

ESTONIAN LITERATURE

IV

Poetry in Independent Estonia
M. Under, H. Visnapuu, B. Alver, et al.



Estonia was declared a Democratic Republic on 24 February 1918.



Next day, Tallinn was invaded by German troops.



- Great Britain, France and Italy recognised Estonia *de facto*.
- A Baltic Dutchy in union with Germany failed.
- Soviet Russia renounced its sovereignty over Estonia.
- The Estonian Government started work on November 1918.
- The Red Army attacked Estonia and conquered 2/3 of Estonia.
- The Estonian War of Independence broke out (1918–1920).
- The Estonian forces pushed the enemy out by February 1919.



- The *Landeswehr* War broke out in summer 1919.
- General von der Goltz's German army got crushed.
- The Land Reform abolished the land ownership of the barons.
- A peace treaty with the Soviet Russia was signed in Tartu on February 1920.
- Russia relinquished “forever its rights over Estonia and its people”.
- Estonia was recognised *de jure*.
- After 700 years of foreign rule the country was free again.
- Estonia established cultural autonomy for its ethnic minorities.



The Statue of the War of Independence in Tartu by Amandus Adamson (colloquially “Kalevipoeg”, restored)

Letter of acknowledgement of the Jewish National Foundation to the Republic of Estonia for passing the Cultural Autonomy Act in 1925.

The letter reads:

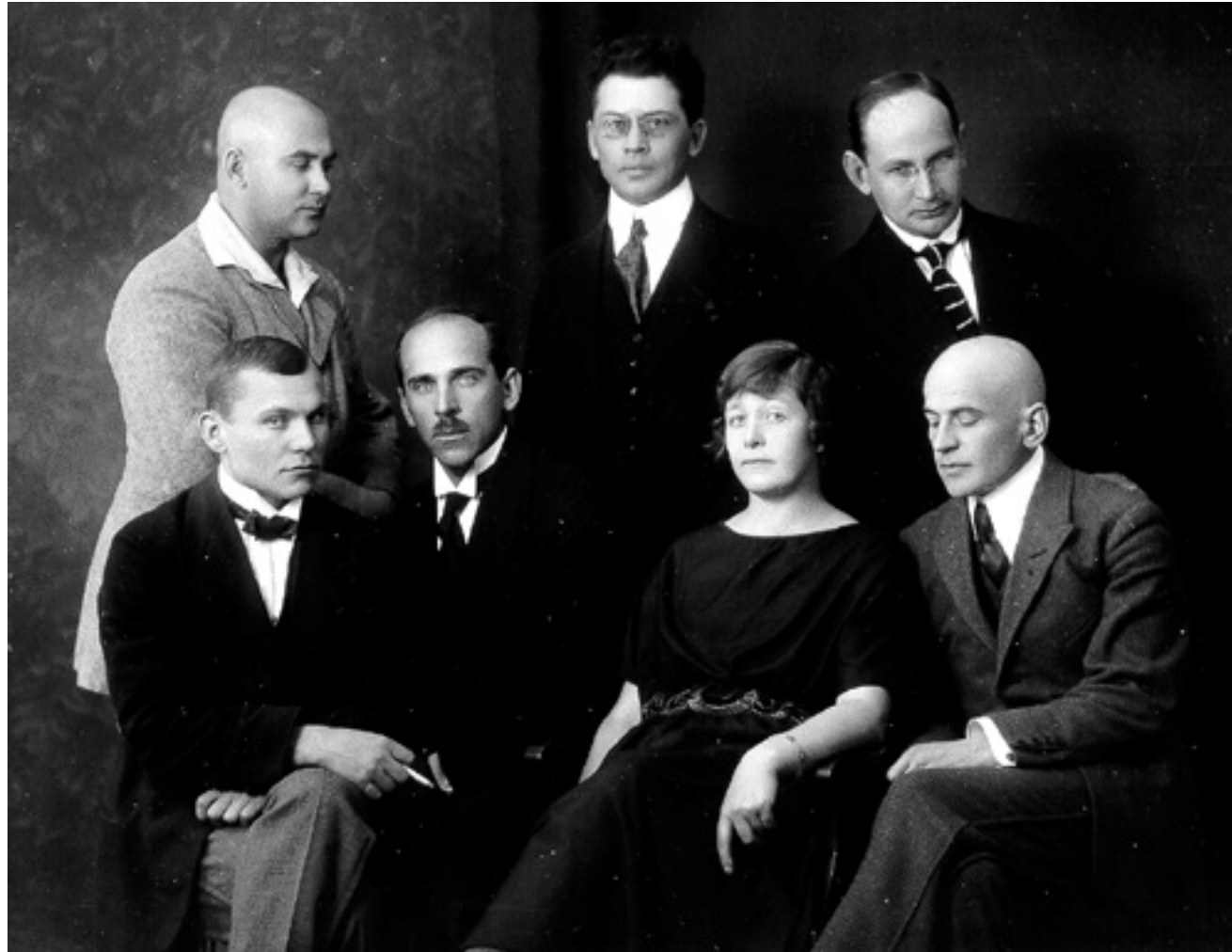
To the Republic of Estonia. In deep gratitude for the historic deed – the first in the history of Jewish people – of giving national-cultural autonomy to the Jewish minority in Estonia.



