shammies Built a House' (2015); 'How the Shammies Got Well' (2015); 'How the Shammies Tidied Up' (2015). Web episodes: 'How the Shammies Teeter-Tottered' (2012); 'How the Shammies Gussed' (2013).)

Productions based on poems and fairy tales by Inese Zandere

lekšņa un ārīņa (Innies and Outies) (director Ģirts Ēcis, the JRT Theatre, 2003)

Ja tu esi sivēns (If You Happen to Be a Little Pig) (director Varis Piņķis, the JRT Theatre, 2007)

Ineses tantes mīklainie panti (Auntie Inese's Puzzling Rhymes) (director Varis Brasla, Valmieras Drama Theatre, 2007)

Pūka ceļojums (The Dragon's Journey) (directors Aurēlija Anužīte and Valdis Lūriņš, the Riga Dome, 2011, 2012)

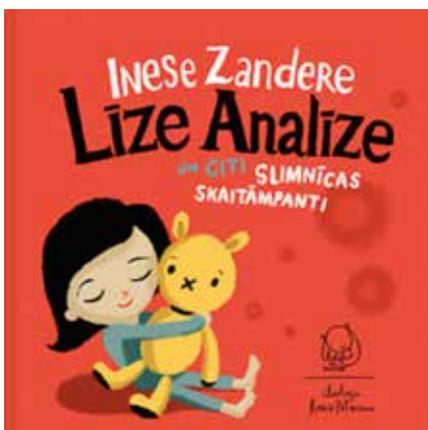
Publications about Children's Literature

Zirgs, kas naktī dzied : bērnu literatūra Latvijā (A Horse that Sings at Night : Children's Literature in Latvia) / Silvija Tretjakova, Ilze Stikāne, Inese Zandere ; [editor Inese Zandere ; illustrations by Ūna Laukmane]. [Rīga] : Latvijas bērnu un jaunatnes literatūras padome, 2006 43 p. : ill.

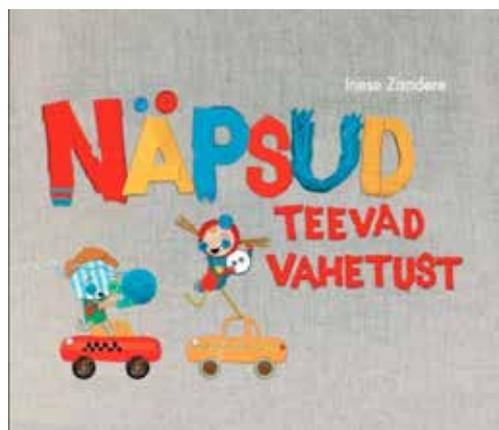
A Horse that Sings at Night : Children's Literature in Latvia / Silvija Tretjakova, Ilze Stikāne, Inese Zandere. Riga : Latvian Literature Centre, 2006. 38 p. : ill.

6. List of translated editions, and their languages

In Estonian

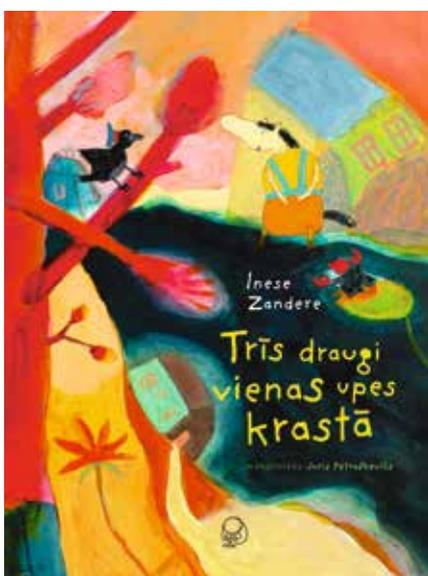


Zandere, Inese, **Annaliisa Analüüs ja teisi värse lohutuseks haiglas olijale** / Līze Analīze un citi slimnīcas skaitāmpanti / Inese Zandere ; translated by Leelo Tungal and Guntars Godiņš; [Tallinn] : Tammerraamat, 2016.



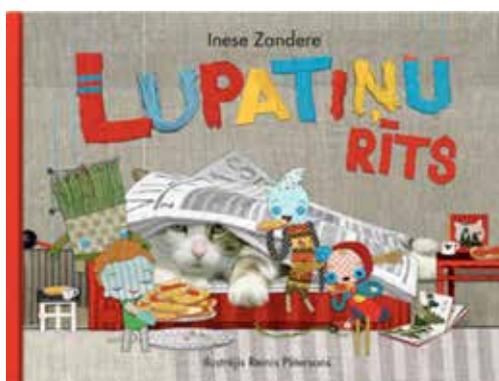
Zandere, Inese, **Nāpsud teevad vahetust** / Kā Lupatiņi mainījās / Inese Zandere ; translated by Margus Konnula; [Tallinn] : Lumemana, 2016.

English language rights sold



Zandere, Inese, **Trīs draugi vienas ūpes krastā** (Three Friends on the Coast of the Same River), Inese Zandere, translated by Sabīne Ozola and adapted by Lawrence Schimel, publishing house Book Island, 2017.

Arabic language rights sold

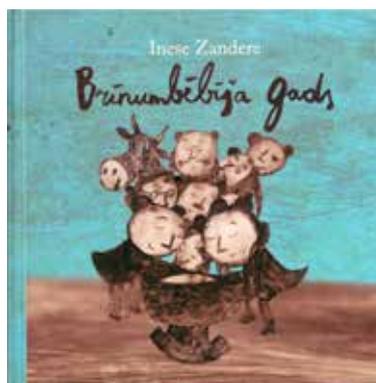


Zandere, Inese, **Shammies' Morning** / Lupatiņu rīts /, Inese Zandere, translated by Zeina Idriss, Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc., 2017.

