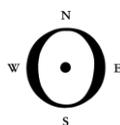


# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



BALTIC CENTRE *for* WRITERS  
*and* TRANSLATORS

Org nr 834001-6776



## Introduction

In 2017 the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, pursuing its aim to support creative process and provide authors and translators international cultural environment, time and space to write, read, translate, study, conduct research, give readings and become part of the vibrant and diverse literary context, served as a work and meeting place for a broad international community of 213 writers and translators from 26 countries.

In 2017 BCWT also put special attention to Russian new literature and its authors as well to the Russian-Swedish cultural exchange. A translators' workshop in July, a writers' conference in October and increased Russian writers and translators' presence in the international residency environment through the year was a result of this intensified exchange that laid ground for further cooperation.

Also, the quest to convey the centre's narrative out to the world and the keen work to maintain the centre as an active international cultural actor continued. All those who work with and at the Centre, its intellectual owners and creators, i.e. authors and translators, and those who take care of the "business", are keen to cherish the centre's inner essence and meaning - to be a home for literary creation, authors' and translators' ongoing workshop, an inspiring international environment and a place for significant meetings and learning.

Through the year many groups and individuals visited the Centre to get closer acquainted with its activity and work conditions.

BCWT's programs often become the first acquaintance with a certain authorship or a translator's work for the Swedish audience. It was particularly exciting to arrange talks about ongoing writing project, the one writer works on while staying at the centre or on a recently published book, which to some extent came to life during the residency.

## BCWT is a haven for work and a forum for exchange



*“Building bridges and breaking barriers”*

BCWT is a work place and meeting point for writers and translators, open for applicants from all over the world, though residency priority is given to literary professionals from the countries in the Baltic Sea region and Scandinavia. The main criteria for being granted a residency at BCWT is the professional character of literary work, t. i. a writer/translator’s works have been published at an established publishing, either in paper or digital form. An applicant is asked to send a CV, list of publications, description of the project to be worked on.

**During 2017 the BCWT hosted 213 residing guests from 26 countries.** They could devote themselves to a literary project of their own, staying in average 2-5 weeks on a residency bursary, t. i. free of charge, and with 24-hours full access to all BCWT’s facilities. Furthermore, German Translation Fund, Swedish Writers’ Fund, Swedish institute, Estonian Writers’ Union, Finland Swedish Writers’ Association, Norwegian Writers Union, et al granted a number of individual allocated bursaries, meant for a work term at the BCWT. Most of the residing guests were authors and translators of poetry, prose, plays, screenplays, film scripts, libretto, essays, children books, non-fiction within humanities, though occasionally cultural administrators, publishers and other guests working in the literature field stayed in connection to a shorter project or meetings. BCWT actively facilitated dialogue between residents, as well as visibility of Centre’s international activity. The Centre extensively served as a place for readings, Open Houses, film-screenings, meetings, talks, receptions, mingles, dinners and study visits.

Serving and promoting the BCWT as an international meeting place the organization has been investing significant efforts into creating good working environment and welcoming conditions to develop professional and personal contacts and networking. Dinners, tea-hours, combined with talks and presentations of work-in-progress contribute to deeper acquaintance with each other’s writing, culture, backgrounds, experiences. To inspire the guests by extraordinary historical and natural richness of the island, to create more opportunities for international dialogue-on-road a great number of excursions in Visby and around Gotland were arranged for residing guests and participants of the projects. A great number of presentations of the BCWT’s activity were done for booked and drop-in study visits to BCWT’s premises.