The Impressionistic *Siuru* grouping was established in 1917:
**Henrik Visnapuu, August Gailit, Marie Under, Friedebert
Tuglas, Artur Adson, Johannes Semper, et al.**



The Expressionistic *Tarapita* grouping was established in 1920:
**Johannes Barbarus (Vares), Friedebert Tuglas, August Alle;
Albert Kivikas, Johannes Semper, Marie Under, Artur Adson.**



Marie Under (1883–1980)



Ants Laikmaa, “Mutti” (1904)

Ekstaas

Ah! toredaim on elamine maine

Ja vägev vere surematu püüid!

Mind võidab Rõõmu ihar, hõiskav hüüd,

Ma iial pole kaaluv ega kaine.

Ecstasy

Ah, earthly life burns in a myriad splendours

Not even death's dark hazard can destroy.

I yield, a willing prisoner, to joy;

I never sorted with discreet pretenders.



Siuru period

- *Sonnets* (1917)
- *Early Flowering* (“Eelõitseng”, 1918)
- *Blue Sail* (“Sinine puri”, 1918)



M. Under and A. Adson

Tarapita period

- *Bloodletting* (“Verivalla”, 1920)
- *Selected Newer German Lyrics* (1920)
- *Heritage* (“Pärisosa”, 1923)

After the Tarapita

- *Voice from the Shadows* (“Hääl varjust”, 1927)
- *The Joys of a Beautiful Day* (“Rõõm ühest ilusast päevast”, 1928)
- *The Eclipse of Happiness* (“Õnnevarjutus”, 1929)



The Eclipse of Happiness (“Õnnevarjutus”, 1929)

Mandrakes

Young Lady of Porkuni

Child Killer

Whirlwind

Exchanged Child

The Birth of Naissaar Island

Leather Merchant Pontus

Hobgoblin

Sea Cows

White Bird

A Travelling Lake

Swamp Song

Kölner Dom



- *Under an Open Sky* (“Lageda taeva all”, 1930)
- *Stone off the Heart* (“Kivi südameilt”, 1935)
- *Collected Works I-III* (1939)
- *With Sorrowful Mouth* (“Mureliku suuga”, 1942)
- *Sparks in the Ashes* (“Sädemed tuhas”, 1954)
- *Borderlands* (“Ääremail”, 1963)

