

Раздел «Английский язык»

Конкурсное задание в номинации I «Художественный перевод прозы»

Catch-22*By J. Heller*

Orr had been knocked down into the water again while Yossarian was still in hospital and had eased his crippled airplane down gently into the glassy blue swell off Marseilles with such flawless skill that not one member of the six-men crew suffered the slightest bruise. The escape hatches in the front and rear sections flew open while the sea was still foaming white and green around the plane, and the men scrambled out as speedily as they could in their flaccid orange Mae West life jackets that failed to inflate and dangled limp and useless around their necks and waists. The life jackets failed to inflate because Milo had removed the twin carbon-dioxide cylinders from the inflating chambers to make the strawberry and crushed-pineapple ice-cream sodas he served in the officers' mess hall and had replaced them with mimeographed notes that read: "What's good for M&M Enterprises is good for the country". Orr popped out of the sinking airplane last.

"You should have seen him!" Sergeant Knight roared with laughter as he related the episode to Yossarian. "It was the funniest goddam thing you ever saw. None of the Mae Wests would work because Milo had stolen the carbon dioxide to make those ice-cream sodas you bastards have been getting in the officers' mess. But that wasn't too bad, as it turned out. Only one of us couldn't swim, and we lifted that guy up into the raft after Orr had worked it over by its rope right up against the fuselage while we were all standing on the plane. That little crackpot sure has a knack for things like that. Then the other raft came loose and drifted away, so that all six of us wound up sitting in one elbows and legs pressed so close against each other you almost couldn't move without knocking the guy next to you out of the raft into the water. The plane went down about three seconds after we left it and we were out there all alone, and right after that we began unscrewing the caps on our Mae Wests to see what the hell had gone wrong and found these goddam notes from Milo telling us that what was good for him was good enough for the rest of us. That bastard! Jesus, did we curse him, except that buddy of yours Orr, who just kept grinning as though for all he cared what was good for Milo might be good enough for the rest of us.