

Queer voices in Czech literature: Often overlooked and marginalized, confident and diverse today



Although queer themes have long been marginalized in Czech literature, there has been growing attention to LGBT identities and experiences since the 1990s. This literature addresses love, identity, self-discovery, and social tensions post-1989—and is increasingly spilling over from subculture into mainstream literary consciousness.

But a look back at literary history shows that queer voices existed in Czech literature much earlier: the first Czech lesbian novella, "Vyhnaní lásky" (Expiles of Love) by **Lida Merlinová**, was published in 1929 and is one of the earliest written works with LGBT themes in the Czech language. Such historical works—some of which were long forgotten or banned—have paved the way for today's authors and remind us that queer narrative storytelling has a long but often overlooked tradition.

Today, queer Czech literature is very diverse—ranging from romance novels and identity narratives to reflective coming-of-age stories. In 2000, **Zuzana Brabcová** published "Rok perel", one of the first Czech novels with an explicitly lesbian theme. Today, titles such as "Pátá minuta je o nás" (**Klára and Eva Pospíšilová**), "Počkej na moře" (**Veronika Opatřilová**), and "Tamařino souhvězdí" (**Anna Musilová**) are among the most popular queer books in the Czech Republic and represent a younger generation of authors who confidently and diversely explore queer themes. **Adam Georgiev** is also an important name when it comes to gay prose. His "gay trilogy" in particular is characterized by explicit depictions of homosexuality and social reflections.

This spring will also see the publication of German translations of recent works by young Czech authors dealing with queer themes. **Marek Torčík's** novel "Was die Zeit nicht nimmt" (translated by Mirko Kraetsch, just published by Anthea Verlag) deals with identity, memory, and the experiences of the gay protagonist in a dysfunctional family and an exclusionary society. The book has been translated into 27 languages and is the most internationally successful Czech novel in decades. **Vratislav Maňák's** "Mit Wittgenstein in der Schwulensaua" (translated by Lena Dorn, just published by Karl Rauch Verlag) examines male homosexuality in contemporary Central Europe in seven texts that combine sociological reportage with literary essay, returning to its sexual roots. **Marita Kelbl's** children's book "Weder Junge noch Mädchen" (translated by Barbra Schnelle, published by Anthea Verlag) explains queer identity without pointing fingers, arouses curiosity, and shows how much power there is in finding words for one's own feelings. In **Antonín Zhořec's** poetry and coloring book "Ich piekše den Sonnensturm" (translated by Markéta Blažejová and Thomas Stefflbauer, published by Wortpalast), readers journey through a ritual of queer physicality in which something ominous lurks behind every act of tenderness, and something deeply tender behind every act of mischief.

Today, the Czech literary scene is showing a growing diversity of voices that deal with LGBT themes in literature—from reflective everyday novels to experimental prose. These narratives not only broaden literary horizons, but also strengthen the visibility of non-heteronormative realities of life in literary discourse. Literary festivals, book fairs, and queer culture weeks in Prague, Brno, and Olomouc also regularly offer panels on the topics of queer writing and LGBTQ literature. In Prague, Prague Pride runs a queer library where LGBTQ literature can be borrowed.

As part of the **Leipzig Book Fair**, you will have the opportunity to experience Czech queer literature live on Saturday, March 21, from 6:45 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at Schaubühne Lindenfels. The event "QUEER CENTRAL EUROPE: Bodies, Words, Saunas" takes you on a journey that begins in Přerov in Moravia with **Marek Torčík**. It continues with **Marita Kelbl's** intimate self-discovery accompanied by the Czech-Ukrainian poetry of **Iryna Zahladko** and the poetic texts of **Antonín Zhořec**, and ends in gay saunas in Central European metropolises with **Vratislav Maňák**.

Your Guest of Honour Czechia press team
Annika Grützner, Nathalie Weber and Mathias Voigt

Please contact us if you would like further information, review copies, or if we can arrange interviews for you!

Events

26.02.2026, 7 pm
Reading & discussion with Petr Borkovec and the translators Lena Dorn and Sophia Marzolf
Literaturhaus Oberpfalz, Sulzbach-Rosenberg

07.03.2026 - 14.03.2026
LUSTR on tour: Scratchy lines, missing bubbles – Exhibition on contemporary Czech comics
Hochschule Luzern

21.03.2026, 7 pm
Reading & discussion: Miřenka Čechová – Tote Schwäne tanzen nicht
Tanzstudio der LUISE, München

Book tips

Petr Šesták: „Ausgebrannt“
(Parasitenpresse, translated by Christina Frankenberg, released on 02.02.2026)

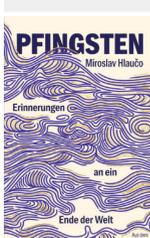


"Ausgebrannt" is the story of a bicycle courier who navigates his way through the madness of traffic every day to deliver food to customers on time. He weaves around obstacles, ducks away from insults, dishes out some himself, and constantly reflects on the world. In the civil war of the streets, he wages an uncompromising battle for his idea of justice, resorting to increasingly extreme measures.