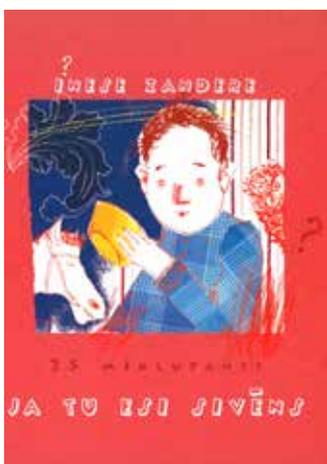
7. Five of the most important titles by the candidate



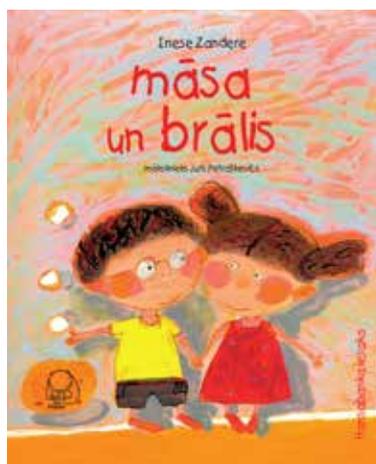
Līze Analīze un citi slimnīcas skaitāmpanti. 2012.
Rīga: Liels un mazs. (Medicine Maddy and Other Hospital Nursery Rhymes)



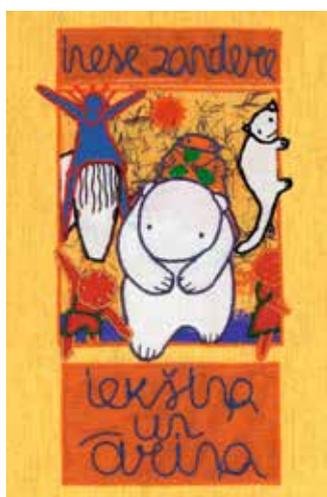
Brīnumbēbīša gads. 2008.
Rīga: Liels un mazs.
(Wonderbaby's Year)



Ja tu esi sivēns. 25 mīklupanti. 2006. Rīga: Liels un mazs.
(Lielo burtu lietojums:
If You Happen to Be a Little Pig:
25 riddle rhymes)

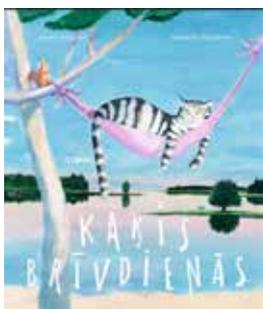


Māsa un brālis. 2006.
Rīga: Liels un mazs.
(Sister and Brother)

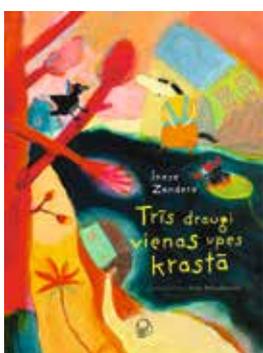


Iekšīņa un ārīņa. 2004.
Rīga: Liels un mazs.
(Innies and Outies)

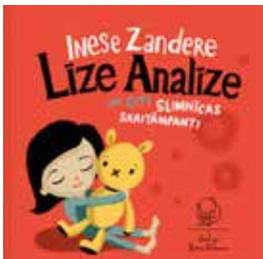
8. List of the books sent to the jurors



Zandere, Inese, **Kaķis brīvdienās** (Cat on Vacation) : un citas pasakas / Inese Zandere ; ilustrator Aleksejs Naumovs ; design: Artis Briedis, Rūta Briede. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2015. 81, [2] p. : ill.



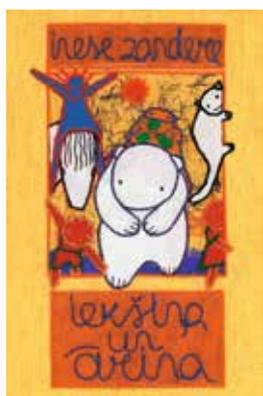
Zandere, Inese, **Trīs draugi vienas upes krastā** (Three Friends on the Coast of the Same River) / Inese Zandere ; ilustrator Juris Petraškevičs. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2014. [25] p. : ill.



Zandere, Inese, **Līze Analīze un citi slimnīcas skaitāmpanti** / Inese Zandere ; ilustrator Reinis Pētersons ; design: Reinis Pētersons, Rūta Briede un Artis Briedis. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2012. 30, [1] p. : ill.



Zandere, Inese, **Kā Lupaņi mainījās** (How the Shammies Swapped) / Inese Zandere ; ilustrator Reinis Pētersons. Rīga : liels un mazs : Atom art, 2011. 31 p. : ill.



Zandere, Inese, **Iekšā un ārā** : dzejoļi (Innies and Outies) / Inese Zandere ; ilustrator Ūna Laukmane. New enlarged edition. Rīga : liels un mazs, 2004. 175, [1] p. : ill.

Gundega Muzikante: A Child is a Human Being [2]

Two conversations with artist and children's book illustrator Gundega Muzikante took place during the conference *The Power of Imagination: The Most Vivid Characters in Children's Literature*, at Spīķeri Concert Hall on 10 May 2013.

Conversation after the conference [The second conversation]

Inese Zandere, poet and editor: The time restraints of the conference were so tight that you and [art critic] Austra [Avotiņa] could only just start your conversation – and listening to it suggested many questions I would like to discuss with you. Even, for instance, regarding our very own dragon: 'The Dragon's Journey' is based in the tradition of Christian allegory with its entire spectrum of classic vices and equally classic liberation from their grip. What was it like to seek a way to translate this tradition into a picture book?

Muzikante: It is easy as long as there are vices to show. Anger, envy, pride, greed, fear – this array of negative emotions is full of character, inspiring and easy to draw. Things become more difficult when the hero loses these powerful negative traits. Virtues are not as easily depicted.

Zandere: That is where fairy tales always come to an end, as the dramatic impact is lost.

Muzikante: You have to arrive at some sort of essence, the core of 'all that is pure and good' – but this essence is so pure it has no image. Seeking the essential meaning, discarding all that is individual, characteristic, leads to a pictogram.

Zandere: And in this case, it would probably mean an approbated iconography that is capable of indicating, signalling the meaning of the story and its ending. From tradition you were taken, and to tradition you shall return...

Muzikante: It touches on that. Not with that sort of unequivocal didactics of how things were bad, and how they will now be so good...

Zandere: After all, nothing has really come to an end.

Muzikante: The dragon is no more. He has turned into a child, a pure, innocent being without vice.

Zandere: No, he has cast off the dragon, shed the skin that was alien to him, and arrived at what he truly is – a human being. A child is a human being. And a human is both good and evil, the manifestations depend on what situations he finds himself in, and what he does with himself.

Muzikante: And it is difficult to find a visual expression for this: yes, the child is human, but we don't know what will happen to him in the future, we don't know what to expect from him.

Zandere: So the main problem of the visualisation was grafting together all that has already manifested and possesses certain traits, with all that has the potential of becoming something.

Muzikante: Someone of whose particular expressions we know nothing yet. A human being, a person is such a broad notion. We know what he is not, what he has dealt with, from what he has broken free. But we have no idea of what forms his essence and what it looks like. There's only a hint, a predicted direction; in fact, the fairy tale ends with the question: what *is* a human being?

Zandere: What do you think of children's books as something that influences, moulds children?