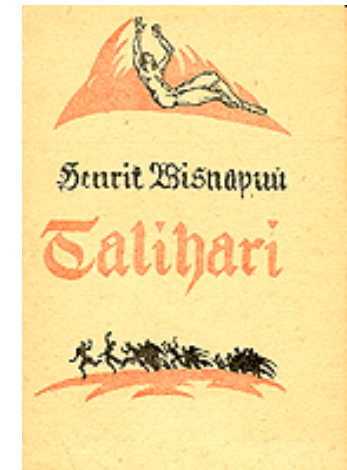
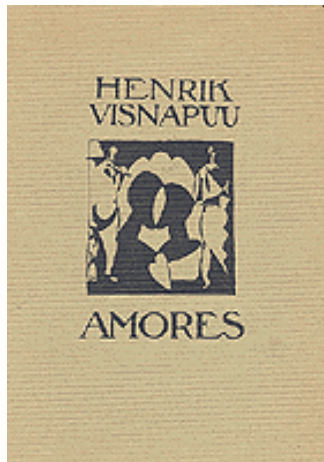


Henrik Visnapuu (1890–1951)



Siuru period (Impressionism)

- *Amores* (1917)
- *Farewell, Ene!* (“Jumalaga, Ene!”, 1918)
- *The Meadow Violet* (“Käoorvik”, 1920)
- *The Silver Sleigh-bells* (“Hõbedased kuljused”, 1920)
- *The Height of Winter* (“Talihari”, 1920)



Igavesti

*Igavesti mulle antud olla kurb,
olla rõõmust hull,
olla hell, olla karm.*

Võlund tunnil sel meeled sinu arm.

*Jälle süda mul
tuikab, tuikab sull'!*

“Forever”, first stanza: It’s given for me to be sad forever, /
mad of joy forever, / tender for ever, severe for ever. / You are
casting your spell of love over my senses this hour, / my heart
again, / pulsates and pulsates on you.

Eokene eo-eo

*Tilli-illi lilli-line lilliken,
illiken.*

*Tiuda-tiuda tiokene,
Ene!*

*Eokene eo-eo, äokene äo!
Öö koob unekanga, katab sinu valge
näo.*

“My little Eo, eo-eo”, last line:

Night knites the cloth of dream, covers your white / face.

Lill/lilliken = flower, tihane/tio= small bird, titmouse

Sireli

Sireli torkas püssirauda.

Sireli, sireli.

Palju on sõpru langend hauda.

Sireli.

Sireli seisis, valvas vaenlast.

Sireli, sireli.

Sirelit kevad puistab kaenlast.

Sireli.

Sirelit kodu akna taga.

Sireli, sireli.

Sirelit Eo! uinu, maga!

Sireli.

Sirelis sõda, sirelit kanda.

Sireli, sireli.

Sirelit raua vastu anda.

Sireli.

Sireli torkas püssirauda.

Sireli, sireli.

Palju on sõpru langend hauda.

Sireli.

Sirelit kodu! Sireli tarju!

Sireli, sireli!

Sirelis kodu — sõduri varju!

Sireli.

Sirelist õnne! Kaks korda neli.

Sireli, sireli.

Sirelit sulle, võõras ja veli.

Sireli.

Stuck a lilac into the rifle barrel. / O lilac, lilac. /

Lots of friends have fallen down the grave. / O lilac, etc.

Kolmas kiri Ingile

*See aasta tuleb kevad teisiti,
tiu-tiu ja teisiti, see aasta teisiti,
ja kevad teisiti ja tuleb teisiti,
tiu-tiu! ja teisiti ja hoopis teisiti.*

*Nii palju naeru, linde, lilli't hoi!
Ja päikest, meeletumalt päikest.
Ih-ha-ah-haa! ah-haa! Ih-ah! Oh-oi!
Paar prahvakut veel rööska äikest:
mürr-mürr! mürr-mürr! trahh-trahh!*

“Third letter to Ing” (Ing – angel, or soul, also female name):

This year the spring is coming differently, / tiu-tiu, and differently,
this year differently, / and spring differently and coming differently, /
tiu-tiu! and differently and completely differently.

