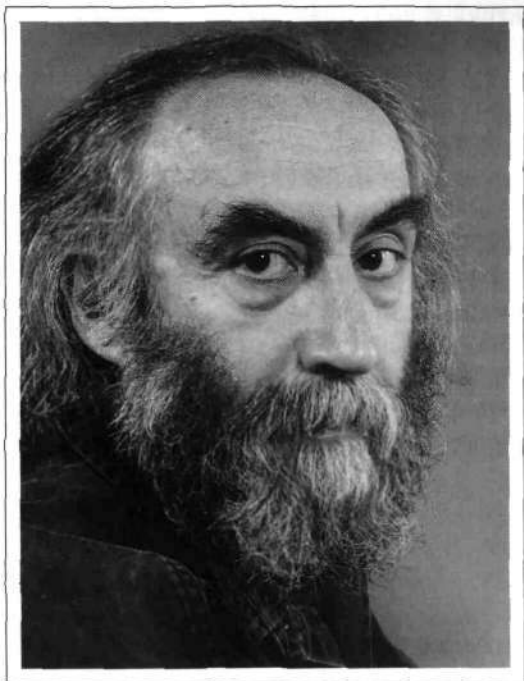


OSTI, Josip



Josip Osti, poet, story teller, essayist, anthology compiler and translator, was born in 1945 in Sarajevo, where he graduated from the Faculty of Arts. He has worked as editor for the publishing house Veselin Masleša, was Director of the Sarajevo Days of Poetry and President of the Association of Literary Translators of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since the end of the Eighties he has lived as a freelance writer and translator in Slovenia. In addition to books of prose, essays and literary criticism he has published thirteen poetry collections, among them *Barbara and the Barbarian*, 1990, *The Sarajevo Book of the Dead*, 1993, *Solomon's Seal*, 1995, and *The Narcissus of Karst*, written in Slovene. His poetry has been translated into Slovene, English, Italian, Czech, Polish, Turkish, Portuguese and other languages. He has received numerous awards, among them the international Vilenica Prize.

Josip Osti, rojen leta 1945 v Sarajevu, pesnik, pripovednik, esejist, literarni kritik, antologist in prevajalec, je diplomiral na Filozofski fakulteti. Bil je urednik sarajevske založbe Veselin Masleša, direktor Sarajevskih dnevov poezije, sekretar Društva književnikov BiH in predsednik Društva književnih prevajalcev BiH. Od konca osemdesetih let živi v Sloveniji kot svobodni pisatelj in prevajalec. Poleg knjig proze, esejev in literarnokritičkih tekstov je od leta 1971 izdal trinajst pesniških zbirk, med njimi *Barbara i barbar*, 1990, *Sarajevska knjiga mrtvih*, 1993, *Salomonov pečat*, 1995 in *Kraški narcis* (ki jo je napisal v slovenščini). Njegove knjige pesmi so prevedene v slovenščino, angleščino, italijanščino, češčino, poljščino, turščino, portugalščino in v druge jezike. Med ostalimi nagradami je prejel Mednarodno literarno nagrado Vilenica.

JOSIP OSTI

**With a rusty bayonet
from World War One**

With a rusty bayonet from World
War One I weed the garden. Thrusting
it deeply into the soil as it might have been thrust
into hard bread or soft human flesh in the times
long cleansed from its
memory. When its former shine
mirrored the fear and uncertainty
of the beautiful young man who,
at the war cemetery, has for decades
been feeding flowers and weeds
as nameless as himself ... With a rusty bayonet
from World War One I weed the garden ...
Pulling out nettles, dandelion ... When the bayonet
touches a brass cartridge in the soil
I blow in it the way I learned as a child.
The silence of the Karst is broken by an unusual sound
to which a wood-owl responds. A wood-owl
whose measured, ominous voice
fills the air all night long.

In my pocket I still keep the key to my former home

In my pocket I still keep the key to my former home, which, since the last war in my home town, has been lived in by strangers who have changed the lock on the main door a long time ago ... I know that a key without a lock no longer has a reason for being, but this key means something higher to me, just like many other generally useless objects ... The dry chestnut I picked up on a tree-lined avenue leading to the source of the river Bosna ... A saucer for the beer mug from the Golden Tiger Inn in Prague, where I met Hrabal ... The napkin on which the English poet Adrian Mitchell drew me an elephant ... The dust of a lemon flower whose unforgettable smell reminds me of our walks along the seashore between Podaca and Brist ... Objects which warm the palm, like the egg my neighbour brought me as soon as it was laid, and which stir the memory ... In my pocket I still keep the key to my former home ... I don't know if this key dreams its own memory, its other half, as I dream my beloved wife, equally dark and mysterious, to whom for years in my dreams, although she sleeps next to me, I have been writing poems instead of love letters. All I know is that, inexplicably, she shows me the way to the darkroom of language, in which alone I feel perfectly free.

