Dukh

Pain
SERIES EDITOR: AGGOTT HÖNSCH ISTVÁN
Dukh — Pain

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 Americans 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.

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Foreword

By Ronald Lee
Sessional Instructor
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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
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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 vorbíl ando chisto glaso Romano. 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
“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.
Gadze¹ 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.

¹Gadze: 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:
“Noth nural Romalen thaj chavalen!
Nashen dur dural!”
Granaturja, jagala, churika.
E gadze maren amen.
E gadze mudaren amen.
Bibaxtali sem.
dukh
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, mangen.
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!”
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 pashljel
mulo lacho Rom,
Opash les Roma beshen
thaj lesa phenden agoresko drom.
Romnja thaj chava dzele
ando kokosko 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!”
THANKS · PARI KERAV PALA

Naomi Binder Wall
Lynn Hutchinson
Florence Gibson
Paul St. Clair
Ronald Lee
Coming in 2008 from
MAGORIA BOOKS

THE LIVING FIRE
(E Zhivindi Yag)

BY RONALD LEE

Ronald Lee’s autobiographical novel, formerly published as “Goddam Gypsy”, is an intense, fast moving, and brutally honest affair.

Yanko—a Canadian Rom who ‘took the non-Gypsy way but didn’t go far’—seeks his fortunes both among and apart from the Roma, never quite finding his place. His story exposes the out of sight, out of mind world of Canada’s Roma in 1970’s Montréal: Parties, rackets, bar brawls, weddings, desperate poverty, and intermittent police raids fuel in Yanko the passion, creativity, and rebellious defiance that is The Living Fire.
Legends of the Roma
(working title)

by Hedina Tahirotić Sijerčić

A unique collection of Romani legends and folktales bring alive the rich cultural and religious traditions of the Roma.

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.

Visit our website for updates on this and other projects.
**About Magoria Books**

Magoria Books is an independent Canadian publisher specializing in Romani books. Our aim is to provide Romani authors with opportunities to present and thereby preserve the culture, language, and folklore of the Roma.

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.

Write to us at:

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1562 Danforth Avenue #92006  
Toronto, ON M4J 5C1  
Canada
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‘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.