

SAMPLE
TRANSLATION

JOSIP OSTI
ON THE CROSS OF LOVE

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Josip Osti: On The Cross Of Love

Selected Poems

There's a Trellis before the Window, Sweetheart, with a Cluster of Ripe Grapes on It

There's a trellis before the window, sweetheart,
with a cluster of ripe grapes on it. Like time. For it's
the end of summer with autumn beginning. Its
grapes, not long ago green, took on the color of
amber. I left some of them for you. Some of them I
ate myself. Some of them were nibbled by a
redwing. After the autumn, the winter will come.
Perhaps the very last one. An all-embracing one.
And it will all come to nothing. The cluster. Myself.
And the bird.

A Pair of Swallows Are Dancing in the Air above a Garden in Tomaj

A pair of swallows are dancing in the air above a garden in Tomaj. A dead leaf is dancing on a golden thread of a cobweb. The tips of a tiny bamboo grove are dancing with the countless singing sparrows on the little branches concealed behind a fan of lush foliage. The weeping willow and the blue pine are dancing, their hair intertwining. The shadows of the white clouds are dancing on the ground of the meadow. The two of us are dancing too, sweetheart, embracing, as though we'd only just met and are saying goodbye at the same time. Everything's dancing and everybody's dancing. Dancing are those saying: "The wind has started up again." Without hearing the music created by the plucking of the invisible fingers of wind against the strings of the harp made of sunrays.

There are Moments When I Want to Be You, and You Want to Be Me

There are moments when I want to be you, and you want to be me. So we could get to know love from both sides. Seen through your eyes and mine. ... Longing. Lusting ... What

the man wants and feels, what the woman does. The one caressing and being caressed. Loving while being loved at the same time. What the body and soul experience and what they remember ... There are moments when I want to be you, and you want to be me. For us, like a boy and a girl that will become an old

man and an old woman tomorrow, to constantly repeat our run under the rainbow. Trying to avoid love, even unintentionally, turning into its opposite.

Like Columbus, Searching for India, Found America, I Also Discovered You by Coincidence

Like Columbus, searching for India, found America, I also discovered you by coincidence. Although we'd lived in the same neighborhood for years, we'd never met. We may have been walking different streets at the same time and the same streets at a different time. Maybe even the same street at the same time, yet in the opposite direction. If we did meet, you didn't know it was me, just as I didn't

know it was you. ... Like Columbus, searching for India, found America, I also discovered you by coincidence. Then, literally, death brought us together while love united us. I've been celebrating coincidences ever since, although I don't know whether they truly exist.

While We Were Embracing and Kissing That Night

While we were embracing and kissing
that night, we got lost in time and space.
When the night came, we lay in bed, but
when we awoke, we were lying in a

field. The sky had been above us
throughout, full of twinkling stars.
We didn't know whether the newborn
sun was our child.

Whatever May Happen in Our Lives, Sweetheart

Whatever may happen in our lives,
sweetheart, I beg you to maintain on
your sunny face that sunflower smile,
having seduced not only me, but also
the bees of Tomaj.

I Know Not Whether They Are Signs or Whether I Can Interpret Them Properly

I know not whether they are signs or
whether I can interpret them properly.
Before you went back to the path you had
followed before the two of us met,

with me returning to my Tomaj
solitude without us knowing whether it
meant a short-term or lifelong
separation, I caught sight of a single
sunray in a

dark wood. Unlike any other sunray

I've seen to date. I didn't know whether it
meant I was destined to be and to remain
alone like the sunray, or that you were the
sunray, continuing to shine upon me. Not
even yesterday did I know whether
something similar was implied in the
storm carried by the large and lone black
cloud following a bright and sunny day,
making it look, in the middle of the day,
as though it were the darkest night.

After the heavy downpour, the sun, before
it set, began to shine all around. With a
light much stronger than before. I can say
marvelous, for every rain-washed roof was
glittering, as did every treetop with its
every gilded leaf.

Although Our Days, Not to Mention the Nights ...

Although our days, not to mention the nights, were mostly remarkable, we would sometimes talk as though you'd written me a letter that you never sent, gave, or read to me, but I'd already given you a reply.

Although We're Often Sheer Light

Although we're often sheer light,
darkness happens to speak out of us.

The one within us and the one embracing
the universe.

I Know That the End of Our Love Won't Be the End of the World

I know that the end of our love won't be the end of the world. However, it's you I'm interested in, not the world.

A Print of Your Bare Foot in the Garden Clay

A print of your bare foot in the garden clay.
After the rain it turns into a lake, from which
thirsty butterflies drink for a few days.

Another Question I Can't Answer

Another question I can't answer:

Is it easier or harder being alone with you
or with you alone?

I Used to Compare Your Face with the Moon

I used to compare your face with the moon,
but now I compare the moon with your face.

Your Rice Bread of Love Is Gone

Your rice bread of love is gone.
I've eaten the very last crumb.

Not leaving a single one for the birds or the ants.

Like an Incurable Doubter I Doubted

Like an incurable doubter I doubted
that our love story would end soon.
But now I only doubt my doubt.

The Door of My House Will Remain Open

The door of my house will remain open.
From now on, as it has been so far.
Although you didn't have to ring or knock,
now, when somebody rings or knocks in
the middle of the day or night, it strikes
me that it must be you. That you've
returned. And I rush to open the door for
you. You may return sooner or later. The
same way you left. Wordlessly. And if you
don't say

so yourself, I won't ask you where you've
been or how you've been. I'll embrace and
kiss you the same way we embraced and
kissed for all of our time. Finishing our
countless letters mostly with these very
words: A hug and a kiss. I'll do the same if
Death precedes you. I'll embrace her.*
When she comes, I'd like her to look
similar, if not identical, to you. To have
your face. Your eyes, hands, hair ... To even
wear one of your colorful dresses. With very
bright colors. For me not to be able to tell
which is which. Or whether you returned
before she came, or she came before you
returned.

*In Slovenian, death is feminine.

Tonight, Sweetheart, I Wrote the Poem Again That I Wrote Twenty Years Ago

Tonight, sweetheart, I wrote the poem
again that I wrote twenty years ago.
Which I only realized after that. Also
that I had written it then,
unknowingly,

for you. Like most love poems, especially
the most beautiful ones, are written for
the one named Love. It goes like this:

Did you also, as I did, rise from a warm
bed? Did you walk, naked and barefoot,
into the night? Are you, as I am, standing
under the starry heaven? Are you gazing
into the twinkling light of the same star?
Are your feet also freezing buried to the
ankles in the crisp snow? Did the quiver
of bats' wings shift a lock of hair from
your forehead as well? Did you halt
halfway from yourself toward me like I
halted halfway from myself toward you?
Are you also bringing to your lips a cup
full of moonlight? Will you also, not
knowing how, return to a bed grown
cold? And will you, as I will, dream about
what has already been described in that
poem? Is the star-burnt black velvet

undulating from the beat of our hearts
also staying awake tonight like every
night?