The sun warms everyone everywhere equally

The sun warms everyone everywhere equally ... There is no alien sky with an alien sun, as you claim, my good Alexa, in your poem *Remain here*. Neither in your time nor in mine, equally taxing. Only people are alien to each other under the common sky and the common sun. Especially full of hatred for one another are the brothers you refer to. From Cain and Abel onward. The most reliable witness to that is precisely the sun, who decides whether crops will mature or burn, whether there will be bread and wine. Also a witness to the fact that the homeland for which everyone should lay down their life is not a mother ... I do not believe a man is born to die for his country. Especially not for the one which has always been a battleground, an arsonfield and a slaughterhouse. Which, if a mother, is a murderess of her children ... The sun warms everyone everywhere equally ... There is no alien sky with an alien sun, as you claim, my good Alexa, in your poem *Remain here*. For a human being among human beings, as long as he or she is a human being and truly among human beings, flowers and wormwood grow equally. That is why I advise all those you're asking to remain here to go and remain where they won't have to ask themselves who is going to kill them, but who is going to love them.

Building a house after the war

After the war we're building a house ... After yet another war, during which many people have remained without a roof over their heads, we're building a house and arranging the garden around it. We're building it on the scale of a snail's house, small and beautiful, but for two. We learn from the sparrows. We ask the wind for advice, and the rain. We build it with hands that smell of soil into which everything that comes from it always returns. With hands that gently touch and, exhausted, laugh loudly like an elder-tree in bloom. We're helped by stone and water, which we unite with the smell of lavender and images from a dream ... After the war we're building a house ... For two bodies that will lie in bed as if under a blooming apple-tree, and for two souls that will silently wander around it like the soul of an old woman who had lived and died among its walls ... We're building little walls that will cut us off from cruel reality, and stairs that will lead us beyond the known, to where only two who love each other ever get ... After the war we're building a house ... Day and night, although we're only too aware that we are building tomorrow's ruins.

Translated by Evald Flisar

JOSIP OSTI

Z zarjavelim bajonetom iz prve svetovne vojne

Z zarjavelim bajonetom iz prve svetovne vojne pulim plevel v vrtu. Zabadam ga globoko v zemljo, kot so ga morda zabadali v trd kruh in mehko človeško meso v času, ki je že zdavnaj izbrisan iz njegovega spomina. Ko se je v njegovem nekdanjem sijaju zrcalil od strahu in negotovosti spačen lep obraz mladeniča, iz katerega na vojaškem pokopališču že desetletja rastejo tako kot on brezimne rože in plevel... Z zarjavelim bajonetom iz prve svetovne vojne pulim plevel v vrtu... Pulim koprivo, regrat... Ko z bajonetom naletim na medeninast tulec v zemlji, pihnem vanj, kot sem se naučil v otroštvu. Kraško tišino prekiné nenavaden zvok in nanj se odzove čuk. Čuk, ki se potem vso noč oglašá s svojim enakomernim, zloveščim glasom.

V žepu še vedno nosim ključ nekdanjega doma

V žepu še vedno nosim ključ nekdanjega doma, kjer od zadnje vojne v mojem rojstnem mestu stanujejo drugi ljudje, ki so že zdavnaj zamenjali ključavnico vhodnih vrat... Vem, da je ključ brez svoje ključavnice izgubil smisel obstoja, toda ta ključ ima zame višji smisel, tako kot veliko drugih, v glavnem neuporabnih predmetov... Posušen kostanj, ki sem ga pobral v drevoredu, ki pelje k izviru Bosne... Podstavek za vrč s pivom iz gostilne Pri zlatem tigru v Pragi, kje sem se srečal s Hrabalom... Prtiček, na katerega mi je angleški pesnik Adrian Mitchell narisal slončka... V prah spremenjen cvet limone, katerega nepozabni vonj me spominja na najina sprehajanja ob morju med Podaco in Bristom... Predmetov, ki grejejo dlan kot jajce, ki mi ga je prinesla soseda, takoj ko ga je znesla kokoš, in oživljajo spomine... V žepu še vedno nosim ključ nekdanjega doma... Ne vem, ali ta ključ sanja svoj smisel, svojo drugo polovico, tako kot jaz sanjam svojo ljubljeno ženo, enako mračno in skrivnostno, ki ji v sanjah, čeprav spi ob meni, namesto ljubezenskih pisem že leta in leta pišem pesmi. Vem samo, da mi na nepojasnljiv način kaže pot do temnice jezika, v kateri se edino počutim popolnoma svobodnega.

Sonce povsod in vse enako greje

Sonce povsod in vse enako greje... Ni tujega neba in na njem tujega sonca, kot praviš, dobri Aleksa, v pesmi *Ostanite tukaj*. Ne v tvojem ne v mojem enako hudem času. Tuji so pod skupnim nebom in skupnim soncem le ljudje med seboj. Sovražni drug do drugega so predvsem bratje, na katere se sklicuješ. Še od Kajna in Abela. Temu je prav sonce, ki presoja, ali bo pšenica dozorela ali zgorela oziroma ali bo kruha in vina, zanesljiva priča. Kot tudi temu, da ni mati domovina, za katero naj bi vsak dal svoje življenje... Ne verjamem, da človek živi zato, da bi umiral za domovino. Posebno ne za tisto, ki je bila ves čas bojišče, pogorišče in morišče. Ki je, če je mati – morilka lastnih otrok...
Sonce povsod in vse enako greje... Ni tujega neba in na njem tujega sonca, kot praviš, dobri Aleksa, v pesmi *Ostanite tukaj*... Povsod za človeka med ljudmi, če je res človek in je resnično med ljudmi, enako cvetijo rože in pelin. Zato vsem, ki jih vabiš, da ostanejo tukaj, sporočam, naj grejo in ostanejo tam, kjer se ne bodo spraševali, kdo jih bo ubil, temveč kdo jih bo ljubil.