## Statistics

<b>Unique guests</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Countries</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Days</b>	<b>2962</b>

	Days		Guests	
Sweden	622	21,00%	60	28,17%
Germany	273	9,22%	16	7,51%
Russia	260	8,78%	20	9,39%
Poland	249	8,41%	13	6,10%
Finland	232	7,83%	18	8,45%
Belarus	193	6,52%	7	3,29%
Norway	172	5,81%	12	5,63%
Estonia	166	5,60%	9	4,23%
Iceland	149	5,03%	6	2,82%
Ukraine	132	4,46%	5	2,35%
Denmark	107	3,61%	7	3,29%
France	80	2,70%	17	7,98%
Lithuania	57	1,92%	5	2,35%
Netherlands	54	1,82%	2	0,94%
Spain	34	1,15%	1	0,47%
Latvia	30	1,01%	3	1,41%
Bulgaria	28	0,95%	1	0,47%
Turkey	25	0,84%	2	0,94%
Israel	24	0,81%	1	0,47%
Greece	19	0,64%	1	0,47%
Czech republic	17	0,57%	1	0,47%
Ireland	15	0,51%	1	0,47%
Switzerland	14	0,47%	1	0,47%
Serbia	5	0,17%	1	0,47%
Italy	4	0,14%	2	0,94%
Slovenia	1	0,03%	1	0,47%

<b>Profession</b>	Guests	
Writers	106	49,77%
Translators	79	37,09%
Other *	28	13,15%

\*Playwrights, cultural administrators, journalists, publishers, etc.

<b>Gender</b>		
Female	143	67,14%
Male	70	32,86%

## Highlights of the year 2017

### Baltic Writers' Council

*28-30 April.* Baltic Writers' Council, representing 21 literary organizations, 12 countries and 17 000 members had its annual general assembly in cooperation with and at the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators in Visby.

### Workshop for the Young Russian translators from Swedish

*10-16 July.* Translation workshop for Russian translators from Swedish. During a week twelve translators discussed and analysed texts of the Swedish authors they've worked with. The seminar finalized the series of seminars the group attended at the Swedish Embassy in Moscow. Participants: Tatiana Gorokhova, Valentina Melnikova, Maria Skudarnova, Oksana Abramova, Anna Ogneva, Alla Gusarova, Oleg Gubetskov, Maria Ludkovskaja, Alexandra Polivanova. The project was carried out in cooperation with the Swedish Embassy in Moscow and funded by the Swedish Arts Council.



Solving linguistic and intellectual puzzles wherever on Gotland they were...



## French Translators' Seminar

*1-3 September.* Celebrating ten years of translators seminars in Paris under the guidance of Elena Balzamo the jubilee seminar at BCWT gathered all together 23 participants. The French and Belgian translators from Swedish listened to a linguist Mall Stålhammar from Gothenburg University talking about Swedish language's recent development and translation problems, to a publisher Johanna Daehli from Sekwa on today's publishing, to an literary agent Linda Altrov Berg from Norstedt's Agency about the work of an agent and Swedish literature in French translation, to a Swedish translator Anna Säflund-Orstadius about condition of translators in Sweden. The seminar was arranged in cooperation with and funded by the Swedish Arts Council.



Participants: Virginie Perrotte Sourieau, Anna Marek, Anne Karila, Aude Pasquier, Benoît Fourcroy, Clara Rouhani, Elisabet Brouillard, Esther Sermage, Isabelle Piette, Johanna Chatellard Schapira, Laurence Mennerich, Marie Valera, Marina Heide, Marie Valera, Sophie Jouffreau, Sophie Refle Miyashita, Marianne Hoang. Under the guidance of **Elena Balzamo**

Participating also:

Susanne Bergström Larsson, international literature exchange, Swedish Arts Council, Mall Stålhammar, scholar, speaker,

Linda Altrov Berg, literary agent, speaker, Johanna Daehli, publisher, speaker,

Anna Säflund-Orstadius, translator from French into Swedish, speaker

### **Meeting of the Russian and Swedish Writers**

*20 - 24 October.* Conference of Russian and Swedish writers. Swedish and Russian writers as well as translators and representatives from the Swedish Embassy in Moscow and BCWT talked about conditions for writing and literature, how to assist each other if freedom of expression is threatened, how to cooperate and promote exchange and translation and other issues. The internal discussion proceeded into a public one about literature in Russia today and readings by the Russian writers, moderated by Mikael Nydahl. The conference was carried out in cooperation with the Swedish writers union and Swedish Embassy in Moscow and with the financial support from Swedish Arts Council, Swedish Academy and Swedish Institute.

