

The Kette Literary Trail

Welcome to the Kette Literary Trail – an experience that combines history, culture, nature and the literary heritage of **Dragotin Kette** (1876–1899), one of the pioneers of modernism in Slovenian literature. The picturesque route runs between **Prem**, the poet's birthplace, and **Trnovo** (now part of Ilirska Bistrica), where the poet spent his holidays.

Let the stories from the past, which you will discover along the way, transport you to a world of imagination and creativity. We will welcome you with open arms.



Discover more about the poet's life in the environs of Ilirska Bistrica!

You can do the Kette Trail on your own, **with a guidebook**, or **with a local guide**, who will ensure this literary trail becomes a genuine experience.

Join us on the **Kette Literary Trail**, which takes place every year on **February 8** – Prešeren Day – the day on which Slovenian culture is celebrated.



»Your body needs exercise, but so does your spirit«
(Dragotin Kette).

More information on the Kette Literary Trail can be found here



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So who was Dragotin Kette?



◀ Portrait of Dragotin Kette with Angela Smola in the background, by the painter Ivan Vavpotič.

Dragotin Kette, a young man of exceptional talent, was born on 19 January 1876, in Prem near Ilirska Bistrica. Although he lived only 23 years, his short life was marked by unwavering determination, hard work and indelible achievements. Despite numerous challenges, he pursued his goal of becoming an exceptional poet and writer. His best-known works are the fairy tale *The Seamstress and the Scissors* and the poem *In the Market Square*.

Kette's literary legacy first came to life when his poetry collection (*Poezije*) was published in 1900. A second edition of *Poezije* was published in 1907. Soon after these publications, literary critics ranked Kette alongside Ivan Cankar, Josip Murn Aleksandrov and Oton Župančič as one of the key representatives of Slovenian modernism.

Slovenian literary modernism spans the period between 1899 and 1918, when young writers turned to their inner experience of the world. They introduced decadence, symbolism and neo-romanticism into their works, elevating Slovenian literature to a European level not seen since the time of the poet France Prešeren (1800–1849).

Technical data:

- Total distance (one way): **9 km**
- Time needed to cover the distance: **3–4 hours at a moderate pace**
- Surface: **tarmac, gravel road**
- Difficulty: **undemanding marked trail**

You can embark on the Kette Literary Trail at four different locations: Prem Castle, Dragotin Kette Primary School in Ilirska Bistrica, the Posrtvica Valley (approximately halfway), or at the Ivankotovi Tourist Farm (as their guests). It is also possible to visit just the village of Prem or Trnovo (Ilirska Bistrica), where the poet spent some of his holidays.

Main sights along Kette Trail

Prem Castle: One of the most attractive and best-preserved castles in the Reka River basin. It was built at the end of the 12th century by the Lords of Duino. The castle had many different owners and administrators who all left their mark on it. When Dragotin Kette was alive, the castle was owned by the Porcia family from Friuli. Visit the castle and learn about its history. Perhaps it was this castle that inspired Kette to write his fairy tale *The Seamstress and the Scissors*. *"Scratch scratch scissors, rush across the yellow table and tailor me a jacket!"*



The Kette memorial room in Prem: Visit the former primary school in Prem, where Dragotin Kette was born to the teacher Filip and his wife Ana, née Valenčič, from Trnovo. The Kette memorial room contains a piano, which the poet probably played together with his father. *"We used to play the piano, me on the bass, my father on the tenor, and sing: "Oh, sail, my little boat, across the quiet pearly sea!"* (Upon my father's death). Above the Kette memorial room, there is also an exhibition entitled *The Hustle and Bustle of School*, which presents the history of primary education in the Ilirska Bistrica region.



Novak's Mill: This is one of the few preserved mills in the Reka River basin, where tradition meets the present day. It has been declared a monument of local importance. *"Mill girl, come to me, but blow out the candle, so no one may see how I kiss the beautiful maiden's cheek. Make noise in the house so no one hears our chatter"* (In the Mill).



The Church of St. Helen in Prem: The church is famous for being the first one to be painted by Tone Kralj in the Primorska region in 1921. It was also in this church that Dragotin Kette was baptised as Karel Kette, and his father Filip probably played the organ here.

The convent in Trnovo (Ilirska Bistrica): The convent of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, founded by Mr. and Mrs. Valenčič, Kette's relatives on his mother's side. Ivan Vesel Vesnin, the dean of Trnovo, a friend of Dragotin Kette and his collaborator on translations of Russian literary works, also played an active role in establishing the convent. It was blessed by the Bishop of Ljubljana Jakob Missia in 1888. Dragotin Kette dedicated his satirical poem *Our Messiah* to the same bishop.



Dragotin Kette Primary School, Ilirska Bistrica: The primary school has been named after Dragotin Kette since 1963. A bust of the poet, created by Marjan Keršič Belač in 1968, stands in front of the school.

Local cuisine is an essential part of the Kette Literary Trail experience. When doing the trail, you can stop to eat and drink at various locations in its direct vicinity.