

France Prešeren

France Prešeren is Slovenia's most talented poet. He was born on the 3rd of December 1800 in Vrba na Gorenjskem, a small village in the north of the country. His family was poor, but because he showed talent and intelligence, he was sent to his uncle to attend school. He was an excellent student and his name was written in the school's »golden book«. After his graduation, he began studying at the secondary school in Ljubljana, finished two grades of philosophy, and in 1821 moved to ^{Vienna} Wien, where he finished another grade of philosophy, and enrolled in the ^{law school} university of law, wanting to become a lawyer. His parents (mother in particular) weren't thrilled with the idea, as they ^{had} wanted him to become a priest, so they and his uncle ^{stopped supporting him financially} seized to financial support him. Still, he managed to live off of scholarships and work as a private teacher and in 1828 he finished his studies, returned to Ljubljana, and began work as an apprentice ^{to} for a lawyer.

He first started writing poetry around the year 1824. His ^{poems} songs were simple at first, but he later started to adopt ^{Roman and oriental} forms, which were introduced to him by Matija Čop, a literature historian, critic and linguist and dear friend of his. The time from 1828 to 1840, when he became a Romanticist is considered to be his most productive. The poetry he wrote in this period is his finest, and most well known. ^{The poems} Songs like Sonetje nesreče, Sonetni venec and Krst pri Savici were all created at this time.

While his poetry may be great, his life wasn't. He lived in poverty and misery, failing to achieve the position of a lawyer, ^{which} that would've ^{given} him the respect and appreciation he craved. He often turned to alcohol to ^{drown} drown the pain. He even wrote in his poem Glosa, that poets are foolish for writing and that a poor man has no chance of success in life.

This depression was quickly swept away when he met Julija Primic, ^{the} a daughter of a wealthy merchant family, and instantly ^{fell} fell in love with her. She became his muse and his greatest work, Sonetni venec, is dedicated to her. Sonetni venec is a collection of 15 sonnets, where the last verse of a sonnet repeats as the beginning verse of the next sonnet and then again in the 15th one, ^{which} which is made up entirely from verses that were used in the previous sonnets. The initial letters of the verses in the 15th sonnet also spell p-r-i-m-i-c-o-v-i-j-u-l-j-i (translated to Primiceva Julija). This complicated structure is why this is his best work.

Prešeren loved Julija, but she was out of his reach, and while he never got married, he had ^{(3) three} children with Ana Jelovšek, a young servant. Only one of them, Ernestina, survived childhood, and ^{she} later wrote a book with memories about her father.

In 1835 Matija Čop drowned and Prešeren was devastated. He dedicated a few ^{poems} songs and his historic epic Krst pri Savici, to him.

In the year 1846 he finally got the job of a lawyer he wanted. He moved to Kranj, a city north-west of Ljubljana. He also ^{published} released his collection of poems, Poezije, something he had difficulties with because of censorship. The ^{poem} song Zdravljica, ^{which} which contains our national anthem, wasn't ^{published} released until 1848.

His talent started to fade, as did his productivity, with his health taking a turn for the worst. He died on the 9th of February 1849 and was buried in Kranj.