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Festive Night

Isak Samokovlija

”Have you heard the wind blowing today around noon time from the distant mountains still covered by the deep snow?

Tonight is a festive night. The fruit trees are awakening tonight, they are awakening from their winter sleep and rest.”

Bencion turned to his wife. ”Open the window, please,” – he said.

The mother stood up and slowly opened one casement and then the other one. The children were watching, holding their breath and waiting for what was going to happen, what the father would say next. Every year, this story seems new and more wonderful to them, as if the father always adds something new to it.

”Listen up children” – he said. ”Listen to hear the trees awake. Listen. The hearts begin to beat again, to beat just like the hearts in the clocks. The heart beats within the trees as well, but silently, not heard with the ear, only felt with the soul. Listen, you can hear the juices gushing from the deep roots below. Listen to the trees awakening, my children.”

The children were still as they were enchanted by the father’s voice. None of them moved in their seats. The room was warm and quiet. A fresh, cool air entered the open window. Burning wood was crackling in the round stove.

”Listen up!” – said the father again.

The children leaned one ear against the window. They were listening. They listened as if listening to a magical music coming from somewhere far away.

It was a calm February night.

”Do you hear it?” – the father interrupted the silence.

Lejka spoke.

I hear… I hear… a rose blooming beneath the window… I hear the bees buzzing…

Her cheeks were blushing and glowing when she said that.

The mother moved her hand gently, she took the girl and embraced her. ”My sweetheart!” – she whispered and teared up.

”Yes, you can hear it” – said the father. ”You can hear: flowers blooming, apples and pears, almonds and apricots, sweet and sour cherries, lemons and oranges blossoming, warm winds rustling in the leaves and spreading sweet smells. Listen, you can hear the song of juices that gushed out today from the heart of the awakened fruit trees.

Let us close the window now. Have a taste of all fruit, my children; wish for it so that the awakened trees can hear you. They will not be able to resist your wishes.”

Abridged from: Riječi Benciona Albaharija by Isak Samokovlija

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