Muzikante: I wouldn't pontificate about the artist's responsibility, but of course we want the child to identify with what we consider to be worthy, with our moral values. What children's literature can and should fearlessly cultivate is good judgement and creativity. Let the book not provide readymade clichés, but instead leave room for creativity and the possibility of becoming interested in something. Let there be judgement, including moral judgement, the ability to tell right from wrong – but any blatant acclamations would be misplaced. Children have a certain tendency to identify with a character, and an illustration has to create a situation in which they are able to do so. If this point of contact is not provided, the book will leave the child indifferent. There's no need to sort black from white, but a developed judgement ability will help the child make sense of the scale and evaluate the boundaries of what is acceptable.

Zandere: I would say children's literature has less of a problem with books that err by aestheticizing evil, making it attractive – maybe this is more the case in commercial literature intended for teenagers; rather, there are too many books, especially those meant for the very littlest, that trivialize good.

Muzikante: Indeed. Such vapidly 'nice', in effect vacant books, bring nothing creative. But this 'dragon issue', the idea of depicting 'good', is truly complicated. It demands vivid, full-blooded expression. An individualized character lives within the wide boundaries between 'distilled essence' – a symbol, sign, pictogram – and caricature, which results from grotesquely heightening traits.

Zandere: Have your illustrations ever reached this caricature boundary? You do seem to have a certain tendency towards grotesque.

Muzikante: I do. But I have to know the moment when a trait is being overexaggerated to the point of caricature. It still has to remain within those brackets of the impersonal and the caricatured.

Zandere: 'The Dragon's Journey' is not out yet, the illustrations were on show for Children's Day at the Riga Dome last year. But you have completed another work that is yet to be published, even though the illustrations were already exhibited for Poetry Days at the Rainis Museum in Tadenava. It is a tome of Pēters Brūveris' poetry, the last one compiled during his lifetime – 'A Book for Gundega'. Is that a personal dedication to you?

Muzikante: I met Pēters Brūveris in person maybe five times in my life... we first met while working on the animation film 'The Cuckoo and Her 12 Husbands'. He had just recuperated from illness, and was in such a mood... he was still

deciding whether to write at all. He found it difficult to gather his thoughts, difficult to do anything. He sent me a few poems and I egged him on to keep writing and writing, he sent me some more, and the pile of poems kept growing until there were enough for an entire tome. Initially he had no concept for the compilation, it took shape gradually. He also sent me excerpts from the libretto for 'The Little Devils' – everything he was working on at the time. We exchanged correspondence.

Zandere: Like an imprint of a part of his life – the poet lives on, and the poems follow one another. Did you ever react to what he sent you, did you offer any comments?

Muzikante: Yes. I also sent a few little pictures, photos with my comments. I think we were joking around a little.

Zandere: Did you save this exchange?

Muzikante: The entire exchange has been deleted. Or... we assume it has. But this exchange was not an intimate one, and if someone maybe thinks the title of the book indicates some sort of romantic affair, they will be disappointed, because that is not the case. In all honesty, I don't even know Brūveris, I am free from any human impressions beyond his poems and these letters. But this meeting appeals to me.

Zandere: Brūveris' poems are at once very tender, at times even borderline sentimental, and full of mischief. But he is no longer able to defend himself against rigid, misconceived interpretations. Maybe this public berating – for the hacker poem, and the child that is left home alone – is the reason why the Gundega poems have for so long remained in the publisher's briefcase.

Muzikante: Mischief, yes, they possess a playfulness that I love. But poets live forever – their work is published again and again, and children often do not know if the poet is living or not. The poem itself will show no sign of its author's demise...

Zandere: Speaking of creative legacy – how many children's books have you illustrated? The Baltvilks Award artist nominee lists have so far featured [Ieva] Samauska's 'The City from A to Z', the cultural history reference books about Matīss, and [Valdis] Rūmnieks' 'The Murjāņi Mole and His Friends', and your and Māra Cielēna's 'Flying Adventure' received a special commendation from the jury last year – for the outstanding harmony of language and visual expression, as the verdict put it.

Muzikante: I'm up to thirty books now. But I don't feel I am particularly good at drawing... When I thumb through my past work, I see so many things... Although – if I can see those mistakes now, perhaps it means there has been some sort of progress.

Zandere: We're talking of the meeting of two imaginations, of harmony, but maybe the writer and the artist can have a clash of two imaginations?

Muzikante: Most often the writer has a mental image, but the artist will see the picture completely differently. I am always slightly worried about this: is this what the poet meant?

Zandere: And how do you deal with your doubts?

Muzikante: Well, if the poet is dead, no worries! [Laughs] If he or she is alive, it is possible to gauge the reaction, to see if my vision is accepted. I guess I've been lucky to work with very polite authors.

Zandere: Do you think the quality of the book depends on whether, for instance, you and I get along well? Is it only then that we can produce a good book? Or maybe, like they sometimes say of theatre, you can take the text of a telephone directory and turn it into a good picture book?

Muzikante: Yes, I think that is not the most important criterion. You can get on like a house on fire, but you can also argue. The main thing is not to be on one another's leash. Both the text and the picture must be self-contained.

Zandere: Unfortunately, writers and other critics can often be petty and become upset if a cat has a white tip to its tail in the text, but not in the illustration. Oh boy, what can you say about stage shows then; just go see an opera, where the soloist can gaze at, say, a brunette in a red swimsuit and sing: 'Oh how I adore your blue eyes and golden hair!'

Muzikante: I remember something akin to that from my childhood. I'd sometimes be perplexed by discrepancies between text and picture – why it's one thing here and another there.

Zandere: Would you want a child to keep this attitude? And for the grown-up to be like this, too? I think we as writers and artists are trying to liberate ourselves and the children from this kind of thinking. To allow kids to understand that both the text and the illustrations of the book are a world that is open to fantasy and play. A child who is playing can dream up a fifth or even seventh leg for that cat; they can create new combinations in their imagination and imbue them with new motivation that builds new stories. This very freedom of interpretation is one of the things a children's book could try to surreptitiously whisper into the child's ear.

Muzikante: Of course, this is exactly the kind of creativity of perception that a book should provide, instead of ready-made concepts or a to-the-letter match between word and image. That's what it said, so that's what I drew... No, I would like the child to understand what is text and what is picture, and how together they create something else again.

Zandere: And that there is also a fourth element.

Muzikante: The person who is reading, looking, observing, can go further – they can see what has not been drawn, what has been left out of the picture; and they can dive into this to the extent where nothing will hold them back – neither what is written nor what is drawn.

Zandere: I think a children's book is like a battlefield of imaginations in which the artist has something of the upper hand – or the final say, to be more precise. The artist can influence the way the text is perceived. And artists often – too often, I would say! – mask weaker texts by conjuring up a world that covers up the poor quality of the text. Although there are, of course, also texts that are

left all on their lonesome because the illustrations that have been pinned to them are so feeble that it is better to pretend not to see them...

