

Jon Jonsson speaks

The blizzards have been unusually mild. Your “wind chill factor”
Is an expression which I am unable to translate into Icelandic.
Your enthusiasm for our landscape is flattering but strange to me.
The geysers spout regularly and were no more dramatic than usual.
The waterfalls seemed somewhat majestic only because of recent rain.
This glacier is relatively small. And yet our great forests leave you cold.
Beneath the canopy it can be enchanting. Your mistake was to stand up.
But in my opinion the scenery here is nothing to write home about.

Apart from of course the fish our main asset is our people.
We are all of us educated, mature, responsible and literate.
Our prices are reasonable but seem high to the few who visit us,
Particularly when we feed them rotten shark and marinated puffin.
Our hospitality is a legend and our sweaters are worth every króna.
Since that seismic financial activity we now bank mainly data.
We have little crime although we are beginning to import it.
We have few traffic accidents but in this too our visitors are helpful.

I am a religious man. On Sundays I go to church in principle.
Most of the time I believe in elves and trolls, and this inspires me,
Though I am no more of a poet than the next Iclander.
My novels and most of my string quartets are also unremarkable.
I read avidly, but in only three languages, which embarrasses me.
A few have commented kindly upon my later sculptures.
My placid temperament masks power that is geothermal.
That sulphurous smell is largely in your imagination.