

# Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

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## With My Jesus

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### An Invitation to Dear Jesus

I'd be so happy if, oh Jesus,  
you would enter my dwelling deign.  
Where things quite common hang on the walls.  
Where day drops off early on the window pane.

I would tell you of lighting  
A dim lamp to lengthen the short day.  
Of my very small life, serving  
rancorously with my brothers away.

I would tell you of the house of men.  
Of panes which are sometimes blue.  
Of doors you have to stoop to enter.  
Of locks shutting tightly and true.

I would tell you, while smoking  
a common cigarette, of all men and of their names.  
Some old clothes always wearing,  
Others wearing new ones all the same.

And how there are seven days full of worry  
Oh Jesus, and each one as the one before.  
And when your wound starts being sore  
you pull your hat down more and more.

I would tell you things for a long time, till we hear  
dew dropping down the window pane.  
Then quite dumbly I would say to you:  
You are tired, Jesus, you should dream again.

Oh lie down and sleep on this bed  
which man redeems every day.  
I will bind with solace your sad forehead  
Sleep, and on the bench I'll stay.

## Where I Would Take Jesus

Gentle Jesus, at a late hour, when  
your poor ones are still wide awake,  
I'll take you to a humble tailor  
To make a plain suit for you.

Then to a lowly cobbler, too, who all  
night hammers sharp nails into a hard sole,  
While shoe Factories hum crankily.  
A million pairs they put together in an hour.

Then on to the man who makes hats,  
with rims sunk low, to conceal the pain.  
One will snuggle onto your head.  
Roomy enough to receive your aureole.

We'll then go to the inn near town,  
Resembling an old, beached ship.  
Where brothers at table, in deep sorrow  
Throw glasses and hats on the floor.

The first crow of the rooster will be a sharp arrow  
from which your heart will bleed.  
The second will be the gloom of your brow.  
You will recognize neither people nor things.

And when the roosters crow the third time,  
oh Jesus, you will stagger with pain.  
Your hat will fall from your head.  
Your hat and your aureole.

## Divine Circus

Today I ache for harlequins  
and sad and dumb clowns.  
on my wounded heart, Jesus,  
apply please some cotton balms.

Today I would like to be very ugly,  
to hear throbbing taunts of the mob,  
to be hunch-backed and limpy,  
to have a long nose, very long.

The ache of clowns and harlequins,  
my Jesus, afflicts me so.  
With the monkey, who calmly preens  
in sight of everybody, to them let us go.

Let us go also with the bear in pants

dancing with the stick cleverly,  
and later, his old cap offering  
humbly asking for donations paltry.

Let us also follow the drum, whose grey skin  
is so holy and so dear.  
Since the drum is a dead donkey,  
its implacable beat we still hear.

Thus let us go to clowns and harlequins.  
My Jesus holy, on this very day.  
We shall for them of severe pain die,  
And they for us of laughter pass away.

## **Jesus and Me Before the Town Rooster**

His call is no longer very important.  
The beating of his wings not any more.  
A high chimney through the roof pierced  
by its scream wakes us long before.

Lo how his wings are cropped away,  
and his spurs blunt, quite blunt now.  
Dawns of the siren-woken day  
to him are all unknown anyhow.

His voice used to have the pride of a prince,  
Daybreak used to shiver on crops the dew.  
It gave armies at midnight the creeps  
Before the battle, signaling his wrath true.

And now, with this urban soot  
he tends to grow blacker every day.  
In a little while no one will know  
Whether he's a rooster or a crow.

Therefore let him for once grow  
wings for a journey distant and high,  
let him flock with swallows swift  
and to a kind of south with them fly.

## **The Donkeys' Dream**

Now in this late hour, Jesus, we  
shall enter every barn and there  
you will pull gently, tenderly,  
each donkey by his ear.

And when you leave at dead of night  
they will discuss thoroughly

who is the one whose ear bright  
you held the longest tenderly.

And each of them will sleep again  
A most beautiful dream in its soul:  
that your soft hand still caresses  
its very ear once more.