Muzikante: Yes, if we presume that visual perception is primary – that a picture comes first and is followed by the text; that the images, the book's entire visual aspect is prevalent. This is a hidden yet always present contradiction between two different languages. Where poor texts are concerned, this is definitely not a clash, because a clash can only take place between equal opponents, in which case this can become a most engaging battle, because immediate agreement certainly isn't prerequisite for creating something new and interesting.

Zandere: What do you do if you're asked to illustrate a text that is not particularly good?

Muzikante: If there is such a commission, such a project... I do want to draw. So, I try to pick my own narrative out of the text – something that I would want to draw, something that is worth drawing. You can't exactly draw four giraffes if the story calls for five cats, but you can find your own path, look for the story within the story.

Zandere: And no-one can really forbid those four giraffes from also making an appearance. This is what we hoped for as we launched our 'BICKI-BUCK' series – that artists would create parallel stories for the poems. And that is how Reinis Pētersons started us off when he illustrated Baltvilks' counting rhyme, 'Bicki-buck'. Even though overall this task turned out not to be so easy, we still strive towards this goal. For your own 'bicki-buck' you chose Aivars Neibarts' poem 'Little House'. And then?

Muzikante: I think it must be any artist's dream to be able to choose for themselves. To select a poem that is exactly right and gives you a feeling that you could do so much. That you could do all that is needed – because the poetry will not impose constraints, the boundaries of its imagination are vast and vague, it lets you expound the story in time, space, characters...

Zandere: And you, of course, chose to expound it through something you love – construction.

Muzikante: Yes, right now I am excited by inventing. Each book has its own leitmotif for me – an artistic task I feel compelled to master at that particular time. Sometimes I might feel a need to work with silhouettes – I feel so happy looking at the silhouettes of the Riga rooftops, or skyline panoramas as such. These patterns of the city also make an appearance in 'Little House'. The urban patterns that come about so serendipitously yet are so beautiful.

Zandere: Because the cityscape is a mirror image, the embodiment of the human society – as [architect] Pēteris Blūms once wrote, as in society, on the street you also find the big and the small, the tall and the short, the fat and the thin, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, all intermingled; relationships are formed, and there is a propensity for harmony. A row of similar, homogeneous things is unnatural, disharmonious.

Muzikante: Those who depict nature create compositions of forests, rocks, groups of shrubs. I do the same with roofscapes. And I am also truly enthusiastic about engineering inventions.

Zandere: One of the page spreads of 'Little House' made me think: 'The Latvian Shaun Tan!'

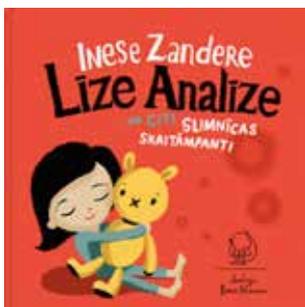
Muzikante: Quite correct, it is my tribute to Shaun Tan. I watched his 'Lost Thing' and other works very carefully, and what I love most about his wonderful 'picture storytelling' is his subtle, sensitive view of objects. The delicate way he approaches the unusual, his ability to tell its story in such a realistic and lively manner. A lost thing – who, upon hearing the words, would imagine an enormous mechanical object, ten times larger than the person who finds it! When the thing is brought home, no-one pays it any attention, no-one is interested. The object is now among other things, in an object-filled little world.

Zandere: And that is its place. Because it is possible. Everything is possible – not just the things that already exist, but also those that could exist, even the seemingly impossible ones.

Muzikante: And should we suddenly observe from our window a strange object, equipped with a few little cans, walk teeteringly along the tram rails past the Opera House, the only thing we should think is – well yes, there it goes!

10. (Published) reviews of the books submitted to the Jury

Ligita Levinska. 05.12.2012. <http://www.ubisunt.lu.lv/zinas/t/16903/>



Tell me this riddle if you can! They do not live in genetics labs and are not hybrid brothers and sisters; they are also not in the grocery shelves or antique shops, or in the 'hope chests' of grandmothers; they are not representatives of the Great Barrier Reef flora and fauna. Where do you go to meet the naughty Jokey, Medicine Maddy, Sniffle-Piffle, Boo-Boo Bogey, the Fat Ghosts, Ulrich the Ultrasonographer, Ultrasound Spy and Nappy Nurse? No, you will not find them in a ghost story or a fantasy film. So tell me this riddle if you can!

Yes, finally I heard the words 'in children's books'. I will give you a further clue: in the latest collection of poems by Inese Zandere, a new piece in the long string of beads that is [Latvian] children's literature. The new book, 'Medicine Maddy and Other Hospital Nursery Rhymes', is Inese Zandere's contribution to original children's literature and has been published in association with the Children's Hospital Foundation and the 'Sunny Days for Our Children' charity campaign by the Diena Newspaper. [...]

Inese Zandere is an indisputably vivid and prolific author of current children's literature; children and their parents, theatre directors and composers interested in new joint projects – they are all waiting for her books like for the coming of Christmas. The relevance and popularity of Zandere's poems are proved by some interesting facts: for example, 2008 saw the third printing of the poet's most popular children's book 'Innies and Outies', originally published back in 2002. In a 2006 survey held by the Ministry of Culture, the above collection was included in the Top 100 of most popular books as the only representative of contemporary children's literature.

Using capital initial letters, the author in her collection makes [the reader] focus, absorb and enrich the vocabulary of all things hospital and illness related; this way various notions and concepts gradually find a permanent place in the child's consciousness, and the poems serve an informative purpose by expanding the range of their factual knowledge. It should be noted that the author does not burden the young reader by making the dose of information too condensed; the factual content is only briefly outlined. The author's poems also serve an edifying function, attempting to introduce some understanding of fundamental moral values through unobtrusive instructions.

