

A C Z A R ' S D E A T H

Once upon a time...

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After Fawad's departure, The Rhymes went into
mourning for a while.

But a roar of a czar,
that was received on the very start of Sarajevo's
marathon with death,
broke the Rhymes' silence;
the Rhymes' mourning clothes.

Once upon a time...

They called it the Pioneer valley.

And in it, there was a cage,
and within, there was a lion.

And the gangs of the unruly Sarajevo youth,
and those well-bred but inquisitive,
and a herd of daddies and mummies,
and grannies and granddads,
and a mob of Bashcharshia ruffians,
and one single lion to gratify all of them.

Run away!

tried I several times to encourage that creature,
created by God dignified and free,
and being now turned,
by the creatures also,
into a plaything.

Who's ever seen a czar of all animals to
surrender?

Get out to your wild!
What are you doing here in this enclosure,
kept as a feeble bird, and allowing to be provoked
with the picky tools,
or sharp insulting tongues of those
whom you can swallow up
in the twinkling of an eye?!
Once,
having found me myself imprisoned,
I have understood:
about freedom, easy is to chat if one's on the free
side of the bar.
But if behind...
However, nobody in the city has ever taken any
lesson from the lion's
sad
destiny.
What may happen,
for example,
to any czar, and then,
that each lion is a czar of all other animals,
but not under any circumstances of each sample
of his kind.
Third lesson had to be learned from one's own
experience.
Namely, when everything started,
nobody had a time to think on,
let alone to make a call to an hypothetical czar
from Sarajevo Zoo.
For few days the king of jungle kept silence,
himself too extremely baffled with the flaming
chaos that started flying over his head.

With the passage of time, the fire was getting ever
closer.

Initially confused, the czar understood:

the Pioneer valley,
Sarajevo Zoo,
and its funny residents,
became,
all of a sudden,
no man zone,
and no state populace.

The very front-line.

All humans,

including those who used to feed them and clean
their lodgings,
disappeared, as though there had not been the
alive left behind.

Last whom the lion saw was an early morning
wavy line of the mottled pyjamas,
with sleeping kids in the hands,
the faltering pairs of the trousers,
as descending a side of a hill,
and ascending an another hill side.

Between which two small green heights,

now in quarrel,

the Pioneer valley,

and Sarajevo Zoo,

and the lake full of the beautiful swans and other
fine creatures,

and a small stream of the always warbling water,
and the biggest cage,
and the lion in it,
became a wedge.

Between now two states:

one of the humans,
and another one of the humanoids.

Incessant barrage-fire.
Ever increasing hunger.
Unbearable starvation.

Famine.

Fear.

Roar.

Several times I had to go to the ascending side of
the hill in order to find,
with my friends,
a piece of bread,
or a drop of water to wash up,
or a pose from,

in the city-centre where I lived constant grenades-
fall,
and,

believed I,

a second of a peaceful sleep,
when I heard him: roaring.

First night, that was an angry roar,
the one of impotence,
a walk round the enclosure,
to and fro,

as I used to see him and hear,
some time before,
walking and roaring
when enraged by visitors.

On my second night, that was the roar of a plea:
for mercy,
for a portion of meat,
for any food,
for company.

I decided to go to him,
at once,
at my own risk,
to help the only czar in the city whom I
recognised as such.

But my empty hands stopped me.
I didn't have any food for me myself either.

Third night, when I went over there,
oh!

that was the roar which I'd never forget.
The roar, overflowed with all accumulated

frustrations,

all pains,

all suffering,

all humiliations,

all incurable nostalgia:

for his birthplace,

for the creatures of his genus,

for the natural freedom and dignity,

that was the roar of agony,

a deep,

long,

loud,

moving,

roar of dying.

The awe-inspiring roar of a czar death.

I'll never forgive myself that neither I did
anything for him.

For the only real czar who lived in the place of
my birth,

where each building's corridor hides
at least one.

Fancied, of course!

I can't say with a complete certainty
that the other tools of Sarajevo citizens fun
from the same precinct also died,
during the first days of the siege,
their own
touching
death.

They might have been rescued by a mimetic
humanitarian organisation,
due to the prices on the world zoo-residents-
market,
about what I haven't learnt anything as yet?
But I don't dare to imagine some frail figures as
flamenco,
or beautiful and proud peacock
with his wife,
much less lovely so awfully jealous,
Lady peahen,
or to picture a bison,
or zebra,
or grizzly,
or a polar bear,
then koala, tiger, cougar or lynx,
a slay fox and my Capricorn,
and all the rest of the tenants
of that small Sarajevo Zoo
as dying,
during that cannonade,
in their defenceless pens,
heard not by the men,
fallen out over one and the same homeland,
for the sake of whose united enjoyment they were
barred

far from their own.
Human beings did not have any longer time for
that zest,
many of them nor for the life,
from the either of two sides,
between which
these innocent objects of the human frolic
got driven a wedge.

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From the book
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S A R A J E V O R O S E
W A R R H Y M E S