

MELIKA SALIHBEG BOSNAWI

SARAJEVO
ROSE

WAR RHYMES



(fragments)

Sarajevo, 00.

*In the name of Allâh,
The All Compassionate, The Merciful*

When the earth is shaken with her shaking. And brings forth the earth her burdens. And says a man, What's wrong with her? On that day she will say her news. For, indeed, her Lord has inspired her. That day will come out mankind in disorder; to be shown to its deeds. And who has done an atom's weight of good, will see it. And who has done an atom's weight of evil, will see it.

Qur'ân, Sûrat 99

NOTE TO THE READER:

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST JUST

IN ORDER TO SPARE MYSELF THE DESTINY OF THE HONOURABLE HAMZA BALI BOSNAWI AND HIS CREED FELLOWS - MY BOSNIAN COMPATRIOTS, MARTYRED IN THE SAME CAUSE TO WHICH I HAVE DEVOTED MY LIFE AND MY WORK - I ASK YOU KINDLY TO IMAGINE THAT ALL THAT FOLLOWS, IS ONLY A HAPPENING FROM THE MIDDLE AGES, WHICH I AM ADAPTING NOW FOR THE MODERN STAGE. I ALSO ASK YOU HUMBLY TO PRETEND BELIEF THAT ANY SIMILARITY WITH PRESENT EVENTS OR PERSONAGES, IS BUT PURE CHANCE, SO WITHOUT ANY SIGNIFICANCE IN ITSELF, SINCE THIS BOOK, IS NOT A BOOK ON A PHENOMENON, BUT ON THE VERY ESSENCE OF POLITICAL EVIL.

MY FAITHFUL READER SHOULD NOW, HAVING ACCOMPLISHED WHAT IS ASKED ABOVE, FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT THIS BOOK'S CHARACTER IS NOTHING BUT AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE PRINCIPLE, WHICH NEEDS, IN ORDER TO BE DISCLOSED IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD, A SULTAN AND HIS SHADOW, AND A SILKEN CORD IN HIS EXECUTOR'S HAND, AND A NECK.

SO MUCH, SO FAR.

PRELUDE

*This book is merely my transcript
for those who were absent
from what has been genuine,
from what has been real,
from what has been a reality.*

RHYMING

*... each thing rhymes a ring
for the performance of the human evil.*

I can give my word:
it is only because of that Congress plot
against Truth and Justice,
secured by God
for the people
through the Perfect Guides alone,
peace upon all of them!
in whom
most of the Bosnian,
as all the ignorant,
do not want,
or are not taught,
or are not allowed,
by their sultans,
or hoja,¹
or Party leaders,
to believe,
the Bosnian War Rhymes decided
to entrust
me,
who unshakeably give credence to the God-chosen
authorities solely,
with bringing them out
in the form of a book.
Why a book? an insolent one may argue.
Especially, why rhymes?
Because,

¹ In Bosnian, hodža, a Muslim priest.

you fool!,
they came into being with the war itself.

Should he ask again, How come?

the answer is:

Because this war has not happened
but in a rhyming manner.

Ignorance rhymes arrogance,
arrogance godlessness,
godlessness is rhymed with falsehood,

falsehood with haughtiness,
empty of God is rhymed with pride,

(nation) pride with (nation) cult,

egoism rhymes nepotism,

nepotism despotism,

despotism rhymes injustice,

grievance rhymes vengeance,

reprisals rhyme assaults,

aggression rhymes army supply,

arms always rhyme allies,

allies rhyme super-powers,

bogus

big

powers,

small

base

interests,

interests rhyme politics,

politics ideologies,

false ideas rhyme fabrication,

lying is rhymed with false election,

mock elections rhyme deprivation,

violation and blow are rhymed with war.

And then,

in an armed conflict,

literally everything is again rhymed:

a shot with dead or wounded,

a fire with ashes,

ashes with homelessness,
having-no-home with roaming,
wandering with suffering,
women and wine are rhymed with raping,
being raped with giving birth,
babies are rhymed with baby throats,
throats are rhymed with cut-throats,
knives are rhymed with butcheries,
massacres rhyme gore and screams,
spectacles and excitements rhyme,
each thing rhymes a ring
for the performance of the human evil.

Then,
all of a sudden,
a church bell,
made according to the commands of an innocent boy
who'd only tried to save his life
knowing nothing,
chimed.

Upon that scene of the victory of the instinct to create
over the instinct to annihilate,
Rubio regained his power of speaking with humans.