Expressionism

- *The Flint* (“Ränikivi”, 1925)
- *The Songs of Maarjamaa* (“Maarjamaa laulud”, 1927)
- *The Death of Jehovah*, (“Jehoova surm”, 1927)
- *The Idols* (“Puuslikud”, 1929)

Mytho-poetry

- *The Wind-sieve* (“Tuulesõel”, 1931)
- *The Sun and the River* (“Päike ja jõgi”, 1932)
- *The Shadow of Satan* (“Saatana vari”, 1937)

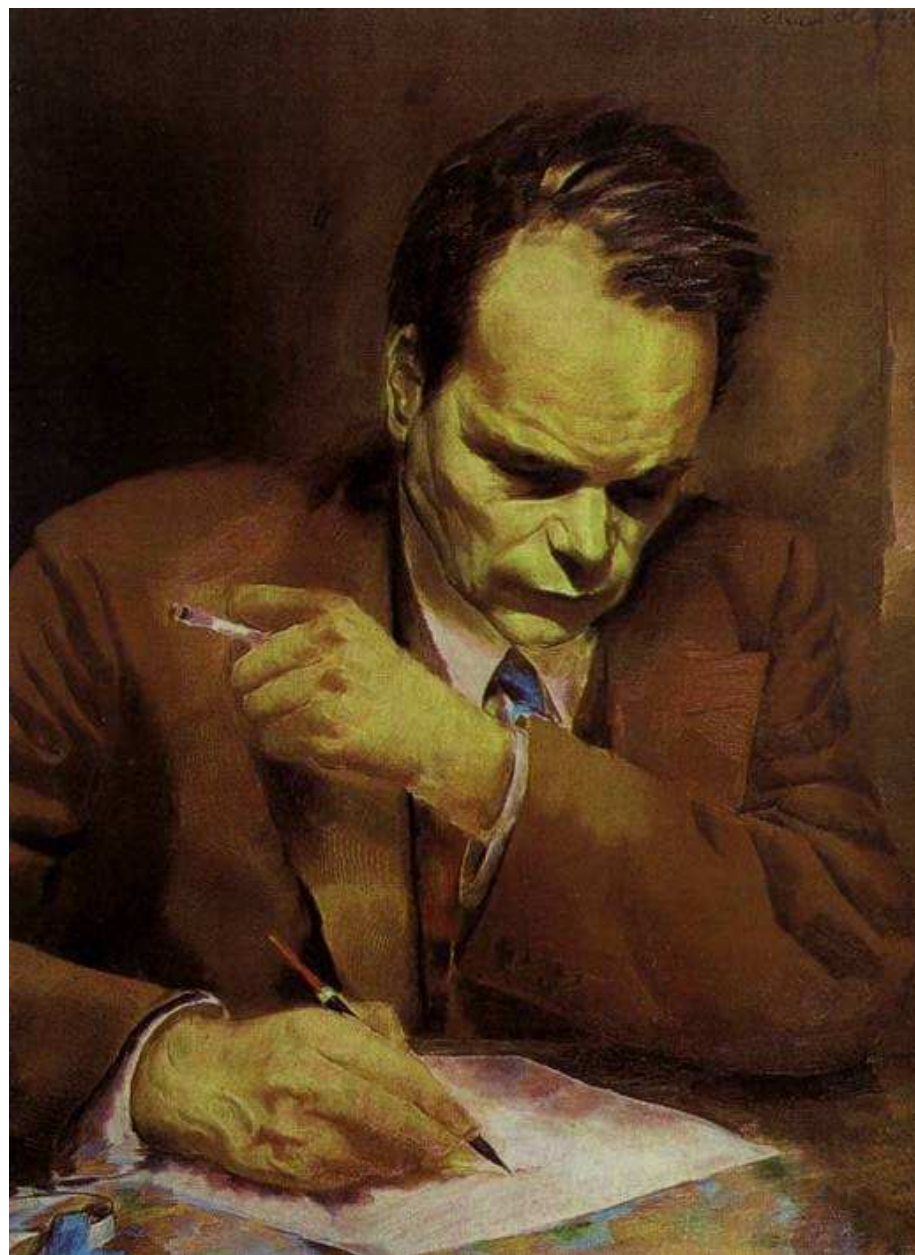


Editor-in-chief of *Varamu* (Treasure House, 1937–1940)

