

Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal
Međunarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezični, online časopis

Hiža of Mile

Mak Dizdar

The hiža ¹ of our fathers was founded here to fix virtue more strongly in the hearts of men

May it ever be open wide for welcome visitors and for the great of heart

For guests for elders and other believers

For all good people for all good Bosnians

For all warriors in the war that is waged against war

And various other small and mighty harms and evils

For all who flee from their flaming homes

For those fleeing the blazing circle of pyres and fleeing the hangman's noose

For all who are burnt for ever aspiring to the sun far and great

For all who have uttered the right word in the right hour

Who had their hands cut off for a single word on the bloody path seeking an outcome

For the word that bread is bread that wine is wine and that water is water

For those whose living flesh was burned and cheeks marked with a burning brand

By those who ever appeal to the laws of God's mercy and to canon law

For those whose tongues were torn from their throat for not betraying the word they gave

For those condemned to die on horses' tails

between two horsemen

May the hiža of our fathers be open wide

For those damned by the heaviest curse

From the consecrated altars of Provence, Lombardy, Zara, Arcady, and Rascia

In the stupor of incense in the militant press of crosses and swords in that bitter choir

For those thrice damned for they were not yet

Butchered and slaughtered on their own doorstep before women and children

May the great hiža of our fathers be always open wide

For those who pay no heed to ancient and new tzars

For true kings and false for bans and barons for boyars

For their ample treasure, for many ducats, gold dinars, for that evil money

For men who never miss paying taxes but never bribe the collectors blaming and cursing them

openly

May the doors of the house of our fathers be open wide

For those who in meetings speak words mild and pure not only to their kin and kind

For those who live without envy yet life always beats them, only mocks and laughs at them
 May it be open for the unknown comrade for the unknown brother
 For all that pine in the darkness of their body's confinement
 Yearning that that word be for all men that they become brothers with that word
 May the hiža of our fathers be open wide all night and always
 For the one who left long ago and now treads in darkness toiling from afar
 But knows that he will arrive awake where someone awaits him
 May the house of our fathers be open wide
 But if someone in love of himself shuts that door of virtue
 May the house of our fathers crumble to its foundations in my soul
 Into a heap may it be crushed may it turn into bare soot and black ashes
 May hot scorpions and snakes breed in it as in the den of Satan
 Forgive you who are condemned and cursed in this slander of the slanderer
 But the house of our fathers without the welcome traveler and the dear guest
 The house of our fathers it is not

Translated by Omer Hadžiselimović - © 2005 Omer Hadžiselimović

Notes

1. Mile was for a time the seat of the head of the Bosnian Church. King Tvrtko (who ruled Bosnia from 1353 to 1391) was probably crowned there as King of Bosnia. The djed's house served as a safe house for all those who were persecuted and sought sanctuary in it. Djed means grandfather, which was the title given to the leader of the Bosnian Church. ↩

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