



Erasmus+

Three migrant stories by a migrant writer

Migration in Europe – let's share our
differences and move on!

Erasmus+ project # 2017-1-NO01-KA219-
034168_2



About the author

- 1982
- 2001
- 2005
- 2012
- 2014
- 2016
- 17
- 8

About the author

- **1982** – Miroslav Penkov was born
- **2001** – won a scholarship to Arkansas University
- **2005** – first story in English published
- **2012** – his story “*East of the West*” won the BBC International Short Story Award
- **2014** – selected as a protégé by mentor Michael Ondaatje
- **2016** – his novel *Stork Mountain* was published
- **17** – his first short story was published
- **8** – stories in *East of the West*

Part 1 – Kahoot Quiz

- You will need one smart phone/group
- You will have 30 seconds to decide on the right answer
- The questions are based on the 3 stories by **Miroslav Penkov** you had to read: *Buying Lenin, A Picture with Yuki and Devshirmeh*

Part 2 – Questions: specific information

- Each group will have 30 seconds to write their answer
- To gain points, the answers need to be correct

Buying Lenin

- Why does the grandson leave for America?
- ❖ *To try something new*

Buying Lenin

- How does the grandson feel about teasing his grandpa?

❖ *Ashamed*

❖ *Exhilarated*

Buying Lenin

- Which University does the narrator go to?
 - ❖ Arkansas University

Buying Lenin

- Why does the narrator's grandpa go back to his native village?
- ❖ He is tired of the sight of his grandson hunched over the Oxford English Dictionary

Buying Lenin

- What's the new name of the village of Valchidol?
- ❖ Leningrad

Buying Lenin

- What does grandpa read to grandma at her tombstone?

❖ *Volume 12 of Lenin's collected works*

❖ *Modern Woman*

Buying Lenin

- When does the grandson make his first call to his grandpa from America?
- ❖ 4 July (2 years after he first arrives)

Buying Lenin

- What is Lenin's favourite snack?
- ❖ *Watermelon with cheese*

Buying Lenin

- How much does the narrator pay for the purchase of Lenin?
- ❖ *5 dollars flat. And 5 more for worldwide shipping*

Buying Lenin

- What confession does the grandson make at the end?
- ❖ *How unhappy he is*

A Picture with Yuki

- Why do the main characters come back to Bulgaria?
- ❖ *For an in vitro program*

A Picture with Yuki

- Which city in America do they live in?

❖ *Chicago*

A Picture with Yuki

- What problems does Yuki encounter on arrival in Bulgaria?
- ❖ *Heat, noise, lost suitcase/ missing items, nothing works*

A Picture with Yuki

- Why are his parents cross with him?

❖ *He married a foreigner and did not invite them to the wedding*

A Picture with Yuki

- What is the narrator's job?

❖ *Luggage loader*

A Picture with Yuki

- How many weddings would the characters have liked to have?
- ❖ *3 (one in each country – USA, Japan and Bulgaria)*

A Picture with Yuki

- What does Yuki find strange in Bulgaria?
 - ❖ *Japanese people don't kiss each other as much as we do*
 - ❖ *Obituaries*

A Picture with Yuki

- Which habit is Yuki trying to give up?

❖ *Smoking*

A Picture with Yuki

- How many spouts does the village fountain have?
- ❖ *5 (1 for each partisan from the village)*

A Picture with Yuki

- What do the villagers call the narrator?

❖ *Amerikanets*

A Picture with Yuki

- What make is the narrator's car?

❖ *Moskvich*

A Picture with Yuki

- Who is driving the car that hits the gypsy boy?

❖ *Yuki*

A Picture with Yuki

- What's the name of the gypsy boy?

❖ *Assencho*

A Picture with Yuki

- Why do Yuki and the narrator decide to leave the village in a hurry?

❖ *They feel guilty*

A Picture with Yuki

- Why do they feel guilty?

❖ *For keeping quiet*

Devshirmeh

- Which University does the narrator graduate from?

