

Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

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Three Bosnian Love Songs (Sevdalinke)

Stara sevdalinka

Autumn Has Come, My Quince, Early Autumn

Autumn has come, my quince,* early autumn,
From autumn to autumn,
The whole village is already married off,
My quince, run to me,
To your dear friend...

Every night, my quince, every day,
I count the hours, I think of you!
My quince, I am dying for you!
Be mine, my treasure!
Don't deceive your friend!

My youth has gone, my quince,
my early youth,
My dearest, I have remained desirous for you,
There has been enough waiting,
Run to me in the autumn,
Don't deceive your friend!

**Translator's note: The quince, with golden color, delicate taste and sweet perfume, is frequently used as a symbol for maidens in Bosnian folk songs. It ripens in the autumn, the most frequent time for weddings.*

Zbirka sevdalinki. 1950 rukopis u Bošnja?kom Institutu (from an unpublished manuscript of sevdalinke from the Bošniak Institute, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Hercegovina)

Ah, My Darling, In The Green Grass

Ah, my darling, in the green grass,
I'll bring you coffee amidst the blossoms,
So that you might drink me in your coffee!
A young girl, I am the sugar in your coffee-cup,
So that you might drink me in your coffee,
So that I might touch your heart!

Gajret is a journal of literature, folk customs, and articles, published in Sarajevo in the early part of the twentieth century. (*Gajret* 1929: 172)

Flowers Began To Adorn Themselves With Dew

Flowers began to adorn themselves with dew,
 Pearls began to be strung with gold,
 Silver thread began to be embroidered with silver,
 Boys began to ask girls' hands in marriage.

Only I have nowhere anyone at all for me,
 Only I have no wild and crazy sweetheart,
 Only I sadly, sorrowfully, mourn.
 Only I have nothing to rejoice in.

I look at the dove, and his lady-dove,
 I look at the swallow, and his mate,
 I look at them kissing each other,
 I look at them rejoicing in life.

Never has anyone loved me,
 Never has anyone kissed me,
 Never with my sweetheart have I greeted the dawn,
 Never I have shared the sweet pangs of love.

I was given away as a young girl to an old man,
 Given away to an old man because of money,
 So that I, the young bride, could keep house for him,
 So that I could caress his gray beard.

Žero, Muhamed. *Sevdah Bošnjaka: 430 sevdalinka sa notnim zapisom*. Sarajevo: Liljan, 1995:352.

Translated with notes by Masha Belyavski-Frank, DePauw University, Greencastle, IN
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