



EGIDA: PUTOPIS: Drugi put u Albaniji

NN: Tomislav Marijan Bilosnić, hrvatski književnik, upravo se vratio iz Albanije gdje je predstavio svoju svjetski poznatu haiku-zbirku *Velebit*

N: SUNČEVA SVJETLOST OD ZADRA DO ELBASANA  
(haibun)

Gotovo tisuću godina Albanija je bila ili porobljena, ili zatvorena i izolirana, što se danas ne može osjetiti u ljudima. Albanci su kao i njihove planine, simboli vječne nade. Ovdje ako čovjek i pati, on to ne pokazuje kao ni njegova rodna stijena. Kao da se božanski val snage zaustavio na ovome mjestu, u planinama izdignutim iznad Jadranskog, Jonskog i Egejskog mora. Ovdje nikad ne treba kompas, čovjek se uvijek kreće prema suncu. To i jest ono što me opet vuče u Albaniju – putovanje u svjetlost!

Dug, dug, dug je put.  
Sunčeva svjetlost seže  
do Elbasana.

Prošloga puta u Skadru mi se učinilo kako svjetlo ne dolazi od Sunca već od vode nad čijim ponorom lebdi orao koji je u trenutku moga ulaska preko mosta u grad poletio iz svoga gnijezda, iz utvrde koja je nekad bila prijestolnica ilirskih vladara i utvrda plemena Labeata. U Tirani, sklonjen pod sjenom tornja sa satom, gledao sam kako svjetlo s katoličkog tornja poput elektriciteta prelazi na minaret susjedne džamije, a odatle pada na sablju Juraja Kastriotića, kneza i vojskovođe, glasovitoga Skenderbega, koji je siječe tako da se svjetlost pretvara u latice krizantema što se dižu k nebu postajući pod njim zvijezde. U Elbasanu je svjetlost bila uznemirena šarama maslina, njihovim crnim plodovima punim zemaljskoga žara. U Draču je

bljesnulo more. Svjetlost je poput Mojsija rastvarala more kako bih vidio dolazak Grka s Krfa i Korinta, kako udaraju temelje Epidamnosu, bacajući u vodeni ponor kamenje što se nadimlje i pišti poput užarenog ugljeglja. A sad u Skadru voda stremlje k nebu, brda se tuku s oblacima, samo se djeca prestala međusobno čupati dok se mi krećemo mostom između kućeraka u obliku ležećih ljudi.

Dok prelazim most  
pozdravljaju me djeca  
tražeći novčić.

Odavde iz skadarske oblasti na zadarsko područje, barski, pa zadarski nadbiskup Vicko Zmajević, doveo je Arbanase čiju je prvu povijest napisao don Mijo Ćurković, gorljivi hrvatski pravaš, glazbenik, pjevač i svećenik. Slučaj ili ne, htio je da nekada staro prapovijesno naselje na području današnjih Arbanasa sudjeluje u formiranju ilirskoga Zadra, kao što su kasnije Arbanasi gradili i branili hrvatski Zadar. Već svibnja 1726. godine u Zemunik stižu prvi Arbanasi. U prvoj velikoj seobi stigao je i moj daleki predak po majci. Po rodu Paleka, po nazivu Đoka. I on je kao i svaka arbanaška obitelj u Zemunik dobio tri odjelita veća kompleksa zemlje; podvornicu s kućom, oranicu na putu koji od zemuničke crkve vodi u Hambar i oranicu pokraj ceste koja od zemuničkog kaštela vodi u Zadar, između dvaju bunara zvanih Smrdelj. Prošloga sam se puta i zaustavio u Skadru kako bih upoznao jednoga od Paleka, a sada u žurbi nemam vremena ni da ga pozdravim.

Samo oblaci  
sjećaju na prolaznost  
dok se žurimo.

Nemam vremena ni za Kruju, biskupsko sjedište još iz devetog stoljeća, za koje mnogi Albanci i danas vjeruju da je sveto mjesto napučeno bogovima. Dvorac na visini od 548 metara stradao u zemljotresu, danas je Skenderbegov muzej. Juraj Kastriotić ovdje je vodio svoje presudne bitke za slobodu kršćanske Albanije. Ali dvorac pamti i bizantsku i osmanlijsku vlast. Pri brzini većoj od stotinu kilometara na sat, stopivši se s putom, ja sam iz zemlje čuo kako kuca veliko srce albanske borbe za nezavisnost, srce patnje zatrpano zemljotresom. Kruja je i danas srce Albanije, ono srce koje se uvijek otkriva u novom i drukčijem doživljaju. Sunce koje je krenulo k zapadu bacilo je na dvorac paučinastu izmaglicu poput Kumove slame što se dizala iznad obližnjega močvarnog područja. Oblaci u ružičastom svjetlu postali su najednom mrki i nemirni poput šišmiša. Dvorac se u poslijepodnevnom parama nazirao na istoku kao tamni portal nadolazeće večeri.