- *The Northern Lights*, (“Põhjavaalgus”, 1938)
- *The Mother of Winds*, (“Tuule-ema”, 1942)

Exile

- *The Ancestral Graves* (“Esivanemate hauad”, 1946)
- *Mare Balticum* (1948)
- Several selections



Eduard Ole, “Henrik Visnapuu” (1932)

Johannes Barbarus (Johannes Vares, 1890–1946)

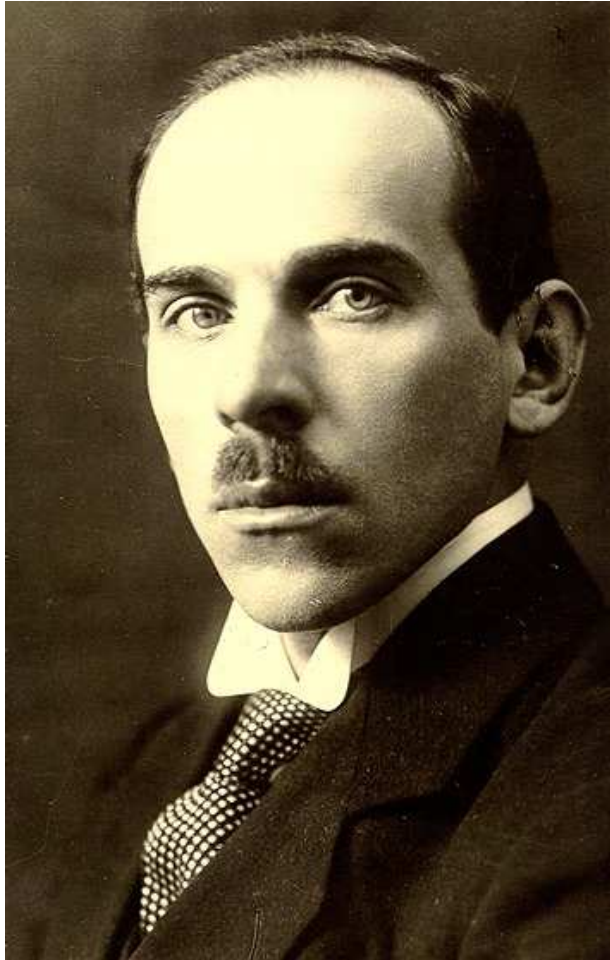


Johannes Barbarus (Johannes Vares, 1890–1946)

- *Fata Morgana* (1918)
- *Man and the Sphinx* (“Inimene ja sfinks”, 1919)
- *Catastrophes* (“Katastroofid”, 1920)
- *The Geometrical Man* (“Geomeetiline inimene”, 1924)
- *Multiplied Man* (“Multiplitseerit inimene”, 1927)
- *The Estonian Republic* (“E.V.-r.”, 1932)
- *Fishes on Dry Land* (“Kalad kuival”, 1937)
- *Crossing the Threshold* (“Üle läve”, 1939)
- *Armed Verses* (“Relvastatud värsid”, 1943)
- *Against the Current* (“Vastu voolu”, 1946)
- *Step by Step to Victory* (“Samm-sammult võidule”, 1946)