### **New Russian-language Literature - Public Programme at Almedal Library**

How is the Russian literature today in the society that used to be defined as authoritarian? What subjects does it deal with? How does it look upon its own role and its possibilities?

The Russian writers came to the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators to meet their Swedish colleagues and during three conference days discuss writers' situation, freedom of speech in Russia and Sweden today and how writers can cooperate and promote exchange and translations.

#### *From Russia*

Writers of fiction, essays, journalists, critics born and grown up in different parts of Russia and even Belarus, though all writing in Russian:

**Sergey Lebedev, Alisa Ganieva, Liza Aleksandrova-Zorina, Aleksandr Filipenko**

As well as translators and interpreters **Anna Ogneva** and **Maria Skudarnova**

*From Sweden:*

**Gunnar Ardelius**, Writer and chairman of the Swedish Writers' Union.

**Maria Zennström**, writer and critic,

**Sara Mannheimer**, Poet, writer

**Khashayar Naderehvandi**, poet, writer, and literary critic.

**Janina Orlov**, literary translator working mainly from Russian and Finnish into Swedish.

**Mikael Nydahl**, translator from Russian, primarily of contemporary fiction and poetry. Founder of and publisher at Ariel Publishers

Participated also:

**Stefan Ingvarsson** Cultural counselor, Embassy of Sweden, Moscow

**Lena Pasternak**, Director, Baltic Center for Writers' and Translators, Visby

**Ann Wikström**, Project manager, Swedish Writers' Union



On 23 October the writers gave a public talk. They also read from their works, in original and translations into Swedish. Moderator: the publisher and translator **Mikael Nydahl**. Arranged by Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, Almedal Library and Swedish Writers' Union.



Liza Aleksandrova-Zorina



Alisa Ganieva in Almedal Library



Sasha Filipenko in Almedalen

## Public events, school visit, study visits and meetings in selection

During her March residency at BCWT actor, playwright and spoken word artist **Kate Pendry** gave a one-woman live show **Human Tsunami: Trump**

In January 2017 **Kate Pendry**, born in London, residing in Oslo, travelled to Washington DC with a film crew to record the inauguration of Donald Trump, and its aftermath.

Human Tsunami: Trump is a show resulted from that journey.

Script: Kate Pendry.



Kate Pendry



Illustration by Steffan André Nilsen

*13 maj.* The Swiss writer and filmmaker **Hildegard Elisabeth Keller**, in residency at BCWT gave a talk about Alfonsina Storni, one of the most important Argentinian modernist writers.

*24 August.* Participation in **Gotland Art Week** with a literary programme in cooperation with DBW.

Locations: Botanical Garden and BCWT

*18 september.* The Polish translator **Agnieszka Pokojnska** visited for the second time Desideria Gymnasium in Visby and spoke with the students about poetry and made poetry translation exercises

## Visits

*September and October* were months of intensified flow of study visits and meetings. The newly appointed director of the Nordic Council of Ministers office in Riga, Stefan Eriksson and the staff, a film and media committee of the city council of Åland were few of the groups visited the centre for ideas, information exchange and discussion of future collaboration.

Lena visits Estonian Writers' Union in Tallinn and attended its jubilee in Tartu. She also visited the Writers' residency in Käsmu, 70 km east from Tallinn.

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## Grants

BCWT in cooperation with Belarusian and Swedish Writers Union and with the financial support from Sida hosted four writers from Belarus.

German Translators' Fund awarded bursaries to a number of German translators, and Estonian Writers Union to Estonian writers for a residency at BCWT.

Supported by the Swedish Institute and in cooperation with the cultural association "Krokodil" in Belgrade BCWT hosted a Serbian writer who was translated and introduced to the Swedish audience.