Hrabre ratnike  
zaklanjaju zidovi  
u oblacima.

Zaustavila nas je samo žeđ. Pivo – zaista lijepa riječ. Konobar se neprestance vrti oko nas s pladnjem punim čaša piva. U svadbenoj sali lokala i nema nikog osim mene, Viktora, moga pratitelja i konobara. Čutili su se prvi znaci večeri, a s njima kao da su se u daljini naslućivali i svi oni gosti koji će nahrupiti ovamo s prvom tamom dana. Na takvu pomisao navode me i suviše rano upaljeni lampioni kojima je lokal okićen poput novogodišnjega drvca. Poslije doslovnog mraka u totalitarnome sustavu, Albanci se poput djece oduševljavaju električnim svjetilkama, koje su posvud improvizirano postavljene. Kada se noću upale stvaraju nekakav istočnjački ugođaj, gotovo festivalski dojam, pjene se poput dobrog albanskog piva s imenom *Tirana*. Pijući čašu za čašom, gaseći žeđ gotovo osam stotina kilometara prevaljenog puta, pomislio sam kako ću već prije Tirane imati problema s utvrđivanjem vlastitog identiteta. Radost što ću se uskoro sresti s prijateljima, kolegama pjesnicima, pijući pivo prešla je u opuštenost, a sljedećom čašom već u melenkoliju.

Cijelo polje  
i cijela rijeka  
u jednoj čaši.

Tirana je danas pravo gradilište, sva je raskopana, puna vreve i žamora, kao da za nju još i nije prestala bitka skadarskih paša i lokalnih begova, započeta negdje početkom devetnaestog stoljeća. Ovaj grad nekada zvan i Teheran, tek će 1920. godine postati glavnim gradom Albanije. Sve do demokratskog osvita devedesetih godina grad je savladavao sve svoje neprijatelje, jednog po jednog, tako što se nije mijenjao, što je njegovo vrijeme putovalo samo kroz sebe, tako da se i nije micalo s mjesta, a onda je na Tiranu navalio njen najljući neprijatelj – ona sama. U svakoj njezinoj točki danas ključa promet, trgovina i izgradnja. Mir više nije njezin kontinuum, kontinuum je dinamika, kao da se u svakom trenutku pokušava prestići budućnost. Samo monumentalni Skenderbegov spomenik mirno gleda mravinjak, ne dajući da mu se itko približi preko njegove davno postavljene demarkacijske crte.

Pod gradskim svjetlom  
miran, na crnom konju  
čeka Skenderbeg.

U kavani *Europa* u Tirani već trideset godina za istim stolom sjedi moj prijatelj, veliki albanski pjesnik Xhevahir Spahiu. Donedavna predsjednik Saveza pisaca i umjetnika Albanije, a potom savjetnik za kulturu Predsjednika Republike. Sjedi Xhevahir i misli na svoja putovanja, a kako je mudar, to uopće i ne mora činiti. “Osedlat ću oblak” - kaže – “i projahati planine”. Čovjek je to bez uzda i orme, čovjek s izgledom vjetra. Sjedi on, čeka me i prevodi svoju rijeku: “Težak prijevod / Od čiste vode”. Znam da sada misli s kime može popričati dok me čeka, s kojeg telefona? On čeka mene, ali bi razgovarao i s Halleyjevim kometom. Čita moj *Velebit* na albanskom, a misli na svoj Tomorr, na planinu koju ne može smetnuti s uma ma ni u jednom razgovoru.

Planinske ruže  
prijatelju cvjetaju  
sad u očima.

Xhevahir me grli i ja u šuštanju zagrljaja čujem kako “još od Adamova vremena/romone rijeke;/romone pčele i oblaci/na hrptu planina”. On je danas u velikom intervjuu u središnjim albanskim novinama *Shqip* govorio i o mom *Velebitu*. Pita me da mu govorim o Velebitu, o velebitskim vilama, o Zoraniću; pita je li nad Velebitom nebo “sazdano od zraka” ili od kamena. Njegova pitanja nemaju strpljenja, pa i ne čekaju odgovor. Iz njegovih ruku, iz očiju kao i s njegovih usana samo izlaze i ulaze pitanja, a iz tih valova rađaju se lijepe riječi kao “sve boje beskrajna svemira”. Prozvao me Xhevahir Spahiu tako danas u svom novinskom razgovoru “princem hrvatskog haikua”. I eto, to mi pokazuje kao svoju dobrodošlicu.

