



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

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

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

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

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



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.