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Emina

Aleksa Šantić

Last night, returning from the warm hamam,
I passed by the garden of the old imam,
And lo, in the garden, in the shade of a jasmine,
There with a pitcher in her hand stood Emina.

What beauty! By my Muslim faith I could swear,
She wouldn't be ashamed if she were at the sultan's!
And the way she walks and her shoulders move . . .
–Not even a hodja's amulet could help me!

I offered her salaam, but by my faith,
Beautiful Emina wouldn't even hear it.
Instead, scooping water in her silver pitcher,
Around the garden she went to water the roses.

A wind blew from the branches down her lovely shoulders
Unraveling those thick braids of hers.
Her hair gave off a scent of blue hyacinths,
Making me giddy and confused!

I nearly stumbled, I swear by my faith,
But beautiful Emina didn't come to me.
She only gave me a frowning look,
Not caring, the naughty one, that I'm crazy for her!

Translated by Omer Hadžiselimović – ©2006 Omer Hadžiselimović

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