❖ *Sofia University*

Devshirmeh

- What's the narrator's name?

❖ *Mihail/ Michael*

Devshirmeh

- What was the narrator's job before he left for the States?

❖ *English teacher*

Devshirmeh

- Why do the main character and his wife go to the States?
- ❖ *In hopes of a better life as green card winners*

Devshirmeh

- Why does the narrator move to Texas?
 - ❖ *To be close to his daughter*

Devshirmeh

- Who is the narrator's ex-wife married to?
- ❖ A doctor (Todor/ Buddy Milanov)

Devshirmeh

- What is John Martin's relationship with the narrator?
- ❖ He is the narrator's landlord

Devshirmeh

- How many languages does Ellie speak?
- ❖ 2 (English and Bulgarian)

Devshirmeh

- What kind of stories does the narrator tell his daughter?
 - ❖ *About the old khans, glorious battles, history from school, memorable moments*

Devshirmeh

- What kind of bed-time story does Ellie want to hear?
- ❖ *About their family back home*

Devshirme

- What does the title word mean?

❖ *Blood tribute*

Devshirmeh

- What does the word **YAD** mean?

❖ *Spite, rage, anger, pity for someone, regret for something you did not do, for a chance you missed, an opportunity you squandered*

Devshirmeh

- Whose shadow does Ali Ibrahim see?

❖ *His mother's*

Devshirmeh

- What kind of storm do the characters witness?

❖ *Tornado*

Devshirmeh

- What does the narrator regret?

❖ *Coming to America*

Part 3 - Quotes

- Each group writes the title of the story that the quote comes from or the name of the character who says that

Where is this from?

- Do yourself a favor, he said, and kill the things that pull you back. He hadn't heard from his brothers in three years and look at him: he was a perfectly happy human being. Fewer stones to carry, so to speak. Onward and upward. Never look back. Nothing good, he told me, ever came from looking behind you. You either turned to a pillar of salt or lost your beloved into Hades. He, too, was a schoolteacher, the poor guy, and now a fine cabdriver in New York.

❖ *Devshirmeh*

Where is this from?

- There was no good reason for me to be in America. Back home I wasn't starving, at least not in the corporeal sense. No war had driven me away or stranded me on foreign shores. I left because I could, because I carried in my blood the rabies of the West. In high school, while most of my peers were busy drinking, smoking, having sex, playing dice, lying to their parents, hitchhiking to the sea, counterfeiting money, or making bombs for soccer games, I studied English. I memorized words and grammar rules and practiced tongue twisters, specifically designed for Eastern Europeans.

Where is this from?

- At that time my mother still did not speak to me, so when she picked up the phone I had to wait for my father to take the receiver. That wasted almost a minute of my expensive calling card. “What time is it in Chicago?” my father asking, and “What’s the weather like?” wasted another. Seven years in the States and their questions were the same; so were my answers. Eight hours behind. Windy

❖ *A Picture with Yuki*

Who says that?

- “My grandson a capitalist.
After all I’ve been through.”

❖ *Grandpa in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- She doesn't need her eyes to see my world. Neither do I to see the things she sees. My blood runs in her veins and hers in mine. Blood will make us see.

❖ *Mihail in Devshirmeh*

Who says that?

- “These are the deeds of our Savior. The word of our Lord.”
“Oh, Lenin’s collected works.
... Which volume?”
- ❖ *American student and narrator
in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- I understood that nothing I said mattered to those around me. No one knew where I was from, or cared to know. I had nothing to say to this world

❖ *The narrator in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- “... there is so much water between us. We are so far apart.”

“We are. ... But blood, I hope is thicker than the ocean.”

❖ *The grandson and grandpa in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- Mother dearest, ... send me some money because I've spent mine.

❖ *Lenin in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- “We are expecting him soon. But please, my dear, next time you talk to him, ask him to stop reading Lenin at my grave.”

❖ *Grandma in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- “Tell me the third step. I need to know.”