But I myself have to stop.

I have to make a pause.

A silent halt.

A minute of silence for the souls of victims
in remembrance of whom

these War Rhymes,

Bosnian,

came into existence.

To be a living witness of that

living

literature.

AN AMERICAN IN BOSNIA

*A timid gazelle,
already fatally wounded,
ran away.
So did Fawad, but he for good.*

Neither could my dear, never-met, brother in faith,
an American,
Fawad Ali,
may God accept his sacrifice!
understand, to what sort of people and land he had come.
A huge rucksack on his back,
dozens of letters from family members
who escaped in the nick of time,
allegedly enclosing green American bank-notes as urgent
help,
several other thousand dollars collected by himself
in his Saint Louis,
for the most needy.
Determined,
first,
to imprison,
for good,
within wed-lock,
all humiliation and pains suffered by a violated
innocent
Bosnian
girl.
I'm an American!
said he
self-confidently
just to conquer his tremor
as he got on board a Sarajevo bus

at the Zagreb Station.
And set himself by an Italian-journalist-looking Iranian,
whose passport,
believed my brother Fawad,
would be spat on,
by this nation,
encouraged,
on a daily basis,
from the very start of her ordeal,
by her Leader,
to keep staring at the sky,
instead of defending herself.

For:
the American jets are just about to appear on the horizon,
and drop their explosive babies
on the Chetniks'
heavily armed
military posts, growing like mushrooms on the sides of the
hills and mountains, encircling the Bosnian cities.

Sarajevo first.
Which mountains,
during the time of brotherhood and unity,
the people, now firing at each other,
used to climb together:
for sport,
a picnic
or a good booze-up.
So, his American passport,
he was waiting for it,
had to be immediately kissed.
The opposite was an initial shock.
Don't worry! addressed him,
with comforting words,
his Iranian fellow-traveller.
A strategy-expert who added frankly:
Iran and America are not
in the least

so distant
as a non-professional might think.
Just push a knitting needle through the school-globe
and you'll see:
it will go into the ball through the gut of the United States,
and come out,
on the other side,
through the stomach of Persia the Great.
What now follows is just by the way:
the Iranian was set on fire in his homeland when he
refused to replace, in his heart, mind and work,
Islâm Itself
with the Islamic Cause,
fixed up by the Iranian regime fixers.
As for Fawad,
quite true!
neither did he come to Bosnia on his President's orders.
He was not a member of any Benevolence,
he didn't announce his visit in any paper,
he was just a Fawad Ali.
A Muslim,
a successful computer expert,
software programmer;
good marketing, ambitious plans, slight Pakistani-origin
complex, bright future...
He came right from his Missouri, bounded not with any
other bounds but with love for his Bosnian
religious
and every upright human
fellows.
As the bus kept still on the last secure Igman plateau
swearing
it won't move any further downward
because of the excessive risk
of being shot
from below
by a drunken Ilidja poet and teacher...

Fawad got off,
and...
Oh, God! from where did,
all of a sudden,
all this crowd of old men,
and teenagers,
emerge?
And what are they trying to do with my luggage?
These letters are not for them.
The money is in my pouch.
This insignificant food-reserve is just for me,
nothing special,
several American halal-meat cans,
Chinese instant-soups,
some vitamins and pain-killers,
so as not to cost
this agonised nation
a single meal or medicine
during my stay in her country.
What are these people grasping at?
He rescued somehow his rucksack but understood not
before he started rolling down the slippery mountain's
side,
along with his weighty bag,
through the mud and slush and silence of the smooth
movements of those
whom he'd believed not to be able
to keep themselves
erect.
And now carrying,
on their feeble shoulders,
the massive luggage-baggage of those who've just arrived
with him from the outside world.
As well trained,
quick movements,
not a single fall,
instinct of life is more skilled than instinct of death,

and Rubiov decided to restart speaking
with the mortal.

Down,
in Butmir,
a Sarajevo suburban safe-zone,
in the same silence,
the icy rustle of German notes,
10 DM, in a whisper, per piece,
or whatever you give, uncle! auntie! Mister!
thanks!

Not shocked..., it was just the sharpest pain ever felt in his
heart.

It probably began at that moment,
his death within...

To whom have gone,
oh God!

all those sums, collected during numberless rallies
organised throughout the American continent?
All those life-saving dollars, given away for the starving
Bosnians...?

But Fawad endured once again.

