

Rrahman Dedaj

Poetry

[*Poezi*].

Tiranë. Naim Frashëri. 1989. 284 pages

A poet in constant evolution and one who has contributed substantially to the modernization of Albanian verse in Kosovo is Rrahman Dedaj. Dedaj was born in 1939 near Podujevë and studied Albanian language and literature in Prishtinë before becoming executive editor of Rilindja Publishing Company. His poetic works are characterized by rich, emotive expression, almost mathematical precision in structure and semantics and by his search for a balance between tradition and modernity.

Dedaj's first collection, *Me sy kange*, Prishtinë 1962 (With eyes of song), evinced both intimate and social motifs. In *Simfonia e fjalës*, Prishtinë 1968 (Word symphony), his sensitive lyrics took on more neoromantic tones, not unlike his fellow Podujevan poet Adem Gajtani (1935-1982) in many ways, with an Orphean world of blossoms and butterflies. Later volumes, in particular *Baladë e fshehur*, Prishtinë 1970 (Hidden ballad), *Etje*, Prishtinë 1973 (Thirst) and *Gjërat që s'preken*, Prishtinë 1980 (Things intangible) inaugurated a new stage in Kosovo verse, more attuned to contextual symbols and myths. This neosymbolist verse often runs rampant with animal and plant metaphors caught up and preserved in disciplined, elliptical structures. His recent collections, *Jeta gabon*, Prishtinë 1983 (Life makes mistakes), and *Fatkeqësia e urtisë*, Prishtinë 1987 (The misfortune of wisdom), have been devoted more to historical and literary themes.

Poezi (Poetry) is Dedaj's first collection to be published in Tiranë, though he has long been a recognized master on both sides of the border. It is a compilation of the best of his verse from the seven above-mentioned volumes, verse which is no idle gift of the Muse, but a painful, parthenogenetic impulse from within the poet's mind, a creative impulse longing for liberation at any price, as he tells us in 'Obstinate Verse':

*"It strives to be born
It has no head.*

*If it came out of another head
It would forget
The pain which nourishes it.*

*If it came out without a head
They would give it a number
Instead of a name.*

*A number which people
Would add and subtract
Multiply and divide
Always mistakenly."*

First published in: World Literature Today 64.2 (spring 1990)