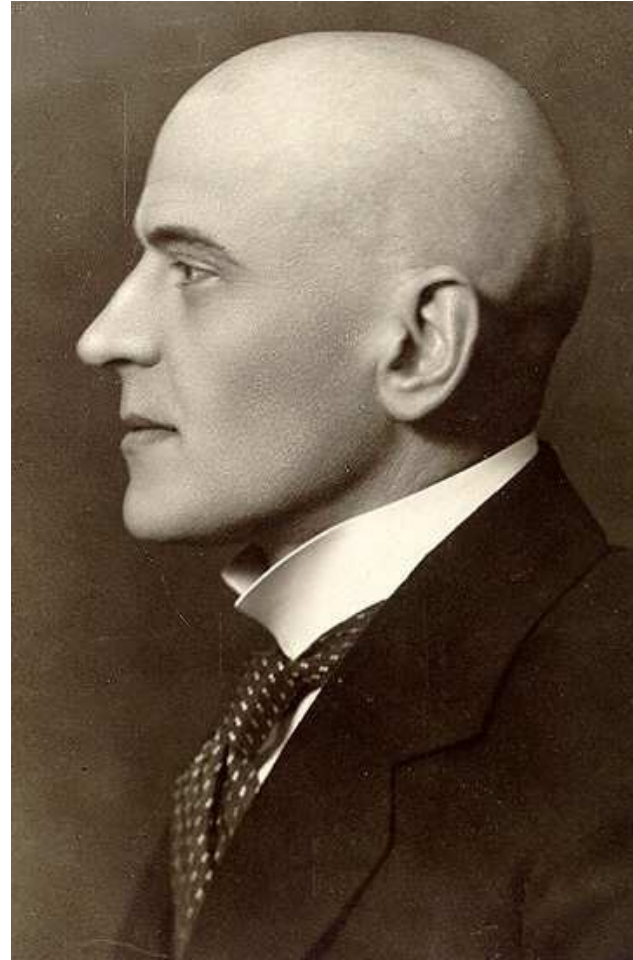


Johannes Semper (1892–1970)



L'art pour l'art
Psychoanalysis

Artur Adson (1889–1977)

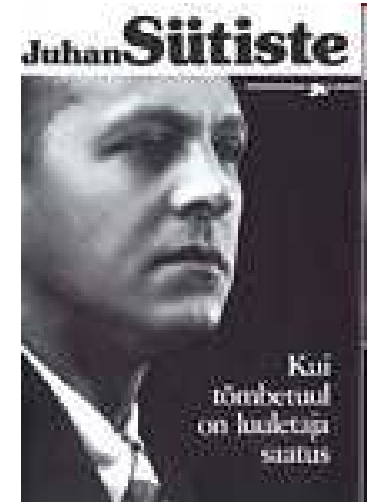


Poetry in the Võru dialect

Juhan Sütiste (1899–1945), social poetry, *Neue Sachlichkeit*

The Earth Turns East (“Maakera pöördub itta”, 1940)

The Oppressive Days (“Umbsed päevad”, 1945)