A Muslim must have *busnizan*,
a good opinion about people or things unless proved
otherwise,

he reminded himself of an Islamic principle.

These are refugees from the just lost...

Town and village names sound strange to me,
but what's close, close...

is

that their fathers are on the battle-fields,
or in the concentration camps...

which are not,
no way!..

announced

urbi et orbi

the Hunter

on return to his Vienna base...,

mothers are inventing food for midnight dinners,
the owners of the refugee-packed houses are ever more
wrathful,
soldiers are looking for pretty girls,
the abusive smell of alcohol is mixing with fresh blood
spots on the virgin snow, shining under a pen-lamp's light,
the future martyrs' figures are looming out of the dark
hole;
halting,
each,
within the roughly cut
wooden
frame
of the improvised entrance,
for a flash:
a last photo of the whole figure to be taken by an
incidental glance before it gets decomposed
in the fading memory of all those
a part of whose lives he used to be once,
or in the faceless war statistics,
or in a piece of the stone, backing
colourlessly
the main beautifully patterned figure in a historical mosaic
in which
nobody would ever
recognise
him,
or in the grave, grave...
Fawad,
numbed with the cold and anguish,
along with other hundreds, was waiting for hours
to get permission to enter the underground tunnel;
dug beneath the city's Airport.
The only opening through which the Bosnian capital was
kept alive;
for a full four years.
And as he finally got in

with the help of the Iranian's pass-word,
he immediately lowered himself.
Forced to do so by the size of the damp muddy passage,
as were forced to do many a one
who'd never before bent either in prayer to God.
But he bowed down even more than necessary;
in shame.
Not to see:
the tunnel was crowded,
not with all those countless wounded who were more and
more desperately waiting to be transported
abroad!
abroad!
if not by the UN aircraft carriers,
for that is required
a relative,
brother, or sister, or a ...,
occupying the post of ...,
or a tough,
mighty,
Speciality of the Sarajevo office!
lady-secretary,
or...,
a dog, at least, guarding the Ruling Party's,
just being built,
in the midst of warfare,
new headquarters,
if not then to be transported somewhere by the
humanitarian relief carrying planes, then
at least
by these mine-trolleys.
Fixed in, crippled, frozen, hopeful,
and pushed,
through this dark mouth which is terrifying babies
who're then crying when everything should be deadened
the UN tanks full of enemies parading between their two
territories are just now passing over our heads,

the drops of rain...
By the mine-trolleys then,
pushed
farther!
farther!
to...
where to?
wherever!
just away!
from the four hospital walls; for years,
away!
from the cycle; fresh hopes, dead hopes,
away!
from the ring, cycled by the rival doctors and their rival
political masters,
away!
from the mind and body pains,
away!
from being a medical case for the easy-done PhDs.,
away!
from your own maimed monologue:
had not I gone that day...
hadn't I...
andn't...
I...
if only death comes!
By the mine-trolleys then,
pushed through the tunnel,
on the way out of the detained city of Sarajevo
to...
?
wherever,
just away!
transported by the mine-trolleys,
pushed by their mothers,
or sisters,
or foreign brothers-in-law,

or wives and kids,
and then carried,
before the crack of dawn,
up the slippery side of snowy Igman,
by the same
amateurish
family
medical
personnel.

Instead of such an echelon of Tunnel passengers, whom,
soon after, Fawad found to be filling Sarajevo's
bombarded
clinics,

in place of them brutally sobered up,
the passage of life was blocked with mine-trolleys;
drunk with alcoholic beverages,
and pregnant with black-market goods,
and escorted with a barrage of blasphemies against God,
Oh God!

Out of which text,
fortunately,
my late brother Fawad Ali,
an American,
may God forgive him and beautify his eternal abode!
could understand but God's name.

The rest was obvious from the context.

I don't know their language!
tried, probably, to comfort himself
a polite,
pious,

American guy,

I must have *busnižan*.

They are only praising the Almighty,
while asking His favour,
and their rude faces and behaviour are just an outcome of
their untold suffering.

That's how he endured once more, and set his foot

in the city of Sarajevo.
A modern rosary in his hands
purchased during pilgrimage to Mecca,
and counting,
upon a finger-push,
his endless *dhikr*
to the Only Owner of life,
and end.

A sack full of letters touring the city
struck round the clock,
from shelter to shelter,
from ruin to ruin,
from home to home,
to animate devastated faces,
he did not find it difficult.

But to understand how disappeared,
the very first day,
all those American greenbacks - he couldn't.
He still asked God to forgive these people
who unbearably suffered.

