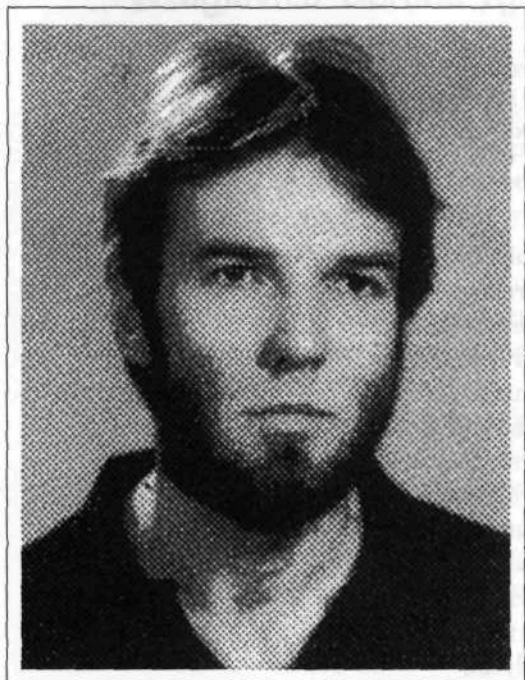


IVANKOVIĆ, Željko



Željko Ivanković, born in 1954 in Vareš, Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a poet, story teller, novelist, essayist, literary critic and translator. He graduated in literature from the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo. So far he has published the following books of poetry: *Something of What Is*, 1978, *Racing Snails*, 1982, *Time without Verbs*, 1986, *Lost Birth-place*, 1995, *Seeking Birth-place*, 1997; books of short stories *Tales of Love and Death*, 1987, *A Starry Day*, stories for children, 1990.; novels *With a Touch the World Begins*, 1992, *Love in Berlin*, 1995; *Who Lit up the Dark?*, 1995; and the diary *700 Days of Siege*, 1995.

Željko Ivanković, pjesnik, pripovjedač, romanopisac, esejist, književni kritičar i prevoditelj, rođen je 1954. godine u Varešu, Bosna i Hercegovina. Diplomirao je studij književnosti na Filozofskom fakultetu u Sarajevu. Dosad je objavio knjige pjesama: *Nešto od onog što jest*, 1978, *Utrka puževa*, 1982, *Vrijeme bez glagola*, 1986, *Izgubljeni zavičaj*, 1995, *Traženje zavičaja*, 1997; knjige pripovjedaka *Priče o ljubavi i smrti*, 1987, *Zvezdan dan*, priče za decu, 1990; romane: *Dodirom i svijet poče*, 1992, *Ljubav u Berlinu*, 1995, knjigu proza *Tko je upalio mrak?*, 1995; i dnevnik *700 dana opsade*, 1995.

ŽELJKO IVANKOVIĆ

War Was Invented by Poets

Boys are being shot at
by poets from their textbooks.
Girls lost their shame
in a dream. Their mothers in longing
for unattainable passion.
People who in their previous lives
were regarded as writers
blow up trams, bark like dogs
at traffic lights,
inaugurate new cemeteries.
In a moonless night
woods are ashamed for hiding them.
Still, finally something nice:
my son is no longer afraid
of films about werewolves.

End of Love

They say the war began on Sunday
but already I can't remember any
details. All I remember is
the cloudy afternoon when a warplane
flying low broke
the vaginal barrier of what today
we call definitive past.
The girl in my bed
said – end of the world,
but it was so divine.

If we subtracted the inevitable
pathetics – what would remain
of truth? She thought that
this was the peak of love, and I ...
that this is, unfortunately, its end.

Night in a Cellar

We talked about poetry
but the town was being shot at by former poets
We talked about death
but night was being lit up by streaks of colour
We talked about God
but outside there raged a godless war
We did not talk about women
our women were there beside us.

Christ in a Transport Vehicle

The good shepherd, with his finger
pointing ahead and with a look
which cuts the horizon with razor sharpness
in full armour, mechanised,
goes into the future without his flock.
An image unknown in the Bible:
the flock is looking for its lost
shepherd. How can the flock go to the Father
by itself, even if complete,
without its shepherd, without Christ?
But he, eternal and imperishable,
and even, so they say, merciful,
in a transport vehicle, so triumphant,
so distant, unreachable. But the flock,
his or whichever nation,
goes to its God without its
good shepherd, praying, crying -
are we a good flock, Father,
if we come to you without our shepherd?