BCWT's chairman Olle Jansson donated, as year before, his chair remuneration of 10000 SEK for a grant conferred to the Ukrainian Vasyl Lozynskyi Arturas Valionis

## *How BCWT is being governed and managed*

### *Members and founders*

of the non-profit organization BCWT (Östersjöns författar- och översättarcentrum) are Swedish Writers' Union, Gotland County Administration and Region Gotland. The members appoint three representatives each to the Board of Representatives and nominate Swedish members to the Board of the BCWT.

### *Representatives*

Gotland County: Britt Silfvergren, Hanna Johansson

Region Gotland: Lilian Edwards, Eleonore Hemström, Annette Glover / Deputies: Bo Björkman, Eva Gahnström, Mats Sundin

Swedish Writers' Union: Lena Karlin, Katarina Kieri, Ing-Britt Björklund

Annual Meeting of the Representatives was held on **8 June**.

### ***Board of the BCWT***

is composed of a Chairman and six members and six deputies who are appointed by the Representatives on the annual meeting and the Board internally appoints its Deputy Chairman. Of the Board's six members, two are nominated by the Swedish Writers' Union, two - by the County Administration of Gotland, of whom one represents Uppsala University Campus Gotland, one member is to be nominated by Region Gotland. The Baltic Writers' Council nominate two members representing the foreign Writers' and Translators Unions for a two-year period.

### ***Members of the Board***

Olle Jansson, chairman, Campus Gotland Uppsala university

Katarina Krusell, Region Gotland

Thomas N. Persson, Gotland County Administration

Janina Orlov / Stefan Ingvarsson, Swedish Writers' Union.

Baltic Writers' Council:

Heidi von Wright, Finland's Swedish Writers Association;

Mudite Treimane, Latvian Writers Union;

Yuliya Tsimafeyeva, Belarus Writers' Union

Deputies: Anna Hrdlicka, Region Gotland

Cecilia Hansson, Viveka Sjögren, Swedish Writers' Union

Baltic Writers' Council:

Liutauras Degesys, Lithuanian Writers' Union

Hannu Niklander, Finnish Writers' Union

Malin Kivelä, Finland's Swedish Writers Association

### ***Meetings of the Board***

During the year 2017 the Board held meetings on 8 June and 24 October - in Visby

### ***Baltic Writers' Council - BWC***

The Baltic Writers' and Translators' Council (BWC) represents 21 literary organizations, 12 countries and approximately 17.000 members around the Baltic region and beyond.

The Council which was founded during the legendary authors and translators' Baltic Sea voyage in 1992 is a multinational, non-profit, non-governmental organization which promotes the freedom of expression, democracy and the free flow of ideas and information between the writers' and translators' organizations. It also aims to support and inspire BCWT activities. The BCWT is the headquarters for BWC, which nominates two members and two deputies to BCWT's Board. The chairperson of Baltic Writers' Council is **Kazimiera Astratoviene** (chair of Lithuanian Translators Organisation)

BWC had its annual General Assembly on 28 - 30 April at BCWT.

### *The Office*

has been open every week-day 8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

### **Employees:**

Lena Pasternak - director

Patrik Muskos - managing assistant, January - April.

September - December: project employment

Amanda Karlsson - household, cleaning, administration

Services:

Accountant: Gustav Söderdahl

### *BCWT's activity is financed by :*

Swedish Arts Council and Region

Gotland

The projects were financed by Swedish

Arts Council, Swedish Academy,

Swedish Institute

*BCWT would like to thank international, national and local organizations and authorities for collaboration and on-going inspirational dialogue*

To maintain and develop the activity of BCWT is only possible thanks to support and vital relations with institutions, organizations and individuals in many countries.

Special thanks for 2017 go to

Swedish Arts Council, Swedish Institute, County Administration on Gotland, Region Gotland, Swedish Writers' Union, Almedalen Library Visby, Swedish Embassy in Moscow, Übersetzerhaus Looren in Switzerland, Ventspils International Writers and Translators House, Baltic Writers' Council, KLYS, Publishing house *Natur och Kultur*, Baltic Art Center, Visby International Composers Centre, Estonian Writers' Union, Belarus Writers' Association, Uppsala University and Campus Gotland Uppsala University, , German Translators' Fund, Network Fabrique Traducteurs Europeene, network RECIT - Réseau Européen des Centres Internationaux de Traducteurs littéraires, Anna Lindh Foundation, Network *Kulturskaparna*, Swedish PEN, Film on Gotland, Bergman Estates, Mirjam Tally, composer

BCWT would also like to thank all writers and translators who came to stay and work at BCWT in 2017, fueling the Centre with new visions, vibrant creativity and intellectual energy and content.