## Jesus Visiting Us

I

Oh Jesus, no matter when you come,  
in our home, ruined and desolate,  
I will sing you a hearty welcome  
together with my little sister bright.

Singing, all white from nearness yours,  
she will offer to you bread and salt:  
an ancient village custom of ours  
when we have a visiting dear soul.

Then you will be taken by my little sister  
to the simple fare adorning the table.  
-Oh, dear Jesus, please sit there  
And take off your hat and your halo.-

She will say this and she will then  
stand in holy pain before you.  
And full of pure loneliness of heaven  
on a peg hang your halo true.

Let it shine all the darkness through  
instead of the oil lamp we light each night.  
We'll have to cover our faces blue  
so strong will be its shiny light.

II

Later we'll take you to the yard, toting  
before us your halo's shine true.  
And with this celestial light glowing,  
our empty barn we'll show you.

And empty stables with the drying hay  
like on a tomb pretty flowers.  
Here at midnight horses' souls arrive.  
You can hear them nibble invisible oats.

We'll show you a flock of misty white  
crawling through the newly grown hedge.

Oh Jesus, our burnt sheep in the night,  
Come here and lie in the pen though dead.

And we shall harness the only horse  
to take a ride through our town small.  
The sky is always low and overcast,  
and under it booms a muffled waterfall.

And should you ask me, as our nag old  
drives on, afraid of swaying reeds, though,  
-Which land is it? I will say quite bold:  
Oh, Jesus, it is just Bosnia, you know.

### III

And later, when even roosters sleep,  
we'll feel your head slowly slip  
onto shoulder mine, or hers in turn,  
its strong shine will constantly keep.

And at that earthly hour late  
the sister will for you softly sing.  
Oh, Jesus, you will doze off then  
tired of the sluggish trot's ring.

Occasionally, as fog turns to snow  
gathering on your holy dress,  
She will cover your head with the halo  
slipped on your ear, with utmost tenderness.

## Jesus Reading the Papers

I know, my kind Jesus, when in a long rain  
I bring you bread for supper under my coat,  
entering the room I will see you full of pain,  
your holy form over the paper bent.

Unnoticed by you I shall sit,  
watch darkening of your pure face,  
while you scan one and another news bit,  
while agitated you turn page after page.

How could I console you then,  
full of shame before you standing?  
And would my voice be forceful again  
in your presence this world defending?

On heavy lines my tiny frame would fall.  
Human joy in my eye burning.  
Oh, I would in an almost steady voice tell,

let our little globe keep on turning.

I would exit very quietly then  
 leaving you alone in your distress  
 praying at the threshold your anger to be calmed  
 by, on the table, fragrant bread's mildness.

To Jesus in the Tabernacle

I

Alone

And now I'm walking, a small sojourner, I,  
 alone again under this world's cocked hat.  
 You have left, and your figure dear and high  
 Invisibly shines in the tabernacle sacred.

Are you really there now, in that bread white,  
 in the tabernacle, before a smoldering light,  
 are you there with your body and soul, your heart,  
 is there the balm for my daily plight?

As I pass your dwelling, with unfinished business,  
 where you hide in the chest, shackled in gold,  
 my soul full of worry, my heart full of wounds,  
 would stay sleepless with you eternally, yet not old.

To you I reveal all that's hidden in my soul.  
 I call upon you to share my hard day.  
 I whisper long to you, ardently invoke you,  
 And you, invisible, are silent, shining away.

And lo, now quite often I forget  
 In passing to take my hat for you off,  
 as I hurry alone, late at night,  
 with a pack of supper on my staff.

II

A Dream

Some day I will return to my little house,  
 After many long days have fled.  
 At a late table I will nod, dreaming of you,  
 with my earthen jug and brown bread.

The nearness of bread will evoke in me,  
 winding through hawthorns, a country road,  
 around it the sound of wheat sleepy,

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stifled by the doughy smell of old.

In my dream, quite happy and joyous in all,  
I will not wish for anything more:  
just to embrace brown bread and hear in it  
breathing of your heart and of your soul.

*Translated by Zvonimir Radeljković, Omer Hadžiselimović, and Keith Doubt - © 2010  
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