Gle, i kraljevi  
znaju biti ponizni  
u prijateljstvu.

Pristiže i prijatelj Arian Leka, poznati pjesnik, prozaik, glazbenik, prevoditelj, likovni kritičar i nakladnik, urednik *Poeteke*, časopisa koji istodobno izlazi u Engleskoj, Francuskoj, Albaniji, Rumunjskoj i Grčkoj. Arianovo je lice kao puna svibanjska mjesecina, blago, nježno i svježe. Rođen u Draču, na moru, on zna kako “postoji jedno more za život i jedno nebo za smrt”. Kao primorac Arian zna da

“ništa nije kako vidiš/kad imaš sve a nemaš prijatelja” da s njim podijeliš “dvije čaše vina duboka”. Pruža mi desnu, a u lijevoj drži butelju zaštićenoga dračkog rizlinga.

Večernju maglu  
kao vjetar rastjera  
pružena ruka.

Počeli smo piti vino, meni je izgledalo tako dobro da mi se činilo kako ću popiti cijelu mješinu. Kad mi je Arian kazao kako će već ovih dana u tjedniku “Albanija” biti objavljen izbor pjesama iz moje zbirke *Tigar* za piće sam imao još i više razloga. Čita mi svoju bilješku uz moje pjesme. On kaže kako moj “tigar nastavlja živjeti, bez obzira što je riječ o jednoj od najugroženijih životinjskih vrsta, jer TMB nanovo oživljuje pjesničkog tigra, poeziju kakvu su započeli Blake, Yeats, Tagore, Emerson, Pound, Borges”. U strahu od spomenutih imena potežem još jednu čašu. Arian se čudi koliko knjiga nosi moje ime na svojim koricama. Najednom mi kaže TMB, to je tvoj zaštitni znak. Gledam ga i mislim, otkud mu to što su još tako davno primijetili Tomislav Ladan i Igor Mandić. A poslije njih i Alojz Majetić. A potom opet prelazi na priču o *Tigru*. Za mene je velika obveza čuti ga kako mi nazdravljajući recitira Williama Blakea – “*Tiger! Tiger! burning bright/In the forests of the night*”, a potom odmah govori moga *Tigra* na albanskom – “*Tigri takon macen egjiptiane*”.

O Tigre, Tigre  
tvoje zube sakriva  
prenježna koža.

Noću smo se uputili preko planine Qaf Krrab, što bi u slobodnom prijevodu značilo Uvrnuti vrat. Strmo je i klizavo, a mi smo već i popili priličnu količinu pića i vina, ali i albanske rakije, bez koje se ovdje ne može. Pa ipak siguran sam, nije me strah ni imena planine. Već sam je jednom prešao. Znam da sve ono u što počnemo sumnjati, ili čega se počnemo bojati, kao i ono u što počnemo vjerovati, s vremenom raste, buja, razvija se, dotle da nam konačno dođe glave, ili nas izbavi iz opasnosti i muka. Zato se ja držim zvijezda, držim se ljepote, pokušavam se vlastitim prepuštanjem vinuti do božanskog poslanja ovoga puta i ove planine. U mraku, pod lampionskom rasvjetom restorana koji svojim preprekama na svakome zavoju priječe mogućnost iskliznuća u provaliju, gledam kako niz cestu teče voda, koja se po rubovima puta cijedi s planine.

Dok se penjemo  
strminom, u dolinu  
silazi voda.

Konačno, evo me u truhu Albanije, na samom njezinom pupku – u Elbasanu. Koje lijepo ime, kao Labrador ili Senegal. Svejedno je kako ove prostore doživljavate, kao mlade ili kao stare, hladne ili tople, jer oni su i jedno i drugo. Oni svoju dugovječnost stječu obnavljanjem, ponekad i obnavljanjem sitnica, baš kao i moj Zadar. Takva sitnica, koja Elbasanu daje dobar duh stalne svjetlosti, jesu drvoredi naranača puni zrelih plodova uz široke gradske ulice. Ono što im daje stalnu životnu boju upravo je ta njihova feniksovska sjena koja neprestance lebdi između dobrog i zlog duha. Baš kao što već ranom zorom u ovo sušno siječanjsko doba nad Elbasanom lebdi prašina, nekakav magleni smog koji prekriva cijelu kotlinu Shkumbin u kojoj leži grad. Meni sad to ne izgleda ni kao dim, ni kao smog cementne industrije, bliske rafinerije, ili nekad najvećega metalurškog kombinata, većega i od samoga grada, već mi se čini kako to nad gradom lebdi njegova orošena duša.

Jutarnja rosa  
zaprljala naranču  
i osvježila.