The Lyric I is in the company of family, friends and animals (admittedly, imaginary ones), and these factors could be considered as the defining ones in the formation of the person of Inese Zandere's poems. Furthermore, one of the concluding poems in the collection acknowledges the importance of art; the Lyric I says: 'Bring me in your bag / the thing I expect, the thing I hope for every day, / not an enormous packet of treats, / not some tea for me to drink, / not the pristine handkerchiefs, / not the woolly bedroom slippers... / Better bring me a new Book, / the best medicine for boredom!' (P. 27) This example is didactics deliberately steered

in a certain direction by the poet: children should accept books as some of their best and most trustworthy friends and include reading in their daily routine as an exciting process. The hallmark of quality is stamped on this book by the messianic message of the back-cover blurb (a book that helps children get well and not be afraid of doctors), the unaffected imagery and the diverse system of characters, filled with interesting and catchy proper nouns. Inese Zandere, of course, does not forget the role played by the object world, which she renders alive and moving: 'The Bed floats like a ship, / the Bed speeds like a train, / the Bed carries like a horse, / rocks like a swing!' (P. 3)

The [secret of the unique] captivating properties of the nursery/counting rhyme lies in the play of form, language and rhyme. In her collection of poems, Inese Zandere does not depart from these nuances; a special mention should be made of the light flow of her language: 'Runs with a sharp, sharp, sharp, / runs with a sharp needle / a quick, quick syringe runs / to me and gives a jab of medicine.' (P. 22) The counting rhymes are sometimes too long but justifiably so: after all, someone who is spending time at a medical institution, either alone in a little nest of boredom or in the company of some new-found friends, will have time enough to read them all and even learn by heart. The author has given a lot of thought to the rhyming system that children often keep in mind particularly well. Besides, Inese Zandere's nursery rhymes can definitely be used to improve speech skills.

At a time when the weather outside the window is growing windier and chillier by the day and when winter arrives with the danger of catching a cold because of the temperature fluctuations, these nursery rhymes by Inese Zandere are most definitely recommended as a means of building up the health of readers small and big alike – like hot linden tea with honey and garlic bread.

In her collection 'Medicine Maddy and Other Hospital Nursery Rhymes', the poet has chosen a single subject that does not stray from its coordinates for a single minute. The Lyric I of Inese Zandere (a child) is surrounded by illnesses both at home and at the hospital. Thematically, the author spans all the stages of being unwell, from the actual fact of falling ill to the oh-so popular children's game of playing at being a doctor, where the Lyric I is already well again and, pretending to be the Wise Doctor, treats her five-year-old sister, reliving and re-experiencing through the game the real scenes [of recent past], building communication with her playmate. For children, the hospital nursery rhymes become an attempt to use rhythmic and melodious language – which, in this context, is not unlike the specific character of Latvian traditional magic incantations – to overcome illness, as well as the psychological discomfort frequently experienced by children when being ill and visiting medical institutions and [interacting] with their staff. The chanting of the nursery rhymes 'put a spell' on the illness, and the child gets well; therefore, metaphorically they substitute adhesive bandages, aspirin and ibuprofen, as well as provide psychological help, cheering up and reassuring that the oasis that is home to everything that is good is right here. One of the poet's trump cards is her determination not to idealize the world, showing a child living in the modern world – not one somewhere in a faraway land, on the other side of the seven seas. This is not a life without sharp splinters; sometimes unpleasant attacks take place – and in the context of this book, it is illness that takes on the role of the unfamiliar and dangerous enemy, disrupting the normal rhythm of everyday life: 'All noises will stop, footsteps fall silent, / a child who is ill cannot run and play...' (P.3)

Arita Strode-Kļaviņa. 21.10.2015. <http://www.ubisunt.lu.lv/zinas/t/36214/>



Being a mum is never easy – particularly one that gives her children books for presents instead of ponies with hair that can be combed or accessories with minions. [...] I put on a little mental pedestal every new original children's book by a Latvian author, with an appreciative pat on the author's shoulder. It may sound like self-congratulation, but Latvian children's books for the most part really are valuable, and the exciting text is [frequently] complemented by original illustrations: an excellent tandem. The only thing that I still find sad is the number of titles.

Luckily, during the last decade Latvian children's literature has found its own mum; her duties are not easy any way you look at it: namely, regularly delight the young readers with her own creations and lovingly pamper the contributions of her colleagues. By now, Inese Zandere's pedestal is reaching into the sky: she is the author of more than 20 children's books; at that, each one of them is different, distinctive and cleverly edifying (for instance, her collection of poems 'Medicine Maddy and Other Hospital Nursery Rhymes' and 'How the Shammies Swapped', a book from the series dedicated to a group of little fabric children – to highlight but a couple).

'Three Friends on the Coast of the Same River' (liels un mazs, 2014, illustrations by Juris Petraškevičs) appeals with its beautiful simplicity. The book is colourful yet 'earthy' – warm and very much in keeping with the Latvian mentality: the illustrations are dominated by brown, maroon, gently orange and dark green tones. And Inese Zandere's narration is calm and flowing, like the river on the bank of which the friends are sitting to discuss their plans for the future. It is a contemporary fairy tale in that it deals with the ever-topical housing problem, and what makes it even more modern is the word PROJECT, without which construction work or life in general is no longer possible: even dog houses have projects these days.

As any proper fairy tale should, it starts with the classic 'once upon a time'. Three friends – a Russian Crow, a German Lobster and a Swedish Horse – who are now grown up and ready to take wives, decide to build a house where they all could cosily live side by side. But alas! – the projects are incompatible! That seems quite logical, seeing as lobsters live in water, horses graze in lush meadows but crows live in tree tops. And there is nothing anyone can do, that is the natural order of things. Lobster's family will not be running around a meadow; the crow's family will not swim in water and the horse's family will never fly, no matter how the world might change. The single uniting element in their lives is the river, traditionally depicted in folklore as a place suitable for meditation, as it were: and in Zandere's book, the three friends – who each live on different levels – also meet on the river coast to try and find a common denominator.

The mythologically magical number 3 also features in the description of the three projects: 'three spans under the water'; 'an area of three hectares' and 'three-metre-high'. This water-earth-sky division and the different projects upset the friends so much that the conversation takes a completely destructive direction: suddenly even the need to get married is called into question. Luckily, Inese Zandere makes a skilful gesture with her magic wand at just the right moment; all discord is carried away by the river and the tale ends on a traditional and peaceful note and a promise of a long and happy ever after.

Undoubtedly, the opening sentence of the book is enough to make grownup readers wonder: why are the nationalities of the three friends exactly what they are? Perhaps it's worth wiping the dust off the history book and remember the whys and wherefores? However, this is children's literature. Preschoolers are not history experts (nor should they be), but they may have watched hockey with their father or the Eurovision Contest with their mother – and so they may have heard about the existence of these big countries, these nations. The artist Juris Petraškevičs has hidden some clues in the illustrations, equipping each of the friends with a popular stereotypical element: the Crow wears a military hat, the Lobster – a tailcoat but the Horse – a shirt and braces in the colours of the Swedish flag.

