

HEDINA TAHIROVIĆ SIJERČIĆ

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# DUKH — PAIN

HEDINA TAHIROVIĆ SIJERČIĆ

MAGORIA BOOKS

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Dukh — Pain by Hedina Tahirović Sijerčić

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HEDINA TAHIROVIĆ SIJERČIĆ was born on 11. 11. 1960. in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is a graduate journalist and teacher. She organized and hosted Romani programs for the Radio-TV station in Sarajevo and worked as an activist for The International Romani Union. She later lived in Toronto and worked as a teacher for the Toronto District School Board. While in Canada she was the Editor-in-Chief of the first Canadian-Romani newsletter, *Romano Lil* from 1998 to 2001.

She was a Canadian delegate at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia: Forum of the Americas in 2001 at Quito, Ecuador. At the moment she is living in Germany.

Hedina is the author of the book *Romany Legends* with the texts in English and German, 2004, Turnshare, London, England and she translated the book *How we live* from Bosnian to Romani, 2001, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was also the editor-in-chief of, and one of the contributing authors in, the booklet *Kanadake Romane Mirikle (Canadian Romani Pearls)* 1999, Toronto. She also translated the book *Ilmihal* from Serbo-Croatian to Romani, 1995, Sarajevo. In 1991, Hedina translated a feature film *Ratvali bijav (Boda de Sangre)* by Garcia Lorca from Romani to Serbo-Croatian. She was also a writer/editor of two documentary films: *Adjive Romen* and *Karankoci-Koci*, TV Sarajevo, 1989.

\* \* \*

HEDINA TAHIROVIĆ SIJERČIĆ bijandili 11. 11. 1960. ando Saraj (Sarajevo), Bosna thaj Hercegovina. Voj si sikadi zhurnalisti thaj učitelka-sikamni. Hedina sasa angluni editori pala Romane programe pe Radio-Televizijate Sarajevo, thaj aktivisti ande Internacionalna Romani Organizacija. Voj dzuvdili ande Torontoneste kaj resli Ontario Koledj- Vuchi Sikamni Diploma. Voj cherdja buchi ande Toronto sar regularni sikamni pe Engleski chib pala skolaki themeski organizacija pe anav Toronto District School Board. Hedina sasa angluni editori pala angluno Romano lil ande Kanada pe akhardipe *Romano Lil*, 1998-2001.

Voj sasa Kanadaki delegati pe Themeski Konferencija pala antirasizam thaj diskriminacija, 2001, ande Quito, Ekvador, (Juzhna Amerika). Hedina akana dzuvdel ande Germanija.

Hedina romasarda *Romany Legends* ande Engleski chib, 2004, Engleska, London. Gova lil ikljovel dujchibeski, ande Engleski-Germanski chib. Hedina tradili o lil *Gova si amaro dzuvdipe, na dzanen aver* katari Bosanski chib ande Romani chib, 2001, Bosna thaj Hercegovina. Voj si editori thaj autori pala o lil *Kanadake Romane Mirikle*, 1999, Toronto, Kanada. Hedina tradili o lil *Ilmihal* katari Serbsko-Hrvacki chib ande Romani chib, 1995, Saraj, TV filmo *Ratvali bijav* katari G.Lorca katari Romani ande Serbsko-Hrvacki chib, 1991. Hedina si autori thaj editori pala duj dokumentarno TV-filmu *Adjive Romen* thaj *Karankochi-Kochi*, TV Sarajevo, 1989.