❖ *Grandson in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- “ I lived my life as though ideals really mattered. And in the end they did.”

❖ *Grandpa in Buying Lenin*

Who says that?

- “At least she isn’t black”

- ❖ *Narrator’s mother in A Picture with Yuki*

Who says that?

- “Good things happen to good people”
- *Narrator in A picture with Yuki*

Who says that?

- “You are very pretty.”
- *Gypsy boy in A Picture with Yuki*

Who says that?

- “I can give you a few herbs. Raspberry leaf, nettle, damiana. Those should help. Those are always good.”

❖ *Gypsy woman in A picture with Yuki*

Who says that?

- “His face isn’t scratched. . . .
No scratches at all on his
face.”
- ❖ The father of the dead gypsy
boy in *A Picture with Yuki*

Who says that?

- “I don’t need cigarettes. . . . I threw them away.”
- ❖ Yuki in A Picture with Yuki

Who says that?

- “Of course. . . . Money and time. I know how it is.”
- ❖ Narrator’s mother in Devshirmeh

Who says that?

- “Any story. Something nice. About our family. Back home.”
- ❖ Ellie in Devshirmeh

Who says that?

- “And so this story, this story, too, begins with blood... And with blood it ends. Blood binds those in it and blood divides them.”

❖ *Narrator to his daughter in Devshimeh*

Who says that?

- “I shall never veil my face”

- ❖ *Narrator’s great-grandmother in Devshirmeh*

Who says that?

- “No one made you leave the house this morning. And no one made you leave your country. Those were your choices and you should be man enough to stand behind them. You make a decision, you accept the consequences. You move on.”

Who says that?

- “Run to the mountain! ...
Take the baby and run!”

❖ *Ali Ibrahim in Devshirmeh*

Who says that?

- “Let’s see what the most beautiful woman in the world looks like”
- ❖ The Sultan in Devshirme

Who says that?

- “What’s going on? Are you down in the shelter?”
- ❖ Narrator’s ex-wife/ Ellie’s mum in Devshirmeh

Who says that?

- “Come, my child. Come, Sunshine. Let’s go inside. The baby is hungry.”
- ❖ The Mountain/Mother in Devshirmeh (the voice of a woman, soothing her children in times of despair, in times of darkness)

Who says that?

- “Don’t look back.”

- ❖ *The narrator in Devshirmeh*

Part 4 – Your turn to write

- Where was Miroslav Penkov's first short story published?
- ❖ In one of Bulgaria's leading sci-fi magazines

Read the beginning of a story

UNDER THE RADAR

2248 A.D.

“It’s going to be a long shift,” sighed Lieutenant Tane as a formation of 20 trade ships appeared on the screen of his radar.

He signalled the department of interspace inspection through the web and watched as the ships were pulled by the station’s magnetic field into the hangar. The space station he worked on was one of the major passing points for space ships that wanted to enter Earth’s atmosphere. Most of them were trade ships or private shuttles filled with non-earthlings. The inspection of the ships was necessary because only those licensed by the Trade Union were allowed to visit Earth. Resettlement on the Earth was illegal for aliens and it wasn’t a rare occasion that Darro Tane’s radar would pick up on ships that tried to enter Earth’s atmosphere without inspection. This was considered a major offense and the ships that attempted it would be immediately exterminated. This was the way humanity protected itself from an alien invasion.

“Lt. Tane, could you give us a hand in the hangar?” asked a soldier on the intercom.

“Alright, I am coming,” answered Darro as he picked up his identification scanner.

As he entered the hangar he singled out a small green ship whose pilot was a bored-looking girl with greenish skin that wore a red scarf and was waiting for someone to pay attention to her.

“Can you stand still so I can identify you?” asked Tane as he held his scanner in front of her face.

“Why ask if you won’t even wait for an answer?” said the girl.

“Tika Pavan, planet Maru from the Procyon system, is that right?” asked the lieutenant ignoring her remark.

“Correct,” she looked annoyed.