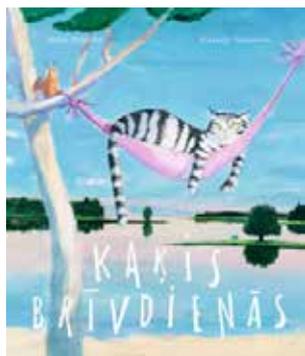
The visual appearance of the book resonates with the child's creative expressions: the imagery conjured up by the artist reflects typical 'second-grader's trees' with their powerful trunks and thin crooked branches and the 'childhood classic' that is pencil-drawn outlines under the see-through coat of paint; gouache brushstrokes and the all-mighty felt-tip pen are also featured generously. And no single line of the text is perfectly straight; the letters are all different sizes. The book creates a fantastic avataric environment with giant trees, exotic plants and fish the size of the Loch Ness Monster.

The language used by Inese Zandere is very clear, easy to understand even for the youngest. The parents should only prepare answers to questions: What is a project? What is a hectare? How does a double-door look? And what does it mean – 'extravagant'? The author skilfully guides her characters through the difficulties and propose a peaceful solution to the ostensibly insurmountable existential problem – without fights, insults and brawls. Besides, it is completely obvious that the different nationalities – and therefore different mentalities – are absolutely not the motivation behind the argument. Inese Zandere makes all the animals sit down obediently by the river and asks them to... simply to think. 'Silence fell; only the river babbled and made it difficult for the three friends to think. An hour passed, then another, then the third one, but the three friends were still thinking hard.' The book is an excellent example how to teach a child control his or her emotions: 'Do you remember what the Lobster, Crow and Horse did in the book?'

The fairy tale 'Three Friends on the Coast of the Same River' is universal: for example, it will make a nice wedding present to a newlywed couple as a witty hint about building their own nest. It will serve equally well as a gift at a housewarming party. Grownups will have something to smile about, remembering their own ambitions and the projects in their life. And, of course, children will be smiling, too, as they will imagine that the crow flying by is definitely heading for its 'extravagant' bedroom three metres above the ground.

Ieva Melgalve about **'Cat on Vacation' by Inese Zandere**, illustrated by Aleksejs Naumovs. Published by liels un mazs publishing house, 2015

<http://www.satori.lv/raksts/izdruka/10504>



'Cat on Vacation' by Inese Zandere belongs among the children's books that first of all attract with their illustrations. The truth is, the paintings by Aleksejs Naumovs cannot really be considered as 'illustrations' to this collection; they are fully-fledged works of art that, instead of 'explaining' or 'depicting' the text, interpret it, sometimes telling more than the words actually say. This is particularly true of the shorter and simpler of the stories. Illustrations were also the first thing that attracted the attention of the three-year-old Stella who immersed herself in the vivid, emotional and surprisingly detailed paintings with great gusto. Although I lack the specialist knowledge necessary to pass a judgement

on the artistic aspect of the collection of stories, I think the book has managed to achieve a perfect balance between the textual and the visual sides; in fact, [the reader can] either enjoy and understand it as a collection of artworks, where the text is secondary (which is what little Stella did), or ignore the pictures and focus on the text (as the thirteen-year-old Džonatans did).

The stories included in the collection seem so different that could easily belong to different books – and sometimes it almost felt as if they had been written by different authors. About half of the stories are 'fairy tales for children' – the kind that usually make me feel a sort of dissonance: children read them with pleasure whereas I tend to start thinking about the underlying nature of the story and worrying about its message. For instance, 'The Story of the Roasted Piglet' is a classic Christmas piece where the protagonist, the roasted suckling pig, is quite delighted at the prospect of getting eaten; the piglet striving so hard to finally reach this fulfilment of its existence that it is willing to rescue Father Christmas while it's at it. Confusingly, the next story features a number of completely edible farm animals who have been humanized even before they have been cooked: they are planning their life (shopping, weddings and similar entertaining events) as if the main objective of their lives was not filling human stomachs. Storylines recognisable from children's literature are played out in the short pieces entitled 'Midday' and 'Owl's Celebration'. Contrary to my own personal opinion, my children seemed to like these stories best. For instance, the eight-year-old Lia loved 'Midday', which I found trivial; according to her, 'a person has to be very clever to imagine what a fly is thinking about'. As for Džonatans, his affection was completely won by the grey-striped cat: all the stories featuring this character were declared to be the best.

'Believe Notbelieve and Tales of Musical Instruments' is a story that probably educates children, serving as an introduction to various musical instruments and the tempting appeal of the Latvian National Opera and Ballet Theatre. I can easily imagine this piece as a lovely stage production but somehow could not put to-

gether the individual scenes as I was reading it. Lia, on the other hand, said that this story, while definitely too long, had seemed the most interesting, so she had liked it best. Admittedly, writing 'a story about musical instruments' is a fine master stroke; only a few have ever got away with it; one such example is the wonderful 'The Composer Is Dead' by Lemony Snicket.

In their own genre, these stories are quite nice: they are wittily and smoothly written, without verbosity, moralizing or patronizing. In each story, there is always a spark of irony, always at least a few sentences to engage the mind of the discerning reader; for instance, when you read the story 'What Mr Rooster Told', you can ask – how will the wedding of Miss Goose and Mr Cat end? On the other hand, you could also definitely say that the question was moot. Besides, considering the fact that the rest of the characters do not take Miss Goose very seriously, the result of the wedding does not seem particularly important anyway.

At the same time, I found the rest of the stories in the collection to be some of the best I have ever read in Latvian children's literature. In the warm-hearted and absurd stories 'Wind Celebration' and 'Breakfast for Three', Bigmouth Fritz and his beloved Bigmouth Martha conjure up a perfect family – or at least a perfect love – scene where everyone is welcome and accepted exactly the way they are, even if they can sometimes be quite annoying. Thus, Fritz, who 'always looked the truth in the eyes and said exactly what he was thinking' (P. 40) is a justice fighter in the best and worst sense of the word, while Martha in her big mouth carries around not only all of the town's gossip but also its tales and legends, in a sense – the body of stories that create the town as a whole being. Their differences are complementary, yet this harmony of opposites is presented in a tender and warm manner, offering a lovely play on words instead of an obvious edification (P. 42):

– I spoke against the wind, – said Bigmouth Fritz. – I didn't give in.

– I played with the wind, – said Bigmouth Martha. – I am good at it.

And when the two of them are joined by Bigmouth Cat, who does not mind swallowing anything that Fritz and Martha have to say – alongside their breakfast –, the scene comprises the best that a big mouth can give. Just add the illustration showing Fritz and Martha sitting in the swing and the shadow of a third figure: is it the wind? Or the artist who may have painted himself into the book (just like the illustrations feature the author of the stories Inese Zandere)?