U hotelu *Četiri godišnja doba* čeka me prijatelj Milianov Kallupi, predsjednik Saveza književnika Albanije, ogranak Elbasan i predsjednik Haiku-kluba Albanije, haiku-pjesnik, urednik u *Egnatie* koja je objavila moju haiku-knjigu *Velebit*. Tu je i Kujtim Agalliu, prevoditelj *Velebita*. Pristižu i drage kolegice, haiku-pjesnikinje Mariana Meta Hushi i Lida Lazaj, tu je i Ferit Rama i Nexhip Bashllari. Iz Makedonije je pristigao književnik Mustafa Spahiu, kojega sam zadnji put sreo prije točno dvadeset i četiri godine. Buket prijatelja, baš kako i dolikuje u Elbasanu, valjda jedinome gradu na svijetu koji slavi Dan cvijeća.

U daleki grad  
prepun cvjetnih buketa  
donio cvijet.

Milianov Kallupi i ja čestitamo jedan drugome rođendan. Oba smo rođeni istoga dana, 18. siječnja, i jedan i drugi u zoru. Milianov mi za rođendan daje rukopis svoje nove haiku-knjige. Pogled mi je zastao na haikuu koji govori o mrazu na

staklu. Samo jedan prst je dovoljan da se na njemu razbudi cvijeće. Tako nježan dodir topline. Dah. Pčelinji dodir jagodicom kažiprsta na zaleđeno staklo dovoljan je za promjenu svijeta. Mislim, je li to onaj dah koji smo s prvim plačem ispustili dalekoga siječnja 1947. godine, kada su naše majke gledale kako se mraz na prozoru preobražava u razbuđeno cvijeće?

Istu zvijezdu  
gledaju naše majke  
daleko, noću.

U središnju Gradsku knjižnicu Elbasana gdje će Milianov proslaviti svoju šezdesetu godišnjicu života, a gdje me pozvao da mu se i ja pridružim, dolaze uzvanici. Stiže i gradonačelnik Elbasana, poslanici u Parlamentu, književnici, umjetnici, slikari, pjevači, glazbenici, učenici i studenti. Čuvši da sam u Elbasanu, čak iz Tetova je stigao Šefki Aliu, vlasnik slastičarnice *Donat* u Zadru. Ovdje su mnogi koje sam upoznao prije dvije godine, a sada mi nije nimalo lako sjetiti se svih imena. Dolazi i Zyhdi Morava, predsjednik albanskih pisaca. Toliko ih je da ih ne mogu sve ni pozdraviti.

I bez riječi  
nama je dobro, dobro,  
dok se gledamo.

Na svečanosti u Elbasanu proglašen sam počasnim članom Saveza književnika Albanije, ogranak Elbasan i Haiku-kluba Albanije. Moja članska iskaznica nosi redni broj 1. Albanski časopis *Haiku* broj 5 iz 2007. godine, koji izlazi u Elbasanu, što se esejističkog i kritičarskog dijela tiče, u cijelosti je posvećen mojoj zbirci "Velebit", koja je ovdje i inače u medijima i javnosti dočekana s velikom pažnjom. Pažnjom sam okružen i ovaj put, čekaju me razgovori za radio, televiziju, već sutra u novinama izlaze moje pjesme iz zbirke *Tigar* koju su u cijelosti preveli Jehona i Mustafa Spahiu.

Sad me veseli  
to što će me rastužiti  
pri odlasku.

Na odlasku iz Elbasana, moj vjerni pratitelj i prevoditelj Viktor Perfundu, inače pokretač ove hrvatsko-albanske književne veze, i sam pomalo pjesnik, pokazuje mi svoj Librazhd. Drago mi je da čovjek nema predrasuda o svome mjestu daleko

gore u planinama. I ja sam njega najprije poveo u Zemunik. Svaki pojedinac koji se želi otvoriti svijetu i uklopiti u njega, ponajprije mora krenuti od svoga izvora, od mjesta koje krije naš duh, dušu, naš san i naše vjerovanje, našu dobru volju, naš svjetonazor, pa ako hoćete i našu uskogrudnost, našu isključivost, naše krive predodžbe, sve ono što držimo dobrim i zlim, pravednim i nepravednim. Iza Librazhda vidim planinu Shebenik (Šibenik) i mislim kako nije samo priroda ta koja je uvijek spremna popuniti praznine u prostoru kojim se krećemo, praznine još bolje popunjava jezik koji nam pruža maštu da možemo svojom voljom zamisliti i imenovati ono što je pružila priroda.

Za tren pomislim:  
nisam tako daleko  
dok gledam nebo.