Saint Louis sympathy and money donors would forgive
them too.

He probably said to his God:
No, my Originator,
in Whose hand is my being and my naught,
I did not come here for the sake of these few pickpockets
and pilferers and black market robbers in whose hands
finishes
half the humanitarian aid.

He,
a clean-soul,
did not know
that the other half
used to disappear
in the hands
of some

...

&
their kinfolk
&
their partners
&
their partners' own kinsmen
&
the partners kin's own *strine i kućine*.
Forgive me, dear reader, for this untranslatable Bosnian
syntagm of the human villainy!

Never mind!
said my brother Fawad,
I still have the rest of the country to visit,
I've got my holy goal,
to protect,
with my wed...
He met her soon,
and felt in love at once.
Graceful, shivering gazelle!
He said straight what he wanted,
she was eager to accept.
No! said a local hoja,
pride-brimming,
provincial dignitaries-encircled,
no my daughter,
I wouldn't recommend it!
He is from afar.
He is a foreigner.
Who knows anything about his family,
plus,
he may defile your religion.
Just look...! What's that Iranian doing with him?
He may be of his creed...
Well yes true! that's all perfectly all right! Iranian food and
medicine and clothes and all that money for the
pilgrimages and tours and conferences... that is all most
welcome! and as for army supplies? oh most true! had it

not been for the Iranian weapons there would not be
Bosnia!

Who to care about *chadori*² Iranian ladies
collecting,
at the same time,
in the sacred Qom,
that ocean of knowledge,
their living from the market's trash?!

Who to mind if an Iranian *mahjuba*³ has to work half a year
to afford a *manto*,⁴
that her Bosnian "sister",
preferring her mini skirt,
chucks out,
the Iranian government gift,
as soon as she finishes her war-visit to the mahjubas,
world-imprisoned,
state?!

Who to be worried about Iranian masses
who have to work a full year
to pay the operations for their critically ill children,
or have to beg, beg...?!

Who to believe that generals of the holy *Sepah*,
(just not the honest,
the awakened)
are fighting now in Bosnia
their second revolution?!

With the slogans, re-designed:
Not for Islâm!
But Maslahât!

With new goals in their views:
1,000
green

² Chador is an Iranian style of Muslim women's clothing, while the word chadorî is the **attribute**.

³ Designation for a Muslim woman who observes the Islamic code of covering herself.

⁴ A mantle.

American dollars
 a month;
 their annual income - at home!
 And all this together,
 all that huge Bosnian bill to be paid from the Iranian
baytu'l-mâl.
 That is, the people's funds.
 All this is quite good,
 concluded the local hoja, sharing nothing with honourable
 Shaykh Sirrî,
 the Slave of The All Compassionate,
 may God grant him forgiveness!
 but the same blueness of the sky over the city of Fojnica.
 Equally cerulean as if there were not the span of two
 hundred years between a hoja of this time of ignorance,
 and an XVIII-XIX century real Muslim divine,
 Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahmân Sirrî,
 who wrote in ecstasy:
If the Lord takes His word from everything,
all things would lose their forms;
become non-existence.
 Above all,
 added Fawad's non-destined religious-marriage-ceremonial
 master,
 haven't they been saying to us,
*bolan!*⁵
 our leaders,
 time and again,
 during closed Party sessions,
Let's take from them more than possible,
and then,
at the proper time,
fight them,
for they've been corrupting our religion?
 For,

⁵ In Bosnian: a word without precise meaning but very often used in a colloquial language as a form of address.

unlike us,
they've been doing nothing but building castles in the air!
Said Džemal, the Fragile,
said Nedžad, the Half-Witted,
said Hasan, the Underhanded,
a would-be saviour of my homeland.
Yâ Haidâr, let me cry with you, leaning against the wall of
Medina's Bâqi´a burial ground;
a beating heart...!
To resume,
uttered the local hoja,
unexpectedly authorised,
by whom?
to decide about the fortune of the girl for whom,
till that crucial moment of the war,
he absolutely did not care.
Nor did those around him.
I would never give you in marriage with my own hand to
one who believes in fourteen perfect...
I say, No!, No!, full-stop!
A timid gazelle,
already fatally wounded,
ran away.
So did Fawad, but he, for good.
A real Bosnian martyr,
may God grant him His forgiveness,
and accept his offering!
Broken.
To spoil her religion? argued he,
silently,
on his way back to America.
What religion at all has she been taught by them, sitting,
kingly,
in the niches of their mosques,
and waiting for people to come to them and express their
reverence?
As if their Prophet,

blessing and peace be upon him and his purified
progeny!
had not given them a perfect example,
walking streets,
and cross-roads,
and markets,
and mixing themselves with people,
and being hungry with them,
and paying them a visit when sick,
and defending them when wronged and deprived,
and supporting them when arrested and tortured,
how to call them,
from darkness,
to the light?!