“State your business,” he said.

“I’m shipping Uranium to the Asian Federation, want to come see the cargo?” asked Tika while entering the ship. Darro followed her and walked around the large metal boxes absent-mindedly.

“Wasn’t Procyon the star that was starting to turn into a white dwarf? I heard about the evacuation of Maru,” Tane said.

“Yes, the temperatures on Maru are dropping every day so we are looking for a new planet to relocate at the moment,” she explained.

„Good luck with that!“ Darro smirked .”Well ,you should know that the Earth is definitely not the right place.“

„Why so?“ asked Tika.

Finish it as a group

- Write the rest of the story or make a storyboard
- Make sure you use the expression “**Don’t look back**”
- Don’t forget the main theme is **migration**

“I suppose you are not very familiar with Earth’s history but there is this thing called The American colonization,” the lieutenant began, “what happened is that when the American continent was discovered by the Spanish, they invaded it and killed most of the native people in different ways – by enslaving them, by bringing unknown diseases, by killing them simply because of their race.”

Tika frowned.

“So you are afraid that history is going to repeat itself?”

Darro looked at her.

”You could say that.”

Tika smirked and looked away from the lieutenant, who started examining the metal boxes.

Darro looked around, checked the boxes filled with, presumably, Uranium, but couldn't find anything wrong with them. It wasn't until he reached the end of the ship that he noticed how many boxes there were. Since when do people allow that much Uranium on ships, he wondered. Looking towards the girl, he was about to ask her about it when a voice interrupted his train of thoughts. "Lieutenant, finish your inspection and go check on the other soldiers. Some of them are not reporting back even though the ships were checked safe to go."

This is definitely strange, thought Darro and took out his intercom.

"On my way, Sir. I'll report back if there's a problem," he assured the department and after receiving their confirmation, he put back his intercom.

Checking the ship safe to go and completely forgetting about his earlier thoughts, Darro started walking away from the cargo. What would make them not answer the General? Did something happen to them? What if.. The scary thought made him shudder as if a cold mist enfolded his body. He looked at Tika, who wore a puzzled expression on her face. Tane started running towards her when suddenly a big metal door obstructed his way trapping him inside the cargo.

“What’s the meaning of this? Where are the other soldiers? You are planning an invasion, aren’t you?” The lieutenant was feeling his legs as stiff as he was standing on shattered glass and his entire face was covered with small drops of sweat. He shouted while banging on the door. A few seconds later he heard the girl’s muffled voice behind the door.

“That’s true, lieutenant. It’s also the reason why I can’t let you go. You see, the other 19 ships are filled with Maruvians as well and are currently on their way to colonize the Earth. The other soldiers are probably dead right now as you will be soon as well. You can’t stop this,” she finished and Darro heard the engine start. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing. No one had ever tried something quite as big as that. He had a few minutes to try to escape and warn the others before the ship took off towards the Earth’s atmosphere.

“It’s indeed going to be a long shift,” he

Part 5 - Personalise

- Which story did you like best? Why?
- What common themes did the stories share?
- What would be your reasons to migrate?
- Who/ what would you miss most?
- Which would be your fondest memory?
- How easy would it be for you to adapt?
- What would you feel guilty about?
- Which story would you like to tell?

Why do birds fly away....



Why do migrants leave their native land?

What do migrants bring with them to the new country?

What do migrants leave in the old country?

How do migrants feel?

they have no idea what it is like
to lose home at the risk of
never finding home again
have your entire life
split between two lands and
become the bridge between two countries

first generation immigrant - rupi kaur



Write a poster poem

- Use the words and expressions from your discussion to create a poster poem
- All languages can be used, as well as all your creative talent
- Your aim is to raise people's awareness to one of the questions you discussed
- Use the cardboard sheets and colour markers
- Use different fonts, sizes and colours

Thank you for your attention!



Nina Patterson

G. S. Rakovski

Romance Languages Secondary School,
Burgas, Bulgaria



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union