English and Romani Lector: Ronald Lee  
Cover Illustrations: Rizah Sijerčić

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## Foreword

By Ronald Lee  
Sessional Instructor  
The Romani Diaspora  
NEW343H1S  
New College  
University of Toronto

As an author, educator, journalist and poet, I find Hedina's poetry both impressive and evocative. She speaks of the beauty of Romani life in her former *Mahala* or Romani Quarter in Sarajevo, named a Sister City of my own Montreal in happier times, and a once beautiful centre of culture which was mindlessly destroyed during the ethnic and religious strife in Bosnia. She gives us an insight into this tragedy and her own pain and suffering at this loss. Since her arrival in Canada, she had worked tirelessly both to improve her own situation and to help her fellow Roma. She was editor in chief of our first Romani publication in Canada, *Romano Lil*, and worked as a parent-teacher liaison worker under a grant funded by Heritage Canada to help integrate the children of Romani refugees in Canada into the Canadian school system in Toronto. She also worked as a volunteer helping to organize Romani events in Toronto. In 1999, she edited the first booklet of Romani poetry in Canada, *Kanadake Romane Mirikle (Canadian Romani Pearls)*, an anthology which contained some of her own poems along with those of other Canadian Roma. This new collection of poems by Hedina, is also a milestone, the first time a Romani poet has ever written a collection of poems in *Gurbeti* Romani with English translations.

As a Canadian Rom, I fully recommend her work as an example of Romani poetry which speaks of the tragedy facing the Roma in the persecuting countries of central-eastern Europe and of her own feelings as a Romani woman who has experienced this traumatic but unknown episode of Romani history firsthand. Her poems describing Romani life and Romani folk beliefs are also valuable and will help non-Roma to understand the culture and customs of the Roma. She has created a valuable piece of our cultural heritage and I commend her for her dedication and talent.



## Swaturya Mai Anglune Kaldershitskones

Katar o Ronald Lee  
Instruktori Semestralno  
E Romani Diaspora Ande Kanada  
NEW343H1S  
Universitato Torontosko  
Toronto

Shavale, Rromale! Me sim Rrom Kanadako thai arakhadyilem ando kako them. Amé, le Rroma ande Kanada, chi mai xalyam o nekazo thai e persekutsiya kai xale amare Rromane phrala thai phenya ande Ivropa kai le Rroma musai te trayin ande phari miseriya thai diskriminatsiya. Ande'l neve dimokrasiyi ande Ivropa chintralno thai lasariyesko, le Gazhe akushen, maren, thai mudaren le Rromen. Phabaren lenge khera thai le kokalune shere (skini) thai e nevi kali leyiga (fashisturya) vorritsin le Rromen thai mudaren len po than. But Rromane azilanturya aven akana ande Kanada katar kakale thema. Me arakhlem but lendar thai ashundem penge historiyande. Murri amalní, E Hedina, si yekh lendar, Rromni sikadí thai godjaver, kai xalyas but nekazo le Gazhendar ando lako them. Musai sas lake te nashel lake themestar te rodel azilo politikalno ande Kanada te beshel ando liberto laka familiyasa.

Ande lake gilyá, E Hedina del-duma katar o yilo. Phenel amenge so dikhlas mashkar le Rroma ando Sarai thai ande Bosniya, ande peski Mahala ka prepedisardé le Gazhe ando lengo Gazhikano marimos kana mudardyile but Rroma. Le Rroma anda o Sarai thai anda e Bosniya. Musai-sas lenge te nashen-pe ka 'l avre thema Ivropanoske kai konik chi manglas te den le andré. But nashlé-pe ande Nyamptsiya thai ande Italiya. E Hedina sas baxtalí. Woi arakhlas azilantomos ande Kanada. Ando kako them, woi kerdyas buki te azhutil-pe thai te azhutil avre Rromene azulanturyen. Woi sas redaktórka-sherutni vash amari mai angluni Rromani publikatsiya ande Kanada, *Romano Lil*. Woi kerdyas o liloró, *Kanadake Romane Mirikle*, yekh kidemos amare Rromane gilyandar. Woi kerdyas buki ando amaro programo te azhutis le Romane shavoren ande wushkala ando Toronto. Kerdyas bari buki sar aktivista te pomozhil le Rromen, desar woi avilyas ande Kanada.

Kako nevo lil katar E Hedina si o pervo data ande lumya ke ramosardyas yekh poeta Romani ekh kidemos peske gilyandar Romanes thai Inglezitskanes. Woi vorbil ando chisto glaso Rromano. Woi kerdyas bari buki. Te del o Del ke kako lil azhutil le Rromen, te zhanen mai mishto le Gazhe kon si le Rroma thai so si amari kultura, amaro trayo thai amari historiya.

