

# fervent wind

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## FERVENT WIND

(Plameni vjetar)

One day that bloody dawn will break,  
one day that red whirlwind will betake  
oh — one day —  
over the pyramid of Home Guards lying dead.  
From countless wounds the flame will spread.  
In that tremendous tremor  
symbols of oaths and incense, comedies and churches,  
hospitals and cafes, madhouses,  
bordellos and monasteries will fade away,  
one day, oh, one day!  
And bells will ring,  
banners and bands and the anger of dungeons.  
The fervent wind will sing the holy song of fire, chaos and eons.  
Oh, street!  
May the bloody wave  
whirl through you today!  
Cursed be the paean to gold,  
for while women, silks and chocolates smell sweet,  
they hang a god on the square  
like a thief in bare feet.  
Oh, street!  
Today  
be a red wave!  
Thus one day a fervent wind will howl  
over the pyramid of Home Guards lying dead  
and black banners will flutter red like flaming tongues.  
Window panes of ghastly pale houses will catch fire like a  
madman's eyes  
and scorching rains from heaven will pour down  
in torrents upon the town.  
The omnidestructive rhythm of the street will exclaim:

Translated from the Croatian  
by Slobodan Drenovac

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Fire! Fire and flame!  
And in the circle of slaves, kings, women and rot,  
tramways, oxen, horses, cannons, wind, buckshot,  
in the crazy cyclone of blood and fire in which Freedom and  
Fortune burn,  
the divine Lie like a holy sun spins,  
a giggle resounds loud from  
Her Majesty,  
Death, who forever wins.

## NIGHT IN THE PROVINCE

(Noć u provinciji)

*»Dogs bark, but the caravan goes by«*  
Old Arabian proverb.

Why do dogs bark like that in our pitch-dark nights?  
An echoed footfall from the road by stranger unknown,  
or whiff of a wolf in the midst of this gloom?  
Briefly silence prevails: all sounds muffled by stillness  
and while the dog's chain swishes and barely clinks  
in the distance a lamp light faintly blinks.

Everything hushed. And again the barking starts.  
Dogs bark. Madly, furiously, without a brain,  
dogs bark stupidly, bloodthirstily and in vain  
at anything that moves: at lamplights, voices and shadows,  
at the moon, at forebodings and persons estranged,  
dogs bark doggedly, doggishly singing songs deranged,  
dogs bark night after night, each one bleak and storm-bound,  
songs doggone hopeless and in damnation wound.

Oh dog congregation, you bark but the caravans pass by  
and rustle of harness is heard, patter of hooves and wheel-  
-thunder.

In vain your bark seeps its dog's hate at those who wander,  
all pass by and vanish, while you, blind shadow on a chain,  
await destiny, to die a dog's death with you in this fenced lane.

## DOCTOR AT A PAUPER'S

(Liječnik kod siromaha)

The nearsighted gentleman with soft cold fingertips  
that chil the burning red-hot ribs like camphor;  
with rubber tubing of caoutchouc and silver  
palpates the sweat seeping thighs and hips.

He has costly gloves from the hide of a deer  
and outside his own coach waiting for Him.  
The glass of his spectacles glitters a cold glim,  
for Him all secrets of the body are silly and clear.  
In His presence they washed the floor and all the chairs,  
long they scrubbed the washbowl with sand and ashes;  
a ceremonious glow flickers from rinsed water glasses,  
the whole household moves on tiptoe harassed with cares.

The woman is ashamed; coarse linen towel trembles in her  
hand,  
she sweats tortured by the poverty of their room; shreds and  
tatters.

In the eyes of this stranger all the things are but dirty spatters:

he things of his hunting rifles shiny,  
of the hare in the meadow, the dog's snout slimy,  
of the after-dinner loll, the wicker chairs and cots,  
of companions, of roses, irises and forget-me-nots,  
of a doll's smile: a maiden in white without faults.

## THE VILLAGE CHURCH

(Seoska crkva)

Two walls. Three steeples, upright, sky-high,  
like a cloud-touching stronghold, the tower.  
Circling the lightning rod, swallows twitter;  
outline of the tower: image daring and sky-high.

Oh how fragrant and succulent the air's dye!  
The apple a copper colour with greenish hue.  
Leaden gray and dark thick mists accrue.  
An outbreak of thunder. War in the sky.

The weary pleasures of a light-hearted sigh  
and of blue joys, not worth a curse.  
Dumb and gloomy daydreams in a pew,

in the waning light of the church. Echoes muffled and few,  
acoustics of the grave: the sweetest place to go to bed.  
Long gone saints, decayed scriptures, no God to dread.

The bleating of a sheep from the church-door instead.

### CALM SEA AT EVENTIDE

(Bonaca u predvečerje)

Like a woman the sea with glittering gems plays,  
knitting a lace of foam in the sail's shadow.  
Aquamarine, yellow and gray carcanets glow,  
from lips of billows a ship's wooden rib sways.

On the sea floor in the dim of the dark mire  
sunken objects move to and fro and glare.  
Over the blue mirror white birds soar through the air.  
The water is as heavy as on oil ringlet dire.

A wriggle of soot gushes from the ship's funnel,  
a fish sizzles on the fire; smells of resin and iodine.  
Flickers of eel's light; the deaf and dumb brine.

A sail on the high sea, a crimson ship's image  
and white feeler of the lighthouse beacon.  
Below deck a furnace. Laughter. Accordion.

(Book of Poems, 1931)