

France Balantič

ZBRANE PESMI

DRŽAVNA ZALOŽBA SLOVENIJE
L J U B L J A N A 1991

France Balantič (1921–43)

One of the “suppressed” poets for his adherence to the losing side in World War II, Balantič published little during his brief lifetime. A Catholic poet of expressionistic orientation, he contemplated matters of life and death, God and man in fine sonnets, including sonnet wreaths. Only the efforts of critics willing to brave the Slovene literary establishment made it possible for his name and his poetry to appear in Slovenia again. Otherwise his works have been printed only in Argentina and Austria. The text is from France Balantič, *Zbrane pesmi*, intro. and ed. by France Pibernik (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1991), and the translation is from Tine Debeljak, ed., *France Balantič* (Buenos Aires: Slovenska kulturna akcija, 1956) 180–81.

Žalostinka

Kje je tisti čas,
ko sem bil plamenolas poet,
ko sem nosil v rožnih ustih cvet
in je kot cekin zvenel moj glas?

Vse prešerne dni
sem prepel na pašnikih ljubezni,
metal kamne v igri neoprezni
v vsak tolmun sem sánjavih oči.

V pernicač oblakov
ležal tih sem, ljubil me je dež,
sen je bil svilen ko mlada rž
in lahak kot cule siromakov.

Bil doma, doma sem,
gruda, težka kakor zlata ruda,
hlebec, dar očetovega truda—
oh, želje, ki vsak noč jih pasem.

Kje je tisti čas!
Zdaj obup mi kruh življenja reže,
kri tujina v svoje čaše streže,
kmalu kmalu bom kot prazen klas.

In bom onemel!
Ko me v drči dni, ki še ostanejo,
hlodi mrzlih trupel zmanejo,
kdo iveri bo sežgal v pepel?

Saj ne bo sestrice,
da bi v ruti nesla jih na Žale,
ne bo materinih ustnic, da spoznale
bi kot sol domače me solnice.

In ne bo očeta,
ne bo mene, da bi sad rodil,
joj, moj Bog, da sem tako grešil,
da je v meni smrt rodu spočeta!

Elegy

Where is that time of old
When I was a poet with sunbeams in his hair
When my youthful mouth a bloom was wont to wear
And my voice was tuneful like a coin of gold?

All those days so free,
In which I sang upon love's pasture-lands
And cast the stones, mere playthings to my hands,
In all pools of dreaming eyes that looked at me.

Where is that time of old!
Now, that this despair is cutting my life-bread,
And my blood into a foreign land is shed!
Soon, soon, I shall be an empty husk grown cold!

And ever silent turned!
When the landslide of my final days falls round,
And by the cold tree-trunk corpses I am ground,
Who will see that my splinters to ash are burned?

No sister will be there
To carry them to their churchyard resting-place.
Nor will the lips that once lit a Mother's face
Know with their soft, parting kiss, that I am near.

Gone, as my Father's breath,
With no further fruit to bear, so shall I be.
Alack, my God, what great sins are there in me,
In the cloud's feathered lairs,
And loved by the rain, I would quietly lie,
With my dreams that were silken like the young rye,
And light as the sacks which a beggarman bears.

I was at home, at home!
The earth I loved, as heavy as gold—ore soil!
And the loaf which was gift of my Father's toil!
Oh! my yearnings, floating through those dreams that roam!

That a household dwindles with me to its death?