Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne
An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal
Međunarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezični, online časopis

Waiting For My Soul

Adin Ljuca

for Dominika Křesťanová

Dear Wayles, I'm back from a long journey.

Rain saw me off in Prague and greeted me in Syracuse.

Were the heavens lamenting my departure or my return?

Or was it just a normal change of location

which I try to assign some emotional higher sense to?

The plane took off gently, pierced the Prague rain

and climbed through the clouds. Gray, dark, when seen from below

but here they shine brilliant white. I meant to write:

"from a bird's-eye view" but I soon realized that birds never do

see them that way — only human pride rises so high.

Blinded by fear of flying, by brilliant sun

and an aureole of clouds, I sailed through the heavenly blueness,

as if looking from the other world to view ours.

In the heavens it was better weather than on Earth.

Even in hell it's better than where wars are fought.

I listen to music to relax. Only silence can

rival it in strength. With hundreds of miles behind us,

my legs grow numb from sitting still in the seat.

But then—a red spot far down on the horizon: the sun

is low, dangerously low, as if not setting

but sinking and drowning in the white silence.

With a routine hand motion I shut the window shade

as one closes a finished book.

I've brought two "American poems" from Europe

and carried a handful of poetic images that the strict inspectors

in Prague and Atlanta let pass and imposed no duty…

And this e-mail that I'm writing you

I think I'll rework into a poem…

but first I must, as the Indians once used to

when arriving after a long journey, sit down and wait

for my soul to catch up with me.

Translated by Wayles Browne

The preceding text is copyright of the author and/or translator and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.