*Hiža*

There it is, standing proudly, over one hundred years old. It has been through many violent storms and winds, sunny and rainy days, war and peace, rough times and good times. The old *hiža* (house) was home to more than a few generations: it had as many as twelve masters! So many owners, and still only one key. And not just any key, but a huge, old, iron one.

How shabby it is can be seen even from the outside since nothing but window frames is left of the windows: the glass is broken. While I'm putting the rusty key into the lock, I'm wondering what I'll find inside.

Right at the entrance my eyes are drawn to the attic filled with old maize stalks. The bumpy, earthen floor takes me to the hall and the first room which used to be the kitchen, with an old wooden table full of wormholes and a broken furnace. The other room has nothing but a bed and a closet.

I imagine what it was like while the scent of *gibanica* (crumpled pie) was spreading through the *hiža*. I see women preparing it, men getting ready for grape harvests, children happily running around the *hiža*, and the *hiža* itself laughing with joy.

Today my hiža is sad because it has been left all alone. An old chestnut's treetops are its only protection and company.

And I, whenever in vineyard, look at my old, proud *hiža.*

Lea Kos, 4.b