



*Photo credit: Alessandra Capodacqua*

## **HAT**

It's not easy to wait for  
The head of right size

To hang from birth

In a window of an old shop  
Whose former owner  
Reposes under the earth  
Eschatologically bald

It's even harder to be  
A church bell made of felt  
On the battlefield of thoughts  
Cold as the fingers of a cashier  
Counting small change

If someone does stop  
Before the dirty window  
It'll be only to eavesdrop  
On the boy with the accordion  
And to drop a coin

Into a hat turned upside down  
To yawn at the sky

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## **BUTTON**

Give it a chance  
And it will get lost

The little rebel  
With only holes  
For its luggage

The insolent son  
Blind to good work  
Of its brothers  
Who toil on dresses  
Of pale mistresses

And the shirt of the one condemned  
And led to be hanged

Enjoying itself now  
On the sidewalk  
In company of a hairpin  
And a cap from a bottle of beer

While the preacher wind  
Opens cold churches  
In souls of infrequent pedestrians  
Buttoned up to their throats

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## **CANDLE**

Virgin made of wax  
Sent to a monastery  
To learn virtue

Thus speaks little  
Exchanges her tongue for a flame

So you'd think only about ashes  
Eyeing your own shadow

It's dark in there  
As in a horn of a beast  
You went hunting  
Across the old forest of your tongue  
For the feast  
Whose day never came

It's dark under the hood  
Of the executioner

With which his daughter  
Plays in the evening

Although the bed  
Has already been made  
And the wind has blown out the candle  
On its way to make music  
In wet reeds at the end of the earth

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## **COMB**

He is a gardener  
Sleepy from idleness  
And a little forgetful

No one hears him hum  
Busying himself a with dim memory  
Of the owner of the hair  
He guards between his ribs

Even if the longing for golden idleness  
Expelled from paradise  
Were to prevail within us  
We can agree that it's sad  
To waste a lifetime  
In a company of a single hair

As for you erecting triumphal arches  
Weaving rope out smoke  
Take a look out of your window

Dusk as if at the world's end  
Slowly burning heaps  
Of dead leaves

As winter walks into gardens

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## SHOES

In the dead of night  
Where blind alley ends  
A toothless mouth  
In a permanent yawn

Don't tell me  
You didn't see that  
Though the street light  
Just went out

Like that little sun  
Above the abyss within you  
Once long ago  
As you went off somewhere

And arrived ahead of yourself  
So you'd have someone to rejoice  
At the end of the road

*Translation by Charles Simic*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## Dejan Aleksić

Dejan Aleksić, born in 1972, is a poet, playwright and an author of children's books. He graduated from the University of Philosophy, the

Department for Serbian Literature and Language, in Novi Sad. He has published nine poetry books and fifteen books for children. With his first book, published in 1995, he was positively reviewed by readers and critics alike. In the following years he has become one of the leading representatives of his generation and since then he has taken an important place on the poetry scene. For his literary works he has been awarded with the most significant rewards and recognitions in Serbia and abroad. His poems have been translated into English, French, Polish, Macedonian, Spanish and Bulgaria. He works as the Editor in Chief of the Publishing Office `Povelja`, in the Public Library `Stefan Prvovencani` in Kraljevo. At present, `Povelja` represents the most significant publisher of poetry books in Serbia.