The stories 'Mirror Children', 'The Legend of the Single Father' and 'Silver Spoon', in their turn, cross the boundary of the absurd, boldly stepping into the world of surreal sadness where children are rarely allowed. Admittedly, this reluctance to cross the line often says more about the unwillingness of the grownups to encounter sadness and a sense of a hard-to-define tragedy than about the absence of these emotions in the children's world. Sooner or later, every child is likely to experience sadness, and, since the adults are rarely capable of discussing it adequately, sadness looms surreal, alienated and unsolvable in the child's world.

Thus, 'The Legend of the Single Father' follows the classic fairy tale formula with triple repetition, showing the relationship of a young man's dream persona with two different women who live, respectively, in the attic and in the cellar, as well as with a mouse who eventually transforms into a pigeon. And the ending of the legend, which sees the young man perish, is, it seems, at least partly due to the fact that he has not understood the meaning of his dreams and make a timely choice between the different paths that he could take in this precarious world. He is even less likely to be able to deal with the responsibility that he has taken without knowing – and probably even unable to know – the consequences of his actions. Džo-

natans dismissed this story at once as too dramatic, almost deliberately intense. Lia also found the story sad; she compared it to a horror story she had read about Slenderman, a popular bogey among children at school, and a girl who had been looking for her parents but instead had met Slenderman and disappeared without a trace. Except the girl in Lia's story probably could have escaped had she acted in a more sensible way, whereas in the story by Inese Zandere there is no escape route – or at least it is not obvious.

There is an equally tragic tone to the 'Mirror Children', a story in which grown-up people meet their alter ego, their childhood ego, who brings chaos, life, self-righteousness and recklessness into their everyday life – but also a chance of examining and integrating their true feelings and emotions. It's just that they also solve this problem in a very painful way – by smashing the mirror and splitting their identity even further. But can we say that what they did was obviously wrong? Perhaps becoming aware of the maximum possible number of their egos is the answer to the discord that naturally arises between two personalities – and, living with nine shards of mirror, they simply become a really large family. (P. 30)

As for 'Silver Spoon' and 'Cat on Vacation', these are stories where a seemingly simple and good-natured storyline takes by surprise with the warmth of their empathy, allowing the reader to relive both the fear and insecurity of a cat who encounters the sea for the first time in its life, and the shyness and compassion of a young snake meeting a badly-off yet dignified bitch who brings her – or rather, the baby she is expecting – a silver spoon.

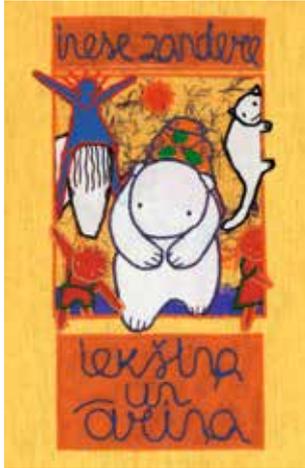
[In all], I was surprised after reading [the book] 'Cat on Vacation' and listening to the sometimes radically opposite opinions of my children. What had seemed to me to be a flaw – namely, too many 'traditional little stories for children' when [the author] could have published only the unusual and surreal ones – may actually be its strength: initially enticed by typical 'anthropomorphised animal' stories, the child is then invited deeper and deeper into a field of literature that is much harder to understand but certainly is more poetic and fascinating. And along with the child, so is the grownup who has picked up a children's book and returned to the child's world – not as it used to be but as he or she recalls it through the prism of their life experience.

Undīne Adamaite

Down the Path for a Bit of Joy.

'Innies and Outies' at the Small Auditorium of the JRT Theatre

Published in the Diena Newspaper, 24 February 2003



Without any loud PR-ing, most Saturday mornings sees the actors Guna Zariņa and Kaspars Znotiņš 'sing, dance, play, solve riddles, count, scare and scuttle' poems by Inese Zandere in the Small Auditorium of the JRT Theatre. 'The rest of my poems are about thoughts and love' – that is how the poet sees her own works; her collection of poems 'Innies and Outies' won the 2002 Preses Nams literary award in the Children's Literature category. [...]

The 'launch pad' of 'Innies and Outies' is small. A so-called 'travelling theatre'. A poor one – and yet how rich! A couple of square metres of space at the foot of a drawing by Ūna Laukmane, accurately and delicately stylizing the seeming naivety of children's chalk pictures. On the façade, in the yard, on a freshly papered wall. The rest of it is an airfield for the collective imagi-

nation of the two actors and the spectators.

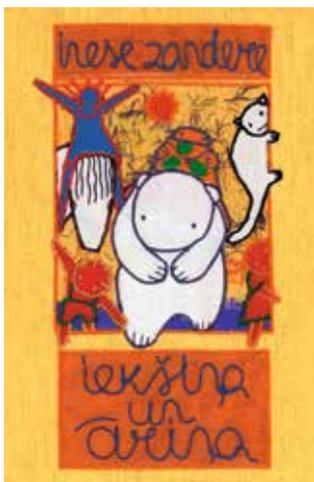
In the centre of the Universe like a yellow sun – a wooden box; from the depths of its belly one by one appear a yarn doll, a toy bear, a wooden sword, a little flag and a strip of paper that is transformed into a boat and an airplane. Guna Zariņa's girl in a sailor dress and Kaspars Znotiņš' boy in trousers with braces look as if they had stepped out of a drawing or an old photograph. 'Innies and Outies' reminds us of a theatre that gives a brief moment of feeling happy and free.

At first glance all that is taking place is reminiscent of a spectacular familial frolicking on a weekend morning. I suppose you have to be a sister or brother in trade to really appreciate the acting skills – a knack for improvisation, imagination, stage temperament and a feel for partnership – necessary to play this seemingly care-free 'counting, scaring, scuttling'.

Inese Zandere has managed to create in her poems the perfect balance between things that potentially appeal to those still sitting on someone's lap and those whose lap they are sitting on. Simple truths alternate with wise revelations, the likes of which could only visit someone who has been living in this world for quite some time. (An instant yet not strictly necessary thought comes to mind: that 'innies and outies' might be the Latvian version of yin and yang.) Importantly, there is no strict line drawn between these two sides and no-one is told who belongs where. This principle is also adhered to by the actors, and it becomes the greatest value of this theatre production. Here it is okay to play with words like colourful toy blocks. It is okay to listen how the letters sound and resound. It is okay to experience naughty triumphant joy for a rude word smuggled into the world of 'good

