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The Balkans

Milorad Pejić

I've never anywhere seen a quince, but lindens
bloom in Scandinavia also. Rinsed by the tea
of rains, though, their scent is faint. Like a strong
perfume, the scent of the Balkan linden tree
in summer gets into both blankets and sweaters.
Quinces rust on the wardrobes in cold bedrooms
in the fall.

In the Balkans both good and evil are enlarged
and so they are never boring. In their trap I fell
a long time ago when as a child I was loved and
transferred by all, smokers and alcoholics, from
arms to arms, from lap to lap. I would scream
and I would struggle, just for show, never with
all my strength lest they drop me accidentally,
lest I accidentally break free of them.

Milorad Pejić

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Translated by Omer Hadžiselimović

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