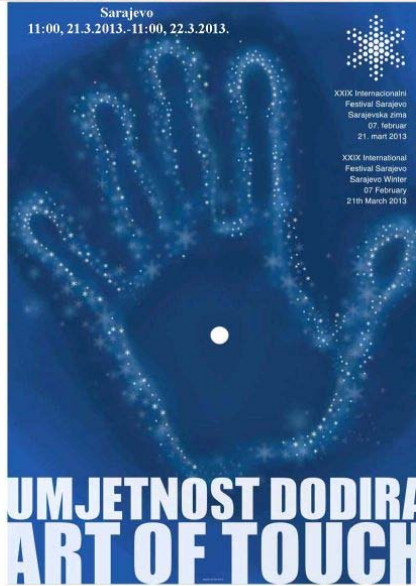


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# DIOGEN TRAŽI ČOVJEKA POETSKI MARATON



<http://www.diogenpro.com/2132013---world-poetry-day.html>

**Ali F. Bilir, Turkey**

## **Prior To Long Journeys**

*To my daughter Defne*

Looking back to my roots,  
long journeys, many steps,  
how gracefully my homeland  
has run after me, snow covered  
those glittering clouds  
just above the changing mountains.

Like a small child am I  
whose heart cannot match  
the rhythm of this world.

The lonely wind has gone  
with me. In me is desire, desire  
such hope it brings!

Maybe I will fall into  
the emptiness of my youth.  
Quite alone is this home  
with the door latched  
and behind me the serenity  
the emptiness  
all my long journeys.

**Translated by M. Ali Sulutas**  
**Edited in English by Susan Bright**

## Autumn Memories

Autumn,  
time to collect  
late summer vines of dried peppers  
from the earthen roof-tops of huts,  
in rushing rain,  
black damsons, sliced apples,  
melancholy around us,  
amber bunches of grapes  
that pale in boiling ash water.

Dried passions  
gradually lean across the day,  
from a shadowed-faced sky,  
are bagged up, taken away,  
along with an urgent desire to arrive  
at last.

Anticipating the next migration,  
we moderate our worries.  
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Life settles back,  
to the ancient riverbed  
and we remember only traces  
of bitter sorrows  
which and quickly,  
like summer, like life.

Autumn  
is this bunch of sweet basil  
I hold in my palm  
like a faded photograph  
that appeared suddenly  
and was wiped clean  
by time.

Autumn,  
at night, as moonlight  
flows down from my window  
your smell lingers on my flesh  
along with ancient memories  
as we wander far from home  
together again.

**Translated by M. Ali Sulutas**  
**Edited in English by Susan Bright**

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## Fearsome Game

I pick up thrown stones  
instead of roses. At dawn I walk  
over broken glass to the gallows  
barefoot, heartbroken  
but forthright, without bowing.  
Do not avert your glance  
from my passion.

My quivering body is witness  
to the fear. It is a long walk  
I know. The cinders beneath my feet  
are burning, they are the soil.  
I wear a shirt of fire.  
Let your attention water my voice.

I am picking up thrown stones  
instead of hope. Constantly bleeding  
is my heart. I wish my vessel of sorrow  
were full. I wish I walked in the garden  
of words like Pir Sultan<sup>1</sup>

I have been picking up these thrown stones  
since Spartacus.<sup>2</sup>  
Every love is an Ebabil.<sup>3</sup>  
Bad words are like bullets.  
I am again crucified.

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<sup>1</sup> **Pir Sultan Abdal:** A 16<sup>th</sup> Century revolutionary poet; leader of the rebellions against the unjust, oppressive and cruel Sultan of that era. He was arrested, stoned and later hung by the Ottoman Governor Hizir Pasha. While he was stoned, one of his loved friends was throwing him roses instead of stones. He was offended nevertheless. Two verses of his poem he wrote relate to this event: *"Dropping down over my head like the rain / Most hurting me are the roses thrown on me by my best friend."*

<sup>2</sup> **Spartacus:** The revolutionary and fearless leader of first slave uprising in history happened in the Roman Empire. He was captured in the year of 71 BC by the Roman General Pompeus and later executed.

<sup>3</sup> **Ebabil:** A bird resembling a swallow mentioned in the Holy Koran. Legend says that these birds, carrying stones with their beaks, were sent over the soldiers of Ebrehe, the tyrant Governor of Yemen and the entire army of Governor was killed by stones dropped down by the birds.

My only life is with you  
in the past. To escape this fear  
the whistle of memory trills on.  
Sorrow's poison cannot kill,  
hope is born of you.  
Oh! My heart carry me!

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## **On The River Bank**

Tell me where to stand,  
here, on the river bank, how dark  
and wet the road we walked.

Here,  
at the threshold,  
the key under the doormat remains.

Whenever a bird flies  
overhead, I turn my face  
toward the mountains.

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## Life Is Better Today

The life is a little better today,  
the voices of children  
in spite of a smell from the distance.

Life is a little better today.  
I am over fifty and grow  
tranquil, as after a storm.

Life is a little better today.  
We serve only olive and bread,  
the happiness of a cup of tea.

Life is a little better today.  
In the poems of Nazim<sup>4</sup> I search  
for the longing of my father.

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<sup>4</sup> **Nazim Hikmet** (1902-1963): The first and foremost modern Turkish poet, was sentenced as a political prisoner to exile and spent his last thirteen years away from his homeland.