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WAITING FOR THE BOGUMILS

Milorad Pejić

For Mak Dizdar

Just as Tibetan nomads choose their headman
by a throw of dice in which the one who loses
the gamble wins, it's fallen to me to continue
to wait for the Bogumils after you. So that there
is always someone who will go out to meet them
in the language they understand.

Every day I open the house of our forefathers,
bring out figs, and pour the wine, reading the stone
while I wait for the Bogumils. I enjoy this work but
I can see that my children are already growing old
and that my time on earth is running out, too. Soon
I will go lie down, like you, in the coldness of space
and cover myself with a stećak* like with a comforter.
I therefore seek someone to relieve me, someone
who will wait for centuries to come out to meet me
in the language I understand.

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* Stećak, pl. stećci: medieval tombstones in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighboring countries.

Translated by Omer Hadžiselimović

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