The book is also a text about injustice, not only on the streets, but also in the world of work. About the unfair distribution of wealth and power in our society. At the same time, it is a pamphlet denouncing the fetishization of the car as a symbol of progress, independence, power, and the privatization of the world. All cars are allegorical, after all.

You can find further information on the book [here](#).

Miroslav Hlaučo: „Pfungsten. Erinnerungen an ein Ende der Welt“
(Anthea Verlag, translated by Raija Hauck, release on 24.02.2026)



At the beginning of the 20th century, the remote mountain village of St. Georg is a place where miracles are part of everyday life: people talk to saints, walk on water, and whistle stones in half. But slowly, the inhabitants begin to sense that the time of great technological change has come, which will replace their traditional miracles. Odysseus, a native of the village who was previously believed to be dead, returns and helps the village prepare for the impending upheavals. However, excitement is brought about by an administrative inspection in the form of Franz Rechitz from the capital. While the young imperial notary St. Georg wants to lead the country "properly" into the new century, the miracles that still work must be kept secret from him.

Hlaučo plays with motifs of magical realism. With a love of detail and subtle, sometimes dry humor, he tells a polyphonic tale of a world on the threshold of modernity and the great narratives of the past.

You can find further information on the book [here](#).

Anna Beata Hábllová: „Die Schicht“
(Geparden Verlag, translated by Julia Miesenböck, release on 01.03.2026)



Young Petra's life is anything but exciting. Day after day, she sits at the checkout in the supermarket, scanning items, stocking shelves, or sorting out wilted vegetables. Petra escapes into daydreams, her thoughts turning to her true passion: painting. art. When a picture she paints on behalf of a colleague turns out particularly well, Petra becomes obsessed: she will never let anyone else have this work of art. The well-known Czech author Anna Beata Hábllová sensitively addresses relevant sociological and cultural issues: undignified working conditions, self-discovery in a consumerist world, social class differences. "Die Schicht" is a novel that relies on the power of language, imagination, and subtle storytelling.

You can find further information on the book [here](#).

Ondřej Cikán: „Die Kinder der Rjyun“
(Limbus Verlag, release on 04.03.2026)



"Sing me everything at once," Cikán asks his muse, and this request sets the tone: the collection "Die Kinder von Rjyun" is a fragmentary modern epic that encompasses the past, present, and future, as well as the worlds of the living, the dead, and the supernatural. Light-footed, elegant, and eloquent, the poet draws a line from the continued existence of Ukraine and the free world to antiquity and the Japanese Edo period, when a sorcerer named Puthon was up to his old tricks—as he still is today. Reminiscences of Japanese manga serve to strengthen confidence.

You can find further information on the book [here](#).

Hans Thill (editor): „Die Seele des Nebels. Gedichte aus Tschechien“
(Wunderhorn Verlag, release on 09.03.2026)



The anthology presents recent, young, and young-at-heart voices that once again focus on poetic speech, ranging from concrete poetry to the finest and most sensual reflections on our present. Here, the night is "full of invisible light" (Tereza Binová), faces appear "in the circle of the pair of eyes" (Petr Váša), one "whispers in the circle of floating snakes" (Vojtěch Váček), the "millipede as a powerful predator" (Tereza Binová). At times, however, it is also – conversely – a "fenced-in sea" (Daria Gordová). Pavel Novotný's sound poems, which are loud in the truest sense of the word, are exciting, as are Petr Váša's "physical" texts, in which it can happen that "the wheels of locomotives tumble."

You can find further information on the book [here](#).

About the Guest of Honour

Czechia is the Guest of Honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2026. The Guest of Honour appearance is being organised by the Moravian Library in Brno and its Czech Literature Centre section. It is being financed by public funds from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and is implemented with the support of PPF Foundation. Partner of the Year of Czech Culture and Guest of Honour is Deutsch-Tschechischer Zukunftsfonds / Česko-německý fond budoucnosti. The Frankfurt Book Fair, which will take place from October 7 to 11, 2026, is the world's largest trade fair for publishing. The Guest of Honour presents its literature and culture at the fair, in the city of Frankfurt, and at many other locations in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Czechia's Guest of Honour appearance is themed "Czechia – A Country on the Coast."

<https://czechia2026.com>



Partners



Press contact

Presse Contact Guest of Honour Czechia
Annika Grützner, Nathalie Weber and Mathias Voigt

Literaturtest
c/o The Base Berlin ONE
Pestalozzistraße 5-8
13187 Berlin

Tel. +49 (0)30-531 40 70-27
Fax +49 (0)30-531 40 70-99
tschechien@literaturtest.de
<http://literaturtest.de>

[Impressum](#)
[Datenschutz](#)

LITERATURTEST

