

# Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

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## Sarajevo (1951)

Lawrence Durrell

Bosnia. November. And the mountain roads  
 Earthbound but matching perfectly these long  
 And passionate self-communings counter-march,  
 Balanced on scarps of trap, ramble or blunder  
 Over traverses of cloud: and here they move,  
 Mule-teams like insects harnessed by a bell  
 Upon the leaf-edge of a winter sky,

And down at last into this lap of stone  
 Between four cataracts of rock: a town  
 Peopled by sleepy eagles, whispering only  
 Of the sunburnt herdsman's hopeless ploy:  
 A sterile earth quickened by shards of rock  
 Where nothing grows, not even in his sleep,

Where minarets have twisted up like sugar  
 And a river, curdled with blond ice, drives on  
 Tinkling among the mule-teams and the mountaineers,  
 Under the bridges and the wooden trellises  
 Which tame the air and promise us a peace  
 Harmless with nightingales. None are singing now.

No history much? Perhaps. Only this ominous  
 Dark beauty flowering under veils,  
 Trapped in the spectrum of a dying style:  
 A village like an instinct left to rust,  
 Composed around the echo of a pistol-shot.

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