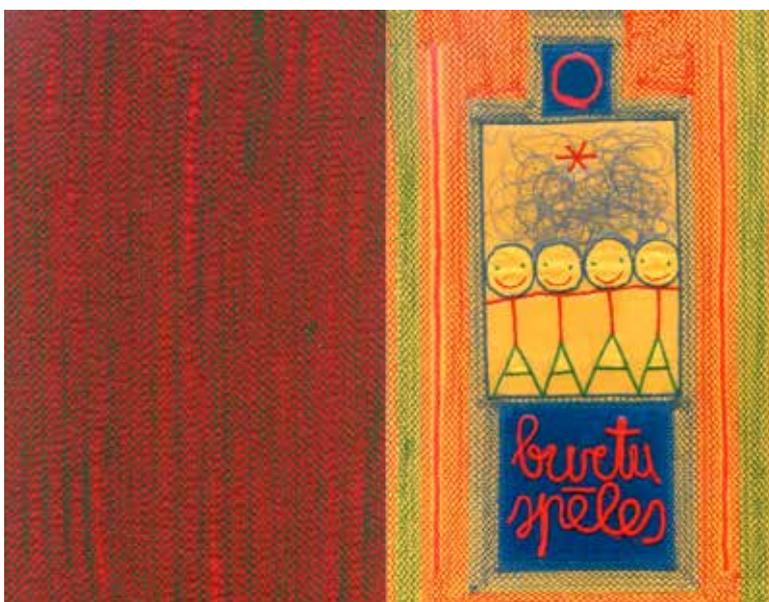
and bad behaviour'. And it's not every day that you can call your mum a slob. You can talk drivel and fool around until the words you have said almost drives [someone] to tears – like Guna Zariņa in 'Conversation'. The poet and the two actors have managed to hold on to the main principle that saves a work of art aimed at children from becoming a formal, outwardly didactic event. They start from the inside – an instantaneous emotional vantage point, a change of subject. From small matters perceived as huge ones. While the actors occasionally physically resort to [movements and reactions] typical for young children, that is not what they rely on. Their starting point is complete honesty and trust in everything that is taking place. And that is why they can fly, they can be carrots, bears and very young teachers – like children in their games. There is a lot of gentle wit in 'Innies and Outies' – like in the poem about marmalade: the way Kaspars Znotiņš delivers it makes one think that he would be able to recite a bus timetable as if it was a piece of sublime love poem. 'Innies and Outies' splash you with joy. In a single moment, you can remember jumping in puddles after a thunderstorm, cooking chestnut soup and the world that was revealed under every stone that had been lying around for a long time. 'Innies and Outies' does not claim that the world is beautiful, rather – that it is good. Or to be more exact – it is what we can or cannot make with our perception of the world. We are better off sticking to an immediate one then.

11. Reproductions of book covers and illustrations



**lekšņa un ārīņa. 2004. Rīga: Liels un mazs. (Innies and Outies) ;
Illustrator Ūna Laukmane**

Zandere's 'lekšņa un ārīņa' (Innies and Outies, 2002) book of poems for children, which has already been re-issued four times, has earned particular acclaim both among her readers and literary critics, winning her four literary awards for children's literature, including the 2003 National Literature Award. In the 2006 survey, conducted by the Ministry of Culture to select one hundred books that represent 'the gold standard of Latvian literature', Inese Zandere's Innies and Outies was the only children's book published in the 21st century that was included in the Top 100.





Līze Analīze un citi slimnīcas skaitāmpanti. 2012.
Rīga: Liels un mazs. (Medicine Maddy and Other Hospital
Nursery Rhymes); Illustrator – Reinis Pētersons

The book offers a dose of positive 'art therapy': by looking at the pictures and reading or listening to the poems, young children can cope better with their fear of getting sick and medical treatments. The illustrations by Reinis Pētersons create a colourful and lively atmosphere, emphasising the element of play and humour in the poems. The hospital, as seen by the artist, is a place where life goes on, a place where there is room for some adventures and friendship.

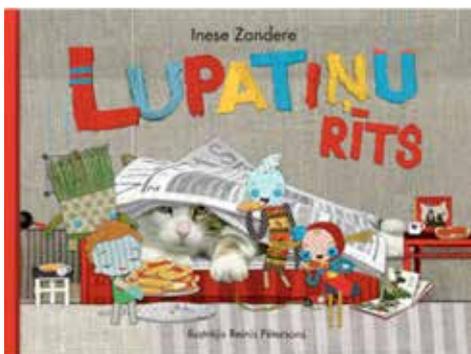




Trīs draugi vienas upes krastā. 2014. Rīga: Liels un mazs.
(Three Friends on the Coast of the Same River);
Illustrator – Juris Petraškevičs

Three friends – a Swedish horse, a German lobster and a Russian crow – decide to build a house together to live with their whole families. However, it turns out that they each have a very different idea of the perfect house. The illustrations help develop the child’s artistic taste; they are childish, playful and joyful, but never simple.





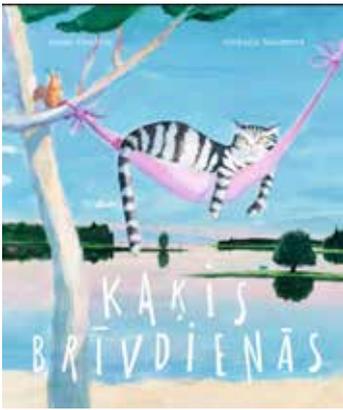
Lupatiņu rīts. 2015. Rīga: Liels un mazs.
(Shammies' Morning) ; Illustrator – Reinis Pētersons

'Shammies' is an animated cross-media project for pre-school children about discovering the world through children's games, fantasies and word plays. The project consists of a TV series, a number of web episodes and printed books. The Shammies are four little curious beings – Sockie, Mitten, Pillow and Hankie – who live in a colourful textile house. They already know how to play, but many exciting things are still to be discovered and learned.

Luckily the dear wise Mr. Cat is always around to help. 'The Shammies' Morning' is the story of the difficult jobs that the Shammies have to face every morning: how do you wake up yourself and awake the light? How do you sit down by the table if the chairs feel like galloping and twirling around? Is it better to behave like a sparrow or like a little goat? The story can be published like three separate picture books: 'How the Shammies Woke Up', 'How the Shammies Behaved' and 'How the Shammies Sat Down by the Table'.

The first book published in the series was 'How the Shammies Swapped' (2011).





**Kaķis brīvdienās. 2015. Rīga: Liels un mazs. (Cat on Vacation) ;
Illustrator – Aleksejs Naumovs**

This collection of fairy tales is a wonderful collaboration between two artists much loved in Latvia. Observations of daily events turn into games, tales and contemporary legends in an easy and effortless way, broadening the child's horizons. The book will suit the whole family: from toddlers just learning to speak, to teenagers who love to speculate about life. The book can almost be seen as an exhibition with paintings of a small town and a metropolis with its suburbs; a sea wind blowing over the rooftops; summer houses; parks; a castle and an opera house – all these are the places where the eleven fairy tales in this collection of stories are set.