Thank you all!

Visby, May 2018

Olle Jansson

Janina Orlov

Katarina Krusell

Stefan Ingvarsson

Thomas Persson

Yuliya Tsimafeyeva

Mudite Treimane

## Ursel Allenstein

Ursel Allenstein översätter skönlitteratur från danska, norska och svenska till sitt modersmål tyska. I unga år väcktes intresset för skandinavisk litteratur då hon slukade böcker av den isländska författaren Halldór Laxness. Drömmarna tog en nordlig riktning.

Ursel Allenstein translates Danish, Norwegian and Swedish fiction into German, her native language. She started to engage in Scandinavian literature at an early age, when gulping books by the Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness. Her dreams took a northern direction.



- Redan under första läsningen av manuset som jag håller på att översätta nu fick jag känslan av att flytta in i ett rum befolkat av karaktärerna. De blir mina vänner på sätt och vis, säger hon.

Vi sitter i det bleka förmiddagsljuset i Östersjöns författar- och översättarcentrums bibliotek. Från köket på nedervåningen hörs ett klirrande ljud av bestick mot porslin, där förberedelserna för en utflykt med picknick i februarisnön är i full gång.

- Det som är så bra här är att man inte har några fasta ramar, inga förpliktelser som kommer utifrån. Om jag vaknar klockan fyra på morgonen kan jag gå upp och börja jobba, säger Ursel Allenstein.

Det är fjärde gången som hon reser från hemstaden Hamburg till Visby. Första vistelsen på Östersjöns

- Already during the first reading of the script that I am currently translating, I got the feeling of moving into a room inhabited by the characters. They become my friends in a way, she says.

We are sitting in the pale midmorning light in the library of the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators. We can hear a clinking sound of cutlery and porcelain from the kitchen downstairs, where the other guests are preparing a picnic excursion in the February snowscape.

- What is so good here is that you have no fixed schedule, no obligations coming from outside. If I wake up at four o'clock in the morning, I can get up and start working, says Ursel Allenstein.

This is the fourth time she travels from her hometown

författar- och översättarcentrum var för tio år sedan, då hon fick ett stipendium av Deutscher Übersetzerfonds, tyska översättarfonden.

- Förra gången jag besökte Centret översatte jag en roman av Christina Hesselholdt. En annan dansk författare, som var här samtidigt som mig, hade just läst boken som jag höll på att översätta. Jag kunde fråga honom om allt möjligt, vilket var till stor hjälp i arbetet, säger hon.

Ursel Allenstein studerade skandinavistik i Frankfurt och Köpenhamn. När hon upptäckte att många böcker som hon läste och fascinerades av inte fanns på tyska, började hon intressera sig för översättning. Från början tänkte hon enbart översätta från danska, men numera är det lika många svenska och norska romaner som hon tar sig an.

- På den tiden, under sent 90-tal, tyckte jag att litteraturen var så spännande i Danmark, med punkromaner och andra experimentella böcker av författare som Helle Helle, Christina Hesselholdt och Naja Marie Aidt, säger hon.

Eftersom Norge är gästland på bokmässan i Frankfurt nästa år, 2019, satsar tyska förlag på norsk litteratur nu. Under månaden som Ursel har tillbringat på Östersjöns författar- och översättarcentrum har hon arbetat med översättningen av den norska romanen "Max, Mischa og Tetoffensiven" av Johan Harstad.

- En stor del av boken utspelar sig i en lägenhet i New York, där tre konstnärer i olika åldrar flyttar in: en pianist, en dramatiker och en bildkonstnär. Varje gång jag börjar översätta, känns det som att jag stiger över tröskeln till den lägenheten och bor där tätt inpå karaktärerna, säger hon.

