**“The End and the Beginning”** (*„Gals un sākums”*) by Rainis (1912)

The idea for this collection of poetry emerged in 1907 in Switzerland, but most of the poetry had been composed from 1910 to 1912. However the collection includes older poemtry as well, even starting from the year 1901. The collection was published at the end of 1912 by the St. Petersburg “Anša Gulbja izdeviecība” publishing house. Rainis considered “The End and the Beginning” his most personal and philosophical book and called it a “song of the winter” (*„ziemas dziesma”*). Guntis Berelis described it as a book that has a scope never before seen in Latvian literature which could be labeled with the term “to grasp the ungraspable”. He thought that the “collection must be perceived as a whole — in fact it is a poetic world model based on the mythical world view, nevertheless this model isn’t static at all — it’s not a “photograph” of the world, “The End and the Beginning” is rather an attempt to explain in words the movement and change of the world. The chapters of “The End and the Beginning” are divided not with titles, but with a moto, that is a variation of the same phrase for each pat: “I go on and on” (*„Es ritu, ritu”*).” In different contexts this phrase gradually becomes a metaphor for the eternal movement and the eternal change — and at the same time, this change is also the ethic ideal of Rainis: “I go on and on, / taking I give and transform to a different one — / I still go on.” The collection’s structure was influenced by the poetics of ancient Sanskrit. Its ten chapters are led by “Re-notion” (*„Atjēgšana”*) that is partly described by Rainis: “A human re-notions, he realizes the necessity to search for the meaning of existence”. It is followed by seven chapters that link up in the central part “Searching” (*„Meklēšana”*). These chapters are cycles: the past, nature, love, work, pain, death, solitude. In the repeating movement verse seven colours, sounds and crown-wreaths are encrypted. Rainis titled the ending chapter as “Finding” (*„Atrašana”*). The lyrical hero, gone through seven cycles, now finds the “soul — drive of life” and the “cosmos — the large world”. Rainis sees the meaning of existence in the harmony between both — “the soul likens itself to the cosmos, grows till infinity, and makes the cosmos liken itself to it, by giving him endeavor and awareness — a soul”. This creates an infinite cycle of existence, where death is only of the stages on the path of harmony. With this collection Rainis convincingly created an example of philosophical poetry that combines the intellectual and emotional line.