Putujemo u Drač; čim sam ugledao Jadransko more sjetio sam se puta za Casablancu. Gledao sam tada čeznutljivo Drač, njegove antičke, bizantske i venecijanske zidine koje su se nazirale već na samom rubu obale, ali obali ni blizu nismo smjeli. Bilo je takvo vrijeme, vrijeme Envera Hoxhe. A danas u Draču kupujem novine *Albanija*, na čijoj se prvoj stranici nalazi i moja i Hoxhina fotografija. Najzanimljivije je to da i jedna i druga fotografija najavljuju naše tekstove, moju poeziju i Hoxhina pisma Amerikancima. Čudno, Enver je pisao zašto Albanci ne vole Amerikance, a danas je gotovo za svakog Albanca jedina uzdanica Amerika. Kako li je tek nedavnu prošlost prekrilo more, mogu misliti što je onda s onom pradavnom.

Jadransko more  
proteglo se od neba  
pa sve do zemlje.

Prije nego li sam krenuo domu, prema Hrvatskoj, u najgledanijem programu albanske televizije *Arbria* u jutarnjoj emisiji *Kapučino* ugostila me prelijepa voditeljica, glumica Juli Xhokaxhi. Više je gledam nego li slušam dok glasom vile Ilirkinje čita moje haikue iz zbirke *Velebit*. Samo jedan trenutak, samo nekoliko riječi, i njezin mi je glas u studio donio cijeli Velebit.

I ovdje Vile  
donose mi jabuke  
s Velebita.



I dok se s večeri vozimo prema albanskoj granici, spremni na cjelonoćno putovanje, slušamo prvi program Radio Tirane. U najavi čujem meni poznati i dragi glas voditelja emisije *Na početku bijaše riječ*, albanskog pjesnika Demira Gjergja. Čitavih sat vremena Viktor i ja nismo više progovorili ni riječi, slušali smo na radiju razgovor sa mnom i Viktorov prijevod. Kako je to maestralno vodio Gjergj, čovjek koji je u ovoj emisiji, do moje malenkosti, ugostio mnoge poznate albanske, europske i svjetske pjesnike. Za ovaj moj nastup u ovoj emisiji zaslužan je Gazmend Agaj, mladi i popularni novinar, kao i pjesnik, pripovjedač i radijski novinar Jaho Margjeka. Slušam ga kako lijepo izgovara moje ime i čita haiku o Zoraniću.

Petsto godina  
put putuje Zoranić  
noseć Velebit.



EGIDA: IN ALBANIA FOR THE SECOND TIME

Tomislav Marijan Bilosnić, a Croatian writer and haiku poet recently returned from Albania where he introduced his world known haiku collection *Velebit*

The sunshine from Zadar to Elbasan  
(haibun)

Almost for a thousand years Albania was either enslaved, closed or isolated, but this cannot be seen on people whatsoever. The Albanians are, just like their mountains, the symbols of everlasting hope. Here even if someone is suffering it is not seen, just like the rocks. As if a godly wave of strength stopped on this place, in the mountains rising above the Adriatic, Ionian and Aegean Seas. Here man needs not a compass, he moves according to the Sun. And this is what draws me back to Albania – travelling into the light.

Long, long, long is the way.  
The sunshine reaches  
To Elbasan.

Last time in Skadar, it appeared to me the light does not come from the sun but the water,  
with an eagle gliding above it that, after had taken off from its nest on the tower, at the moment I was entering the town crossing the bridge. This tower had been a capital of the Ilyric rulers and the fortress of the Labeata tribe. In Tirana, hid in the shadow of the tower with the clock, I was watching the light from the Catholic church belfry shining like electricity, moving over to the mosque's minaret in the neighbourhood, then falling onto the sword of St. George Kastriotić, prince and an army leader, well known Skenderbeg, who cuts the light so it becomes the petals of chrysanthemums rising towards the sky, thus becoming the stars under it. In Elbasan the light was disturbed by the shades of olive trees, their black fruits full of an earthly glow. In Drač the sea glittered. The light, just like Moses had, opened the sea thus enabling me to watch the entrance of the Greeks from Crete and Corinth, their founding of Epidamnos, throwing stones into the abyss, the stones swelling and hissing like glowing coal. And now in Skadar the water aspires towards the sky, the hills are battling with the clouds, only the children do not scruffle while we are moving over the bridge, among little houses that look like people lying down.

Whilst crossing the bridge  
The children greet me  
Begging a coin.

