

From the Window: Chimneys

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Instead of thinking about something useful, you look out the window; and because you live high above the ground, you see God himself, and a bit below Him the sky, and a bit, a very little bit below that, the roofs, nothing but roofs and chimneys. And all of a sudden you recall that you looked out on the roofs of Paris in just the same way, although the roofs are different there: they are like a base from which two or three slender tubes with small twisted heads are sprouting, and you seem to see two or three likable fellows standing there, turning their heads and talking about girls or politics. Here in Prague, chimneys are short and squat, thick-set and somewhat stooped; that's why you so often find them in Czech literature compared to little old men sitting on rooftops, smoking tiny pipes. And in Germany, the chimneys are spindly, upright, and angular; they don't look at all like garrulous gents, or like grandpas, either; they don't look like anything but chimneys. But that's so very little, for chimneys.