Christ Goes to War

Tearful Mother of God
sits on the edge of the pavement
Christ hurries past her
he has no time for tears
he is off to war
with an open shirt
hairy-chested and
with the body of a man
in his prime
A recently emptied can
of coca-cola rolls
down the steep street in front of him
in the hills around glisten
sun-kissed barrels of guns
shop windows hide from
rare passers-by
in a hurry tramlines
forgot their trams
only a lame dog
looks back in amazement
at the tearful lonely Mother of God.

Translated by Evald Flisar

In praise of the barbarians

The barbarians come from the East
with sleepy eyes, with longing
in their nostrils, epically tearful
and strong in multitudes.
The barbarians do not understand
sunset, sweet dreams, and
the intoxicating fragrances of modest breasts,
they pour out all their life into a scream.
The barbarians go to a grave,
they wail wildly, leave food
for the dead on the mound and
stare at the distance
with the eyes of a sad dog.
The barbarians do not hate, they merely
do not understand. In fact, they
hate and are hated. The barbarians
have invented hatred.

Translated by Mario Suško

ŽELJKO IVANKOVIĆ

Rat su izmislili pjesnici

Na dječake pucaju
pjesnici iz njihovih čitanki.
Djevojčice stid izgubile
u snu. Njihove majke u žudnji
za nedosegnutom strasti.
Ljudi za koje u bivšim
životima držahu da su pisci
ubijaju tramvaje, psećim glasom
laju na semafore, na novim
grobjima presijecaju vrpce.
U noći bez mjesečine
šume se stide što ih skrivaju.
Najposlije, ipak, nešto lijepo:
moj sin se više ne plaši
filmova o vukodlacima.

Kraj ljubavi

Kažu da je rat počeo nedjeljom
a ja se već sada ne sjećam
detalja. Pamtim tek rano
oblačno popodne kad je avion
u brišućem lijetu probio
vaginalni zid onog što danas
zovemo definitivna prošlost.
Djevojčica u mom krevetu
rekla je – propast svijeta,
a tako je bilo božanstveno.

Oduzme li se tome neizbježna
patetika – što je ostalo od
istine? Ona je mislila da je
to vrhunac ljubavi, a ja ...
da je to, nažalost, kraj.

Noć u podrumu

Govorili smo o poeziji
a na grad su pucali bivši pjesnici
Govorili smo o smrti
a noć su obasjavale živopisne boje
Govorili smo o Bogu
a vani je bio bezbožni rat
O ženama nismo govorili
naše žene su bile pored nas.

Krist na transporteru

Dobri pastir, s kažiprstom
ispruženim naprijed i s pogledom
koji rasijeca horizont vrškom
žileta, oklopljen, mehaniziran,
ide u budućnost bez svoga stada.
Slika kakvu Pismo ne pozna:
stado traži svog izgubljenog
pastira. Kako će stado ocu,
samo, makar i na broju, kako
bez pastira, bez Krista?
A on, vječni i neprolazni,
kažu k tom još i milosrdni,
na transporteru, tako trijumfalan,
tako dalek, nedokučiv. A stado,
narod njegov, ili čiji već,
ide k svome Bogu, bez svoga
dobrog pastira, i moli, jeca –
Oče, jesmo li dobro stado,
ako ti bez pastira dođemo?

Krist ide u rat

Plačna bogorodica
sjedi na rubu trotoara
pored nje žurno prolazi Krist
nema vremena za suze
krenuo je u rat
raskopčane košulje
maljavih grudi i sa
stasom muškarca u
najboljim godinama
Strmom ulicom pred njim
kotrlja se netom ispražnjena
limenka coca-cole
okolo na brdima svjetlucaju
suncem dirnute cijevi
izlozi se skrivaju pred
rijetkim prolaznicima
u žurbi tračnice zaboravile
na svoje tramvaje
tek hromi pas u čudu
se osvrće na plačnu
usamljenu bogomajku.

Pohvala barbarima

Barbari dolaze s istoka
snenih očiju, s nosnicama
punim čežnje, epski plaćeni
i u množini jaki.
Barbari ne razumiju zalazak
sunca, lijepe snove i opojne
mirise čednih grudi, oni sav
svoj život pretaču u krik.
Barbari odlaze u grob,
nariču divlje, mrtvima na
humku ostave hrano i
gledaju u daljinu
očima tužnog psa.
Barbari ne mrze, oni samo
ne razumiju. U stvari, oni
oni mrze i njih mrze. Barbari
su izmislili mržnju.