Zadar's archbishop Vicko Zmajević, brought the Albanians from this Skadar county (Albania) to Zadar and its vicinity in Croatia and pater Mijo Ćukrović, an enthusiastic Croatian politician, a member of *Croatian law society*, a musician, singer and the priest, wrote their first history. Accidentaly or not, he wanted the old prehistorical settlements on the location of today's Arbanas to take part in forming Ilyrian Zadar, just like the Albanians had built and defended Croatian Zadar. The first Albanians came to Zemunik during May of 1726. In this first big migration my distant ancestor on my mother's side came to Zemunik, too. His last name was Paleka, his first name Đoka. Him too, as every Albanian family in

Zemunik, was given three large pieces of land; a yard and a garden around the house, a field by the road leading from Zemunik's church and a field by the road which goes from the Zemunik's citadel to Zadar, between two wells called Smrdelj. Last time I stopped in Skadar in order to meet one of the Paleks, and now in a hurry, I have no time to greet him.

Only the clouds  
Remind me of the transience  
While we hurry on.

I don't have enough time to stop at Kruj, the bishops's residence from the ninth century. Many Albanians believe it is a holy place with gods residing there, even today. The castle, 548 meter above the sea level, that suffered damage in an earthquake, today is the Skenderbeg's museum. Juraj Kastriorić fought his most important battles for the freedom of Christian Albania. But, the castle remembers the Byzantine and Turkish rule. At a hundred kilometers per hour ride, blending into the road, I heard the heartbeat of the great Albanian battle for independence, the suffering hearts covered by the earthquake. Kruj is the heart of Albania, today as well, the heart that discloses itself in a new and different experience, each time. The sun started towards the west throwing a spider's web-like mist, rising from the nearby marsh, the Milky way alike, over the castle. The clouds became dark and uneasy, bat like. The castle could hardly be seen in the afternoon steam in the East, a dark portal of the evening about to come.

Courageous warriors  
Hidden by the walls  
In the clouds.

We were stopped by our thirst. Beer – such a nice word. The waiter keeps on circling around us with a tray full of glasses with beer. In the wedding reception room of the inn there is nobody but I, Viktor, my escort and the waiter. The first signs of the evening could be felt in the air and with them I had a presentiment, all the guests would dash into the inn with the first dusk. Such a thought was brought to me by the too early lighted lanterns, the inn being adorned with them as if a Xmas tree. After the literal darkness in the totalitarian system, the Albanians like children

are elated with the electrical fairy lamps which have been hung in an improvised way everywhere. Once lit at night, they give some eastern atmosphere, almost the feeling a festival; they are foaming like the good Albanian beer under the name of 'Tirana'. Drinking glass after glass, quenching the thirst of the eight hundred kilometers of travelling, I thought I'd have a problem with my own identification even before entering Tirana. The joy of expecting another meeting with friends, colleagues and poets, drinking the beer became a relaxation and with the next glass, turned into melancholy.

The whole field  
And the whole river  
In one glass.

Today, Tirana is a real building site, being all dug up. Full of crowds and murmur, as if the battle of Skadar's pashas and the local beys had not ended yet, started at the beginning of the 19th century. This town, once called Teheran as well, became the capital of Albania in 1920. Until the democratic commencement during the nineties, this town had been conquering all its enemies, one after another, in the manner of not making any changes, taking its time to travel through itself, that way not moving from the place. And then on to conquering Tirana went its strongest enemy- Tirana itself. At every point today boils the traffic, commerce and construction. Peace is no longer the constant, it is now dynamics, as if trying to surpass its future. Only the large Skenderbeg's monument watches the Tirana-anthill calmly, not letting anybody come too close over his fixed boundary line, set long ago.

Under the town's light  
Calm, on a black horse  
Skenderbeg waiting.

In the coffee shop 'Europa' in Tirana, my friend has been sitting by the same table for thirty years now, the eminent Albanian Poet, Xhevahir Spahiu. Until recently the president of the Albanian Association of writers and artists, then Councillor for Culture of the President of the Albanian Republic. So sits Xhevahir thinking about his travels, and being wise, he does not have to travel at all. 'I'll ride a cloud' – says he – 'and ride over the mountains'. He is a man without restraint and harness, with appearance of the wind itself. He is sitting there, waiting for me and translating his 'river': 'Difficult translation / From clean water' I know he is thinking with whom to speak while waiting for me, from which phone? He waits for me but would like to talk even with *Hayles' comet*. He reads my *Velebit* in Albanian, and thinks of his Tomorr, the mountain he cannot take his mind off in any single conversation.

The mountain roses  
Flowering now  
In a friend's eyes.

