

Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal
Me?unarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezi?ni, online ?asopis

Sarajevo (1951)

Lawrence Durrell

Bosnia. November. And the mountain roads
Earthbound but matching perfectly these long
And passionate self-communings counter-march,
Balanced on scarps of trap, ramble or blunder
Over traverses of cloud: and here they move,
Mule-teams like insects harnessed by a bell
Upon the leaf-edge of a winter sky,

And down at last into this lap of stone
Between four cataracts of rock: a town
Peopled by sleepy eagles, whispering only
Of the sunburnt herdsman's hopeless ploy:
A sterile earth quickened by shards of rock
Where nothing grows, not even in his sleep,

Where minarets have twisted up like sugar
And a river, curdled with blond ice, drives on
Tinkling among the mule-teams and the mountaineers,
Under the bridges and the wooden trellises
Which tame the air and promise us a peace
Harmless with nightingales. None are singing now.

No history much? Perhaps. Only this ominous
Dark beauty flowering under veils,
Trapped in the spectrum of a dying style:
A village like an instinct left to rust,
Composed around the echo of a pistol-shot.

From Lawrence Durrell's Collected Poems and reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown Group Ltd, London on behalf of the Estate of Lawrence Durrell – Copyright © Lawrence Durrell 1960

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.