Hendrik Adamson (1891–1946), poetry in the Mulk dialect



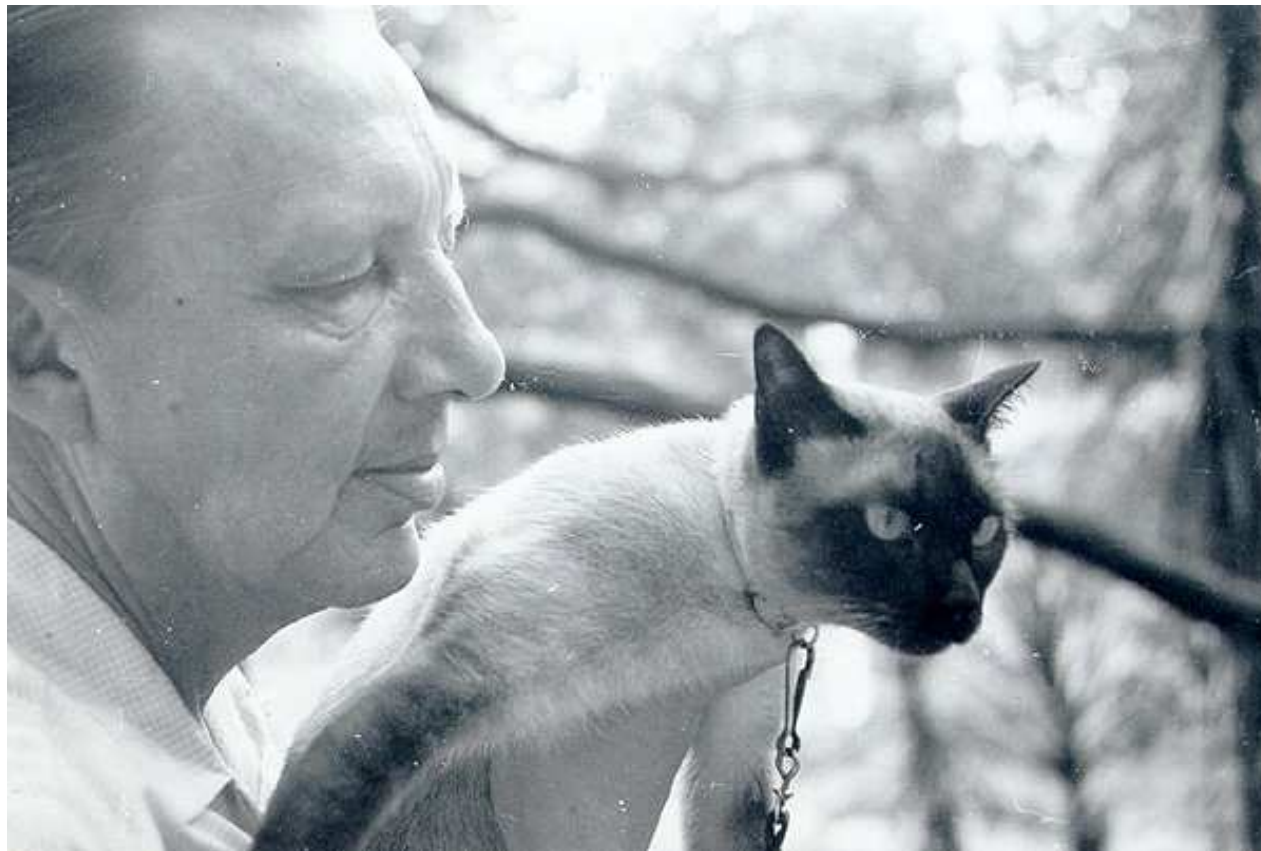
August Alle (1890–1952), social poetry, epigrams

A Song about a Light-bleu Dress and a Pink Skirt

(“Laul kleidist helesinisest ja roosast seelikust”, 1925)



**Arbujad (Soothsayers Brotherhood, 1938,
compiled by Prof. Ants Oras)
Heiti Talvik, Betti Alver, Uku Masing, August Sang, Kersti
Merilaas, Bernard Kangro, Paul Viiding**



Heiti Talvik (1904–1947)

- *The Fever* (“Palavik”, 1935)
- *The Day of Judgement* (“Kohtupäev”, 1937)



Betti Alver and Heiti Talvik

Betti Alver (1906–1989)

- *Wind's Lover* (“Tuulearmuke”, 1927)
- *The Invalids* (“Invaliidid”, 1930)
- *A Tale of a White Crow* (“Lugu valgest varesest”, 1931)
- *A Comedy of Misery* (“Viletsuse komöödia”, 1935)
- *Dust and Fire* (“Tolm ja tuli”, 1936)
- *Long poems: Pear Tree* (“Pirnipuu”), *Nutshell* (“Pähklikoor”), *Bread* (“Leib”, 1943), *Children of the Wind* (“Tuulelapsed”)
- *Tree of Life* (“Elupuu”, unpublished)

A Tailor Called Sorrow

Yesterday in drizzling rain
on the road,
depression came
with its scissors open.
He put unhappy shirts
around the necks
of children,
and stitched black markings
on the lives
of the others.

Around the red faces
the tailor called sorrow
let a cloth with death silk
in it
hang,
and mingled white basting thread
in their hair.



- Transl. of Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin*
- *Cracked Mirror* ("Mõrane peegel", 1962)
- *Stellar Hour* ("Tähetund", 1966)
- *The Flakes of Life* ("Eluhelbed", 1971)
- *Flying City* ("Lendav linn", 1979)
- *The Corals in the Emajõgi River* ("Korallid Emajões", 1986)