Xhevahir embraces me and in the rustle of this embrace I hear *Since Adam's time / the rivers whisper;/ rustle the honey-bees and the clouds / on the ridge of the mountains*. Today he spoke about my haiku collection *Velebit* in the central Albanian newspaper *Shqip*. He asks me to talk about *Velebit*, about its fairies, about Zoranić; he wonders if the sky above *Velebit* is *built from the air or the rocks*. His questions have no patience, not waiting for the answers. From his hands, his eyes and his lips as well exit and enter the questions, and beautiful words are born from these waves, like *colours from endless space*. In his interview he called me 'the prince of Croatian haiku'. So, he shows me the interview as a welcoming greeting.

Look, the kings

Know how to be humble  
In friendship.

Another friend arrives, Arian Lika, a well known poet, prosaic, musician and translator, art critic and publisher, the editor of *Poeteke*, a journal published simultaneously in England, France, Albania, Romania and Greece. Arian's face is just like full moonlight in May, tender and calm. Born in Drač, at the seaside, he knows the *existence of one sea for life/ and one sky for death*. As a man from the coast he knows *nothing is as seen / when you have everything but a friend* to share with him *two long, tall glasses of wine*. He extends his right hand, holding a bottle of protected Drač's wine 'Rizling' in his left hand.

Outstretched hand  
Dispersing evening mist  
As if the wind.

We started to drink the wine, it tasted so good and it appeared to me I could have drunk the

whole goatskin of it. After Arian told me about my poems from the collection *Tigar* to be published in the weekly publication *Albania* very soon, I had even more reasons for a toast with the fine wine. He reads to me his reviews concerning my poems. He says my '*Tigar*' continues to live, no matter if the theme is one among the most jeopardized animal species, because TMB (Tomislav Marijan Bilosnić) enlivens the poetical tiger, the poetry once started by Blake, Yeats, Tagore, Emerson, Pound, Borges'. In fear of the mentioned names I drink another glass. Arian wonders about the number of books bearing my name. Suddenly he tells me, TMB it is your trademark. I'm, looking at him thinking, how come he arrives at a conclusion so long ago noticed by Tomislav Ladan and Igor Mandić. And later, Alojz Majetić. Then he returns to the story about the tiger. For me, it is a big responsibility to listen to his toast whilst reciting William Blake – *Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright / In the forests of the night*, then reciting my *Tigar* in albanian *Tigri takon macen egjiptiane*.

Oh, tiger, tiger  
Hiding your teeth  
Under a too tender skin.

Overnight we started our trip over the mountain Qaf Krrab, in free translation meaning the Inverted Neck. The road being steep and slippery, we drank a substantial quantity of the beer and wine, but the Albanian brandy as well, without which it would be impossible to live here. Yet, I'm, certain I have no fear of either the name or the mountain itself. I've been over this mountain before. I know, things we suspect or fear, and those we start to believe in, grow and burst as time goes on, and it might cost us our own lives, or on the other hand save us trouble and danger. That's why I cling to the stars, the beauty, I try to soar up yielding myself to a godlike mission by own to this road and this mountain. In the dark, under the lantern lit restaurant with its constructed supporting walls preventing the possibility of it sliding into an abyss, I watch the water flowing down the road over the edges, leaking from the mountain itself.

While we climb  
the steep slope, the water  
Descends to the valley

Finally I'm in the belly of Albania, in its navel – in Elbasan. Such a nice name, like Labrador or Senegal. It's all the same how you see the regions, as young or as old, cold or warm, they are both. Their long living has been gained by renewal, sometimes even by a renewal of small things, just like my Zadar. These small matters, giving Elbasan a good spirit of everlasting light are the rows of orange trees, full of ripe fruit, along side of the city streets. Giving them everlasting living colour is the shadow of the Phoenix soaring all the time between a good and evil spirit. And just like at dawn, in this January time, above Elbasan glides the dust, some kind of a misty smog covering the whole ravine Shkumbin where the city of Elbasan lies. It does not seem to be the smog from the cement industry, the refinery close by or times ago the biggest metallurgical industry on an area bigger even than the town itself, but it appears to be the town's dewy soul.

Morning dew  
Staining an orange  
And refreshed it.

In the hotel 'Four Seasons of the Year' my friend Milianov Kallupi waits for me; the president of the Association of Albania's writers, the Elbasan branch and the president of the Haiku Club of Albania, a haiku poet, an editor in the publishing house 'Egnatie' which published my book *Velebit*. With him is Kujtim Agalliu, the translator of *Velebit*. Arriving are my dear colleagues, the poetess Mariana Meta Hushi and Lida Lazaj, here is Ferit Rama and Nexhip Bashllari, and the writer Mustafa Shapiu, whom I met 24 years ago, he comes from Macedonia. Just a bunch of friends, as it is proper in Elbasan, perhaps the only town in the world where we celebrate the Flower Day.

