

LOOK BACK, LOOK AHEAD: The Selected Poems of Srečko Kosovel

Translated from the Slovenian
by Barbara Siegel Carlson and Ana Jelnikar

Eastern European Poets Series #26

ISBN: 978-1-933254-54-8
\$17 | Poetry
232 pages | original paperback | bilingual edition

Release date: March 2010

In his short life, Srečko Kosovel experimented with a wide variety of styles—impressionist, symbolist, expressionist, futurist, Dadaist, and surrealist—leaving over 1,000 poems as well as prose writings, essays and vignettes totaling several hundred pages. Kosovel's poetry has been translated into many languages. *Look Back, Look Ahead* is the first American edition of Kosovel's selected poetry.



“Srečko Kosovel and Rainer Maria Rilke couldn't be more different, but they aren't, they're brothers. They died the same year. They worked and lived eight miles apart. One in Duino Castle, the other in Karst. 'Come, you night-wounded man, so I can kiss your heart,' screamed Srečko Kosovel, the greatest Slovenian poet of the twentieth century. At twenty-two, he immolated himself with the torch of his own verses. To read him is like watching Van Gogh's last paintings, to stare at Celan's last drops of life. And yet, he's the threshold, the triumphal arch to this small nation's destiny. The eternal poet of total existence.”

—Tomaz Šalamun

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Srečko Kosovel (1904-1926) was born near Trieste and was raised in the Karst, a desolate region of rockwork in Slovenia, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following the outbreak of World War I, his parents sent him to school in Ljubljana, where he began to write, experimenting with a wide variety of styles—impressionist, symbolist, expressionist, futurist, Dadaist, and surrealist. He studied at the University of Ljubljana, became active in the literary world and founded a literary review (*Beautiful Vida*). In 1925 he prepared a manuscript for publication called *The Golden Boat*, alluding to the Bengali poet Rabindranth Tagore, but it was subsequently lost and never published in its original form. In 1926 he died of meningitis at the age of 22, leaving over 1000 poems as well as prose writings, essays and vignettes totaling several hundred pages. Kosovel's poetry has been translated into several languages including French, Italian, German, Russian, Czech, Croatian, Serbian, and Catalan. An early modernist, he is considered one of Slovenia's foremost poets of the 20th century.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS

Barbara Siegel Carlson is the author of a chapbook *Between This Quivering* (Coreopsis Press Poetry Award). Her poetry and translations have been published in many journals including *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Poetry East*, *The Literary Review*, *Natural Bridge*, and *Hunger Mountain*. A chapbook of translations (co-translated with Ana Jelnikar) of Kosovel's poetry *Bitter Without Meaning* is forthcoming in *Mid-American Review*. An earlier chapbook of translations *Faces of Man* (Poetry Miscellany Translation Series) appeared in 1991. She lives in Carver, MA, and teaches at Thayer Academy.

Ana Jelnikar is a Slovene translator. Her most recent translations of poetry include Iztok Geister's *Hymn to the Bush Tree* and Taja Kramberger's *Mobilizations*. Her translations have appeared in *Verse*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Third Coast*, and *The American Poetry Review*. She is the translator of the first Slovenian edition of C. G. Jung's *Man and His Symbols*, as well as six collections of contemporary Slovenian poetry, published in both America and Slovenia. Her most recent publication is an anthology of *Six Slovenian Poets* (Arc Publications 2006), which she co-translated with Stephen Watts and Kelly Lenox Allan.

ABOUT UGLY DUCKLING PRESSE

Ugly Duckling Presse is a nonprofit art & publishing collective producing small to mid-size editions of new poetry, translations, lost works, and artists' books. For more information on Ugly Duckling Presse please visit www.uglyducklingpresse.org. **Eastern European Poets Series** focuses on work of Eastern European poets of the 20th and 21st centuries. The series has the following three priorities for publishing: English translations of contemporary Eastern European poets; emigré authors from Eastern Europe writing in English; influential Eastern European poets of the past whose work has not been widely available in English.

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