What does she know about Islâm apart from her Muslim
name,

for even which little she had to pay with her innocence?!
By whom have they been commissioned to advise a lost
injured antelope what direction to go,
when it took them,
the religious judges,

full six months to make a decision concerning both:
the violated Bosnian females,
and their unwanted babies, the innocent fruit of this war's
greatest crimes?

Why did they wait for so long?
As if God's Perfect Religion was not revealed 14 centuries
ago,
as if ever since no single Muslim woman was raped,
as if they were not given by God the power of reasoning,
as if God's Perfect Law was not alive,
just re-animated during their war-session,
as if...

Girls and women are not to be blamed!
announced his verdict the then Bosnian religious head,
the râ'îs,
after a long six months.

And as for babies? Well..., better to give them away!

To whom?

Oh.....God!

And what for?

To be sold on the black market for kids where these
blameless victims of politics blasphemy and alcohol would
arrive branded

as those African children

on their foreheads

with signs:

this one to survive as a whole,
that one just through his/her heart,

or kidney,

or brain,

in the bodies of the sick children
of the world's affluent.

A timorous antelope disappeared.

So will Fawad, but he for good.

They were anxious about who I was and to where I might
take her.

Are they worried likewise about where will be taken that
line of naked bodies parading on the Sarajevo platform,

raised by the woman-flesh merchants,

for the beauty-queen competition,

at the same time as deadly crashes of countless grenades
are taking their

massive

portions.

And rows and rows of Bosnia's

most charming boys are filling,

like spring flower young grass,

Nad-Kovaçi cemetery.

Till only yesterday their park,

with whose ancient

stony

residents

they used to play foot-ball matches:

life-hood against death-hood.
Or game:
hide-and-peek.
Fawad decided to endure no more.
But before he left,
forever,
he tried
once more
to say
all his pains,
directly,
into my fingers,
which are now turning into script
the Bosnian
War
Rhymes.
Of whose
Lâ ilâba illallâh,
Hallelujah,
Alleluia,
Fawad knew,
he'd also been a tone.
He sent me a faxed invitation to visit him in Saint Louis,
providing everything according to the American Visa
Section requirements:
a well-off sponsor,
American war-veteran,
prestige address,
phone and fax,
reason for visit,
all...
To whom it may concern!
A guy working at the American Visa section in Istanbul,
my and Fawad's hoodoo,
did not feel concerned.
Get her, she looks like a cat!

a puppy-woof laugh at the photo in the Bosnian
passport, turning it towards his colleague.

You look like a refugee!

said he in the highest democratic style,

We won't grant you a visa!

he added, turning his disdainful face towards Black Muslim
garb.

The same one was called in,

only six years before,

by the then head of the Section,

personally.

You must have suffered tremendously in your (socialist) country.

Have a nice time in the United States!

Multiple year-valid admittance to an America in a cold war
with Communism.

These are other times.

The communist ghost's sunk in his glass,

another ghost's been wandering the globe;

the soul of Fawad Ali's dîn.⁶

An American's, who possibly said to his God:

Now, I have enough, my Lord!

I've fought my wars, both American and Bosnian,

and got fatally wounded.

I'm choosing now being with You,

my Eternal Lord!

rather than running,

as much as a glimpse more,

after this exquisite,

but transient,

Creation of Yours.

A car accident took away a Bosnian,

and American,

⁶ Islâm is not properly understood if the term religion is applied to it in the Western sense. Dîn is a qur'anic untranslatable designation of God-revealed religion, comprising all aspects of life and the world, unlike the word in use, which covers only man's relation to the Creator.

martyr,
Fawad Ali,
as a finger-push device counted his endless invoking of
God.
May he be received with grace!

C Z A R D E A T H

Once upon a time...

After Fawad's departure, the Rhymes went into mourning
for a while.

But the roar of a czar, at the very onset of the Sarajevo
marathon with death,
broke the Rhymes' silence;
the Rhymes' mourning clothes.

Once upon a time...

They called it the Pioneer valley.