En typisk arbetsdag i Visby försöker hon gå upp när det ljusnar. Då ger hon sig ut och springer, längs Hälsans stig norrut eller ner till hamnen och vidare söderut mot Högklint om hon vill ta en längre tur.

- Det är ett sätt att rensa och ordna tankarna i huvudet. Om det finns något som stressar mig, lämnar jag kvar den känslan ute i naturen. När jag kommer tillbaka kan jag börja arbeta.

Arbetet, som kräver absolut koncentration, är ensamt vid skrivbordet i rummet eller på något café i stan, men gemenskapen finns där när man väljer den.

- Vi äter ofta middag tillsammans här på kvällen. Man har alltid sällskap om man vill, men det finns inga krav.

Visby sockenbastu vid kallbadhuset lockar flera gånger i veckan.

- Man känner sig så skandinavisk när man badar i havet den här årstiden, så pånyttfödd när man kommer upp från det kalla vattnet, säger hon entusiastiskt.

För att hålla språken levande läser hon mycket och försöker resa så ofta hon har möjlighet. En sommar

of Hamburg to Visby on the Swedish island of Gotland. Her first stay at the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators was ten years ago, when she received a scholarship from the Deutscher Übersetzerfonds, German Translation Fund.

- Last time I visited the Centre, I translated a novel by Christina Hesselholdt. Another Danish author, who was here at the same time as me, had just read the book that I was translating. I could ask him about anything possible which was very helpful in my work, she says.

Ursel Allenstein studied Scandinavistics in Frankfurt and Copenhagen. When she discovered that many books she was reading and was fascinated by were not translated into German yet, she started to take interest in translation. In the beginning, she thought she would only translate from Danish, but nowadays she translates as many Swedish and Norwegian novels as Danish.

- At that time, in the late 1990's, I found the literature to be so exciting in Denmark, with experimental books by authors like Helle Helle, Christina Hesselholdt and Naja Marie Aidt, she says.

Since Norway is the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2019, German publishers are now focusing in Norwegian literature. During the month that Ursel has spent at the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, she has been working on the translation of the Norwegian novel "Max, Mischa og Tetoffensiven" ("Max, Mischa and the Tet Offensive") by Johan Harstad.

- A great part of the book is taking place in an apartment in New York, where three artists of different ages have moved in: a pianist, a playwright and a visual artist. Each time I start translating, it feels just like I enter that apartment, living there close to the characters, she says.

A typical working day in Visby she tries to get up with the first morning light. Then she goes out running along "Hälsans stig", a running track north, or down to the harbour and further south towards the rock of "Högklint", if she is feeling for a longer tour.

- It's a way to clear and organize your thoughts. If there is something that stresses me, I leave that feeling behind there in nature. When I am back from my jogging tour, I can start working.

The work, which requires absolute concentration, is lonely at the desk in the room or at any café in town, but the social moments shared with the other guests at the centre are there whenever you choose it.

- We often eat dinner together here in the evening. You always have company if you want to, but there are no demands.

She is going to the sauna by the sea in Visby several times a week.

- You feel so Scandinavian when you take a bath in the

hyrde hon en lägenhet i Stockholm och satt och jobbade där, ett sätt att lyssna in språket på gator och torg. Hemma i Hamburg tittar hon på svensk tv, särskilt litteraturmagasinet Babel, och lyssnar på P1 medan hon lagar mat.

- Jag läser även mycket tysk samtidslitteratur för att underhålla och utveckla mitt modersmål. Klassikerna spar jag till semestern, säger hon med ett leende.

Den första kontakten med skandinavisk litteratur var böcker som hon hittade i sin mammas bokhylla i barndomshemmet.

- Mina föräldrar var medlemmar i en bokklubb där man skulle beställa några böcker om året. Om man inte beställt någon fick man hem ett paket ändå. En gång skickade de romanen "Själavärd vid Jökeln" av den isländska författaren och Nobelpristagaren Halldór Laxness, som jag började läsa och drömde om att kunna läsa på originalspråket, berättar hon och fortsätter:

- Jag lärde mig fornordiska på universitetet, så jag kan läsa de isländska sagorna, men jag behärskar inte modern isländska.