Akana, woi geli pálpale ande Nyamptsiya kai beshel laka familiyasa. Te del o Del lake baxt, sastimus thai lungo trayo.



## Introduction

These poems will be greatly appreciated by anyone with even a little interest or sensitivity to other cultures. The Romani culture carries a lot of mystery to the Gadze (non-Roma), and the authenticity and tenderness with which Hedina writes depicts the Romani world to us in an enlightening and endearing way. The specific personal experiences saturated by the effects of the Bosnian war shatter our illusions of a happy fantasy folk unperturbed and impenetrable by the effects of the foolish and cruel outside human and political world. As our lives have continued to collide historically and geographically, we find ourselves finally united personally through a rich human pathos expressed in poetry.

I earnestly hope we will be offered more of such writing, that we may see our common human soul though reflected in a traditional universe unfamiliar to us.

H. Laurel Peters  
Canadian educator and  
Balkan humanitarian aid worker



*dux* *pain*

## **“Good Afternoon, Roma!”**

In a dream

I am producing a radio-program in Romani.

I am listening to my voice:

“Good afternoon, Roma and children!

Good health and luck to you!”

Studio, microphone, music.

Gadze<sup>1</sup> dance with us.

Gadze laugh with us.

I am happy.

In a dream

I am producing a radio-program in Romani.

I am listening to my voice:

“Flee Roma! Flee children!

Flee as far as you can!”

Bombs, guns, knives.

The Gadze beat us.

The Gadze kill us.

I am devastated.

---

<sup>1</sup>Gadze: non-Roma people



## Lacho Djive Romalen

Ando suno  
Cherav radio emisija pe Romani chib.  
Ashunav pesko krlo:  
"Lacho djive, Romalen thaj chavalen!  
Aven saste thaj bahtale!"  
Studio, mikrofono, bashalipe.  
E gadze chelen amenca.  
E gadze hasaven amenca.  
Bahtali sem.

Ando suno  
Cherav radio emisija pe Romani chib.  
Ashunav pesko krlo:  
"Nashen dural Romalen thaj chavalen!  
Nashen dur dural!"  
Granaturja, jagala, churika.  
E gadze maren amen.  
E gadze mudaren amen.  
Bibaxtali sem.

*duch*

## Romani Milky Way

God desired and urged  
That the Earth and Water marry.  
The Earth and Water sought from God  
A male child, a Sun, from their hearts.  
The Earth conceived five times  
And bore five daughters, five stars:  
The first star — Flower  
The second star — Faith  
The third star — Apple  
The fourth Star — Bird  
The fifth Star — Hope  
The Earth and Water cried  
For they wanted a male child, the Sun.  
God listened to them and said:  
“Then make a solemn vow!  
That every year you will slaughter a sheep,  
Put its crimson blood on the child’s forehead  
And give him the name, Bread!”  
The Earth and Water wept with joy and declared:  
“It is our solemn vow!”

## Romano Thudalo Dromoro

O Devel mangel thaj cherel  
Kaj I Phuv thaj o Paj ansuren.  
I Phuv thaj o Paj roden e Devlestar  
Jekh murshikano chavo, o Kham, ilestar.  
I Phuv khamnisajlel pandz dromengo  
Thaj bijandili pandz chejango, chehrajango:  
Prvi chehrajin – Luludji  
Dujti chehrajin – Pachape  
Triti chehrajin – Phabaj  
Shtarti chehrajin – Chirikli  
Pandzti chehrajin – Dozacharipe  
I Phuv e Pajensa roven  
Jekh murshikano chavo, o Kham, mangel.  
O Devel ashunel thaj phendel:  
“Dema sovli!  
Neka sako brsh perel e bakresko shoro,  
Thoven pe chavoresko chikateste e bakresko rat lolo.  
Thaj akharen les Mahno.”  
I Phuv e Pajensa e baxtalipestar roven thaj phenden:  
“Amen xan sovli!”