And in it, there was a cage,
and within, there was a lion.

And the gangs of the unruly Sarajevo youth,
and those well-bred but inquisitive,
and the herds of daddies and mummies,
and grannies and granddads,
and the mob of Bašćaršija ruffians,
and one single lion to gratify them all.

Run away!

tried I several times to encourage that creature,
created by God dignified and free,
and now turned,
by other creatures,
into a plaything.

Who's ever seen the czar of all animals surrender?
Get out to the wild!

What are you doing here in this enclosure kept as a feeble
bird and allowing yourself to be provoked with the sharp
tools or insulting tongues of those whom you could
swallow in the twinkle of an eye....?!
Once,

finding myself shut in,

I understood:
about freedom, it is easy to chat if one finds oneself on the
free side of the bar,
but if behind...

However, nobody in the city has ever drawn any lesson
from the lion's
sad
destiny.

What may happen,
for example,
to any czar,
or then,
that each lion's a czar for all other animals but not always
of all his kind.

The third lesson is to be learned from one's own
experience.

Namely, when everything started, nobody had time to
think of, let alone to call on
a hypothetical czar from the Sarajevo Zoo.

For a few days, the king of the jungle kept silence,
himself extremely baffled by the flaming blare, which
began flying over his head.

With the passage of time, the fire was getting ever closer.
Initially confused, the czar understood:

Pioneer valley,
Sarajevo Zoo,
and its funny residents,
became,
all of a sudden,
a no-man's zone,
and no-state's population.

The very front-line.

All humans including those who used to feed them and
clean their lodgings disappeared
as if nothing living were left behind.

The last the lion saw was an early morning wavy line of
mottled dimija,

sleeping kids in hands,
faltering pairs of trousers,
descending one side of a hill,
and ascending another hill's side.
Between which two small green heights,
now in quarrel,
Pioneer valley,
and Sarajevo Zoo,
and the lake full of beautiful swans and other fine
creatures,
and a small stream of always warbling water,
and the biggest cage,
and the lion in it,
became a wedge.

Between now two states:
one of humans,
the other of humanoids.
Incessant barrage-fire.
Ever increasing hunger.
Unbearable starvation.
Famine.
Fear.
Roar.

Several times, I had to go to the ascending side of the hill
in order to find,
with my friends,
a piece of bread,
or a drop of water to wash up,
or a pause from,
in the city-centre where I lived constant,
grenade-fall,
and,
I believed,
a second of peaceful sleep,
when I heard him; roaring.
First night, that was an angry roar,
one of impotence,

a walk round the cage,
to and fro,
as I used to see and hear him
some time ago,
walking and roaring when enraged by visitors.
On my second night, it was the roar of a plea:
for mercy,
for a portion of meat,
for any food,
for company.
I decided to go to him,
at once,
at my own risk,
to help the only czar in the city whom I recognised as
such.

But my empty hands stopped me.
I didn't have any food for myself, either.
The third night,
when I went over there,
oh!
that was the roar which I will never forget.
The roar overflowed with all accumulated frustrations,
all pains,
all suffering,
all humiliations,
all incurable nostalgia;
for his birthplace,
for the creatures of his genus,
for natural freedom and dignity,
that was the roar of agony,
a deep,
long,
loud,
moving,
roar of dying.

The awe-inspiring roar of a czar's death.
I'll never forgive myself that I did nothing for him, either.

For the only real czar who lived in the place of my birth
where each building corridor hides
at least one.

Fancied, of course!

I can't say with complete certainty
that the other tools of the Sarajevo citizens' fun,
from the same precinct,
also died,
during the first days of the siege,
their own
touching
deaths.

They might have been rescued by a mimetic humanitarian
organisation, due to the prices on the world market for
zoo-residents,

about which I haven't learnt anything as yet.

But I dare not imagine some frail figures
like the flamingo,

or the beautiful and proud peacock,
with his wife much less lovely, so awfully jealous,

Lady peahen,

or to picture the bison,

or zebra,

or grizzly,

or polar bear,

then koala, tiger, cougar or lynx,

a sly fox or my Capricorn,

and all the rest of the tenants of that small Sarajevo Zoo
as dying,

during that cannonade,

in their defenceless pens

heard not by men,

fallen out over one and the same homeland,

for the sake of whose united enjoyment they were barred
far from their own.

Human beings no longer had time for that jest,
many of them not even for life,

from both the sides between which
these innocent objects of the human frolic
were driven, a wedge.