In a distant town  
Full of spring flower bunches  
He brought a flower

Milianov Kallupi and I greet each other on the occasion of our birthdays, both of us having a birthday on the same day, January 18, both born at dawn. He presents me with a manuscript of this new haiku collection. My gaze stopped on the haiku about hoar frost in the window pane. Only one finger is enough to wake the flowers on it. A tender touch of warmth. The breath. A honey-bee like a touch of the finger-tip on the frozen glass pane is enough to make a change in the world. Is it the very first cry we let out on long ago in January of 1947, whilst our mothers watched the hoar frost in the window pane becoming awakened flowers?

Our mothers  
Watching the same star  
Far away, at night.

The guests are arriving at the Elbasan Central City Library, where Milianov celebrates his 60th birthday, inviting me as well. The Mayor of Elbasan arrives, too, the senators from Parliament, writers, artists, painters, singers, musicians, pupils and students. On learning that I'm in Elbasan, Šefki Aliu had come even from Tetovo (Macedonia), he is the owner of the pastry shop 'Donat' in Zadar. Here are many people I had met two years ago and it is not easy to remember all



the names. Here is Zyhdi Morava, the president of the Albania' writers. So many of them, I cannot greet them all.

Even without words  
We are fine, just fine  
While we look at each other.

At the celebration in Elbasan I was pronounced a honorary member of the Albania's Association of Writers, the Elbasan branch and the Haiku Club of Albania. My membership card carries number 1. The Albanian journal for haiku poetry, *Haiku* No. 5 from 2007 Published in Elbasan, is dedicated to my haiku collection *Velebit*, which was accepted with great attention by the public. It is the same attention I have been encircled with this time, as well. There are interviews for radio and TV waiting for me, in tomorrow's newspaper will be my poems from the poetry collection '*Tigar*' printed, the whole book being translated by Jehona i Mustafa Spahiu.

Now I'm happy  
For the same reasons I'll be sad  
At the farewell.

While leaving Elbasan, my faithful guide and translator, Viktor Perfundu, the originator of this Croatian-Albanian connection, a poet himself, shows me his Librazhd. It is nice to know a man who has not prejudice about his dwelling, far away in the mountains. At the time of his visiting me, at first I showed him Zemunik. Every man, who wishes to open to the world and become a part of it, must start from his own spring; the place that hides our soul, our dreams and our goodwill, our vision of the world; and if you like even our narrow mindedness, exclusivism, our wrong conceptions, everything we take as good and evil, honest and wrongful. Behind Librazhd I see the mountain Shebenik (Šibenik – name of a town in Croatia), thinking it is not only nature ready to fill the emptiness in the area wherein we move, the emptinesses are even better filled with language giving us the power of imagination so we can, of our own will think of and name all given by nature.

For a moment I think

I'm not far away from home  
Looking at the sky.

We travel towards Drač: as soon as I lay my eyes on the Adriatic sea, I remembered my trip to Casablanca. I was gazing at Drač in yearning; at its antique, Byzantine and Venetian walls which were visible along the edge of the coast which we were forbidden to visit. It was that kind of times, the time of Enver Hoxha. And today, in Drač, I'm buying the newspaper *Albani*; on its first there's a photograph of me and Enver Hoxha. The most interesting is the part is our photograph announcing our texts, my poetry and his letters to the Americans. Strange, Enver wrote why Albanians do not like Americans, and today, America is the only mainstay to every Albanian. The recent past has been covered with the sea, I can imagine what happened to the historical times here.

The Adriatic sea  
Stretched from the sky  
All the way to the Earth.

Before my returning home, to Croatia, I was a guest of a beautiful interviewer on TV, the actress Juli Xhokaxhi on the Albanian television 'Arbria' in the morning show 'Cappuccino'. I'm looking at her more than listening while she, with the voice of an Ilyrian fairy recites haiku from my collection *Velebit*. Only one moment, only several words and her voice brings the whole of *Velebit* into the studio.

Here too, the fairies  
Bring the apples to me  
From *Velebit*.

While we drive towards the Albanian border in the evening, ready for a whole night's trip, we listen to Radio Tirana, the first channel. During an announcement I recognize the well known voice of the radio announcer of the show 'In the beginning there was a word', the Albanian poet Demir Gjergja. Driving, for an hour Viktor and I did not say a word at all, we were listening to Demir's interview with me and Viktor's translation. Gjergja lead this interview very nicely and highly professionally and indeed, this man whose guests were well known Albanian,

European and world poets. This interview I owe to Gazmend Agaj, a young and popular journalist, and the poet, story-teller and radio journalist Jaho Margjek. I listen to his correct pronunciation of my name and his reading of haiku about Zoranić.

Five hundred years  
Zoranić travels the ways  
Carrying Velebit.



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