*pain*

## A Deceased Good Rom

In the room lies  
A deceased, good Rom,  
Around him, Roma are sitting  
To speak to him one last time.  
Women and children have gone  
To Uncle's house.  
A deceased, good Rom  
Should sleep in peace.  
The window is slightly open  
And the door is closed.  
By the window, a glass.  
In the glass, cold water.  
At the window, a plate.  
In the plate, white flour.  
A deceased, good Rom  
Should eat one last time.  
A deceased, good Rom  
Should not go hungry  
Into the second world.  
Television and mirror are covered.  
A young man  
Prays and cries  
With the Roma all night.  
The sun is rising  
Morning is awakening.  
At the window a bird is chirping.  
In the glass is less water  
In the plate the trail of fingers.  
The deceased, good Rom ate  
One last time.  
A funeral car comes  
And the deceased, good Rom is driven away  
All the Roma from the Quarter are outside,  
They pour water out from pails  
And pray together  
For the deceased, good Rom:  
"Go with water!  
Go with God!"

## Mulo Lacho Rom

Ande soba pashjel  
mulo lacho Rom,  
Opash les Roma beshen  
thaj lesa phenden agoresko drom.  
Romnja thaj chava dzele  
ando kakosko cher,  
Mulo lacho Rom  
Trubuj ando miro te sovel.  
Pendzero si putardo thaj  
udar phanglo.  
Pe pendzero taxtaj.  
Ande taxtaj paj shudro.  
Pe pendzero tijari.  
Ande tijari aro parno.  
Mulo lacho Rom  
trubuj te hal agoresko drom.  
Mulo lacho Rom  
na trubuj te dzal  
pe dujto them bokhalo.  
Ucharde san televizija thaj dikhlo  
E Romenca sasto jrat  
bandjavel thaj rovel  
terno raklo.  
O kham iklovel,  
Teharin avel,  
Pe pendzero chirikli chicharel.  
Ande taxtaj pohari paj  
Ande tijari vurma kataro naj.  
Halo mulo lacho Rom  
agoresko drom.  
E mulesko vordon avel  
Thaj mulo lacho Rom anel.  
Sa Roma ande Mahala avri ikloven,  
O paj andare kachunende chordardiven,  
The krlalo jekhethane  
pala mulo lacho Rom rudjisaven:  
“Dza pajeha!  
Dza Devleha!”

*duch* *pain*



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Formerly published in English and German under the title "Romany Legends", Magoria Books plans to make the book available both as an English and Romani language edition aimed at adult audiences, as well as a series of richly illustrated full-colour children's books.

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Magoria Books would therefore like to encourage Romani poets, writers, and activists to approach us with their ideas and proposals. We are particularly interested in folktales, poetry, and manuscripts written in the Romani language; but are open to considering other materials.

We are also interested in partnerships with translators, community organizations, and foreign publishers to find ways to increase distribution, availability, and relevance of existing and upcoming titles.

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*In a dream*

*I am producing a radio-program in Romani.*

*I am listening to my voice:*

*"Good afternoon, Roma and children!*

*Good health and luck to you!"*

*Studio, microphone, music.*

*Gadze dance with us.*

*Gadze laugh with us.*

*I am happy.*

*In a dream*

*I am producing a radio-program in Romani.*

*I am listening to my voice:*

*"Flee Roma! Flee children!*

*Flee as far as you can!"*

*Bombs, guns, knives.*

*The Gadze beat us.*

*The Gadze kill us.*

*I am devastated.*

'Dukh — Pain' is a collection of richly evocative poems, weaving together the author's fleeting joys and enduring tragedies with traditional Romani folklore. Hedina's poetry is enlightening in its candidness, which shatters the fanciful myth of the mysterious and ever-carefree Roma, replacing it with lyric images of people living, loving, and dying, not immune to the caprice of the world that surrounds them. It is through such tragedies that the lingering message of these poems has become simply *dukh*, pain.



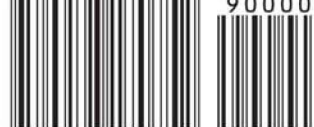
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