På universitetet hade Ursel en lärare som skulle ge ut en antologi med samtida skandinavisk litteratur, i samarbete med det anrika förlaget Fischer i Frankfurt. Han frågade några studenter om de ville pröva att översätta något och Ursel fick översätta en novell av Christina Hesselholdt.

- Det var ett slags uppvaknande, ett spännande uppdrag som även innebar att jag fick ha kontakt med författaren, berättar hon.

Sedan dess har hon arbetat som översättare och även som lektor, då hon läser manus på uppdrag av olika förlag och rekommenderar dem för utgivning. En av de svenska romaner som hon rekommenderat är "Drömfakulteten" av Sara Stridsberg, som hon sedan fick översätta fler romaner av och som blivit en av hennes favoritförfattare.

Som ett stöd och en inspiration i arbetet träffar Ursel Allenstein regelbundet andra översättare och diskuterar texter med dem i forum på nätet.

- När man fastnar och inte hittar en lösning, så hjälper det bara att prata om det, menar hon och ger ett exempel:

- Igår arbetade jag med en scen i Johan Harstads roman då en sparv dör. Det står att den ligger där på marken och andas pipande. Jag kunde inte föreställa mig det ljudet för jag tänkte att småfåglar dör stilla. Därför tog jag kontakt med en översättarkollega och hon kände en veterinär som kunde bekräfta att de verkligen låter så som författaren gestaltat det. Hon kunde beskriva ljudet, något som gjorde det lättare för mig att översätta scenen.

Det är inte ovanligt att hon hittar fel när hon översätter,

sea at this time of the year, so reborn when you get up from the ice cold water, she says enthusiastically.

In order to keep the languages alive, she reads a lot and is trying to travel as often as she can. One summer she rented an apartment in Stockholm and was working there, an opportunity to listen to the language surrounding her. At home in Hamburg she is watching Swedish TV, especially Babel, a TV show about literature, and listening to the Swedish radio while cooking.

- I also read a lot of German contemporary literature to maintain and develop my mother tongue. But I save the classics for holidays, she says smiling.

Her first contact with Scandinavian literature was the books that she found in her mother's bookshelf in the childhood home.

- My parents were members of a book club where you would order some books a year. If you did not order some, they sent you a package anyway. Once they sent the novel "Kristnihald undir Jökli" ("Under the Glacier") by the Icelandic author and Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness, whom I began to read and dreamed of being able to read in the original language, she tells me and continues:

- I learned Old Scandinavian at the university so I can read the Icelandic sagas, but I do not master modern Icelandic.

At the university, Ursel had a teacher who was going to edit an anthology of contemporary Scandinavian literature, in collaboration with the distinguished Fischer Publishing House in Frankfurt. He asked some students if they wanted to try to translate something and Ursel was assigned to translate a short story by Christina Hesselholdt.

- It was kind of awakening, an exciting task that also meant that I came in contact with the author, she says.

Since then she has worked as a translator and also as a consultant, reading scripts on behalf of various publishers and recommending them for publishing. One of the Swedish novels that she has recommended is "Drömfakulteten" ("The Faculty of Dreams") by Sara Stridsberg. Since then Ursel has translated more novels by her, and Stridsberg became one of her favorite writers.

As a support and inspiration at work, Ursel Allenstein regularly meets other translators and discusses different kinds of texts with them in chat rooms online.

- When you get stuck and do not find a solution, it helps just talking about it, she says and gives me an example:

- Yesterday I worked with a scene in Johan Harstad's novel, when a sparrow is dying. He is writing that it is lying on the ground, breathing with a wheezy sound. I could not imagine that sound because I thought that

särskilt i deckare som hon ibland får i oredigerat skick först och där alla i utgivningsprocessen jobbar snabbt. Hon frågar alltid författaren när hon är osäker.

