

MELIKA SALIHBEG BOSNAWI

MINE SLOUGH

Melika Salihbeg Bosnawi, an author,
upon receiving an urgent, unexpected
and rather odd war-assignment from
Alma Suljevic, a sculptor,

to launch,
straight to Metaphysics,
a mine

!?

thought up:

What an eccentric task!

and then wrote the following:

"I will", I promised, as my heart started filling with anxiety.

"I would", I said,

"if you only give me a little time".

(As if any time could ever bring,
any changes into the mine's slough,
presented* to me recently by Alma.

And which larva - of a deep sorrow - has permanently settled
in my home, and alike, in my kismet).

To describe it:

A very genuine plastic blackish mine's husk,
taken out from the Bosnian soil,
which the very content of that same case
was planned to bury,
for good,
the Bosnian soul.

A work of the war-art,
exhibited now in a kitsch-coloured beauty-box,
a cheap Chinese hand-made item,
a unique artistic thing
aimed at "decorating"
others'
and my,
decent,
dwelling.

Has Alma already planned to use my password to enter the field of
Metaphysics

as presenting me her installation?

is not on me to figure out.

What is on me is to tiptoe through the minefield,

the maps of which she collected,
of the Bosnian war and post-war reality,
and in which,
with every explosion,
of every single mine,
every single tragedy is being transformed,
by the irony of the Celestial Alchemy,
(entrusted to this artist)
into a synonym for a joyful innocence.

Alma's art-installation called
MINKA M 99
walks now itself carefully that beatific path.
Because, the irony, if authentic, is self-productive.
Only so could Alma line up Sarajevo with the world metropolises
Paris London New York
famed for their make-up industry.
Bravo, bravo, Sarajevo!

Make-up?
Yes! Because mines are planted not but in order to, if not slay,
then beautify the Bosnian bodies with a blood-red lipstick,
with the mascara of the hot coal's colour,
with the bruised-like azure eye-shadow,
or with the smoke-powdered emptiness-colour
(that was once filled with the rose of the Bosnian limbs).

Why Minka**?
someone might ask the artist.
Because the new-primitives of the Bosnian war decided
that name to be common for their,
female,
clientele.
But, the Bosnian kids outplayed the said war-designers.
Unable to even spell, as the big,
word (š)minka,
they name each mine with what is left of that (bloody)
war-cosmetics.
This way, namely, in Bosnian land, works
The Celestial artist.
And The Terrestrial.

To everyone's knowledge:
Alma Suljevic would never be able to produce such a fine thing
- installation of the noble game of Creation
into a wholly ignoble game of Destruction -
had she herself not been one from among those Bosnian kids.

Nor would I be able to complete the military-metaphysical mission
entrusted to me by her,
to, with my art of literature,
just as she, with her plastic one,
verify transformation of
the Bosnian victims
into
Bosnian winners.

(Sarajevo, 05/06/00, 18:53:27)

From the manuscript:
CON/TRA

* The gift was seized back when the Authoress refused to comply Suljevic's request - her work to be read in Sarajevo's "Museum of Literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina", but she, the writer of the text, by no means should appear with her compromising hijaab. For Almy, this was first but not last mine-laying act against hijaab.

** Minka! Here it is not possible to translate the play of Bosnian word šminka, used in Bosnia for the make-up. Separating letter š from the rest of letters, Bosnian kids pronounce a female name Minka, being at the same time a pet name for a mine.