

Tomaz Šalamun
translated from the Slovenian by Michael Thomas Taren and the author

Grandfather

I dreamt a huge monument, wrapping itself
with a red wire. Birds didn't peck the stone,
but the interspaces between the wires.
There were no interspaces!
The pores, my grandfather!
Your soul had always the shape of a pear.
You stood on the steep slope above the town.
You held the torch in your hands.
Townpeople started to pour each other with blood,
with the buckets.
Tacitly we went to buy an English dining room.
Everything in the room.
The portrait of young mother and
the silver chest. The salesman told us there's
another town beneath this town.
The cathedral glitters in the sun
under the earth too.
Then you fell.
You crushed the theater.
From your head people started to build
houses. Someone carried your
right thumb to his garden.
And I rushed by car on the dry river.
Your huge monument sealed the treaty.
I kept taking your stony veins from your belly and
kept testing them.
I visited your wife in the hospital
and stuffed the nurses' mouths with
five thousand dinari banknotes,
the biggest paper money then.
You were dying.



Not your wife.
Your wife died long ago,
before, in the year one thousand
nine hundred fifty one,
in July,
when mom cried on the terrace.

