15. All the Things We Can Say with Words

From 1958, Věra Nováková occasionally made a living by illustrating books. Her first commission was Olga Scheinpflugová's Pepík's Holidays (Pepíkovy prázdniny). This was followed in 1961 by Fresco (Freska) by Magda Szabó, and in 1962 by the memoir My Dear Brothers (Moji milí bratři) by Helena Palivcová-Čapková, illustrated jointly by the Brázdas. They also collaborated on the playful book All the Things We Can Say with Words (Co se slovy všechno poví) by Josef Hiršal and Bohumila Grögerová, published in 1964.

This slim book of experimental poetry for children, whose first edition is now a valued collector's item, became a key impulse for Věra's letter-based paintings. It led her to reflect on letters and the possible meanings of their shapes, as well as on the symbolic value of the accumulation of specific sounds within a word or in sequences of words – in other words, on the significance of alliteration.