- Först måste man fråga sig om det är en experimentell roman: en experimentell författare hade kanske skrivit att den här sparven sjunger eller dansar, men Johan Harstad skriver för det mesta realistiskt.

Översättningen sker i flera omgångar. Den första omgången handlar om att hitta språkliga kreativa lösningar, och att försöka återskapa rytmen och stämningen från originaltexten. I den andra omgången gäller det att anpassa texten till tysk meningsbyggnad, på ställen där hon inte redan gjort det, ett slags "ombyggnadsarbete".

- Sedan följer två omgångar då jag skrivit ut manuset på papper. I den ena jämför jag texten med originalet: Har jag glömt en mening? Finns det något som jag kanske har missförstått? Slutligen är det dags för finslipningen, då jag läser texten som om den vore skriven direkt på tyska: Låter det som en översättning så måste jag jobba vidare med den.

Ursel Allenstein har fått flera utmärkelser för sitt arbete, bland annat Hamburgs översättarpris för sin översättning av den danska författaren Kim Leines novellsamling "Tunu".

- Jag har också fått ett pris från Europäische Übersetzer-Kollegium i Straelen för min översättning av den norska författaren Kjersti Annesdatter Skomsvolds roman "Jo fortere jeg går, jo mindre er jeg". En gång när jag kom hit till centret och såg namnen på besökarna, som står skrivna på en tavla utanför köket, såg jag att Kjersti också var här. Det var ett roligt sammanträffande, berättar hon.

När vi ses för intervjun är det bara några dagar kvar tills Ursel ska resa tillbaka till Hamburg och hon ser tillbaka på produktiva och upplevelserika veckor i Visby.

- Redan första dagen här, då jag slog mig ned vid mitt skrivbord, var det som att lugnet och koncentrationen kom tillbaka. Många gånger kan det vara svårt att hitta den i vardagen hemma, säger hon, vänder blicken mot de stora fönstren och tillägger:

- Det är något med den öppna horisonten, att man är på en ö, som gör att man kommer in i en alldeles speciell stämning.

**Text och foto: Maria Molin**

small birds die still. Therefore, I contacted a translator colleague and she knew a vet who could confirm that they really sound like that. She could describe the sound, which made it easier for me to translate the scene.

Sometimes she finds mistakes while translating, especially in crime novels, which she sometimes gets unedited at first and where everyone in the chain of production is working very fast. She always asks the author when she is unsure.

- First, one has to ask if it's an experimental novel: an experimental writer might have written that this sparrow sings or dances, but Johan Harstad mostly writes realistically.

She works with the translation in several different readings. The first reading is about finding linguistic creative solutions, and trying to recreate the rhythm and spirit of the original text. The second reading is a matter of adapting the text to German sentence building, where it has not already been done, a kind of "remodeling".

- Then I print the script on paper and compare the translation with the original: Have I forgotten a sentence? Is there something I might have misunderstood? Finally I read the text as if it were written directly in German: If it sounds like a translation, I have to work further on it.

Ursel Allenstein has received several awards for her work, including Hamburg's translator award for her translation of the Danish author Kim Leine's collection of short stories, "Tunu".

- I have also received a prize from the Europäische Übersetzer-Kollegium in Straelen for my translation of the Norwegian novelist Kjersti Annesdatter Skomsvold's book "Jo fortere jeg går, jo mindre er jeg" ("The Faster I Walk, the Smaller I Am"). Once when I came to the centre and read the names of the guests, who are written on a board outside the kitchen, I saw that Kjersti also was here. It was a pleasant coincidence, she says.

When we meet for the interview, it's only a few days left until Ursel is going back to Hamburg and she looks back upon some productive and exciting weeks in Visby.

- On my first day here, when I settled down at my desk, it was like the calm and concentration came back to me. Many times it can be difficult to find it in everyday life at home, she says, looking out through the large windows, adding:

- There is something with the open horizon, that you are on an island, which makes you experience a very special atmosphere.

**Text and photo: Maria Molin**



Translators on raukar...

