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*Pesme sunca, ljubavi i smrti Izabrane pesme / Songs of the Sun, Love and Death: Selected Poems* (review)

George Vid Tomashevich

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the nuance is between good and evil, right and wrong (if one even exists at all). A magnificently intelligent novel, thought-provoking and disturbing with a truly spectacular range of ideas, *How to Quiet a Vampire* makes us question whether we really are all that different than what we despise.

*Bloomington, Indiana*

**Jovan Dučić, *Pesme sunca, ljubavi i smrti Izabrane pesme* / *Songs of the Sun, Love and Death: Selected Poems*. Vasa D. Mihailovich, ed. New York: Serbian Classics, 2003, 133 pages.**

Reviewed by *George Vid Tomashevich*

This attractive, pleasant to handle and tastefully produced bilingual collection of Jovan Dučić's greatest and unanimously acclaimed poetic masterpieces, selected and arranged in parallel columns, consists of fifty undisputed jewels of Serbian and world poetry of the first half of the twentieth century. Greatly enriched by its editor's expertly informative and scholarly introduction, which places this truly great Serbian poet within the proper chronological and thematic context of his historical epoch and his lonely but overflowingly fertile and loftily inspired life and literary career of an aristocratic and itinerant bachelor-diplomat, this elegant little volume contains, next to the originals, the best available translations into English of the most accomplished and most representative, formally impeccable, artistically enchanting and semantically far-ranging works.

Divided into *Senke po vodi* *Shadows across the Water*; *Jadranski soneti* / *Adriatic Sonnets*; *Lirika* / *Lyrics*; *Sunčane pesme* / *Songs of the Sun*; *Duša i noć* / *Soul and Night*; *Pesme ljubavi i smrti* / *Songs of Love and Death*; *Plave legende* / *Blue Legends*; and *Kasne pesme* / *Later Poems*, these fifty poems carefully and rigorously scrutinized by the book's editor, Professor Vasa D. Mihailovich, himself not only internationally renowned and prolific literary scholar, but a first-rate Serb-American poet in his own right, represent the utter quintessence of Dučić at his finest, within the entire thematic range of his inimitable artistry and structural variation of his virtuosity. The eight striking prose poems, included in *Plave legende* / *Blue Legends*, were taken from among the exquisite translations of these superlative examples of Dučić's prose poetry by the editor himself, who is, in my carefully considered critical judgment, the most brilliant follower, not imitator, of this genre in modern Serbian literature.

The appearance of this quantitatively restrained but qualitatively superb selection of the finest achievements in poetic artistry of one of Serbian literature's greatest poets by one of the most authoritative and best qualified Serb-American literary scholars and poets of our time, is a public event of notable significance and a unique contribution to cross-cultural interaction, understanding, and communication. The volume was issued in commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dučić's death in Gary, Indiana. The poems were translated by Oliver Elton, Vasa D. Mihailovich, Milo Yelesiyevich, Paul Selver, Novica Petrović, Ivan V. Lalić, Milne Holton, and George Vid Tomashevich.

*Buffalo State University College*

**Vasa Mihailovich, *Tango: Poems in Prose*. Chapel Hill, NC, 2004, 105 pages.**

*Reviewed by George Vid Tomashevich*

Over the many years of our academic and literary careers, fruitful and productive professional cooperation and genuine and untroubled personal friendship and mutual critical esteem, I have written about Professor Vasa Mihailovich and his inspired, erudite, and prolific scholarly and artistic creativity so many times that, in the approaching twilight of our lifetime and public activity, it is not so easy to find something worthwhile to say without running the risk of unavoidable, yet unwelcome, repetition and paraphrase. Fortunately, the risk is substantially decreased by Vasa's seemingly inexhaustible inventiveness, undiminished poetic resourcefulness, delicately and acutely sensitive perception and enviably refined articulation of every detectable tremor, internal and external, of the eternal, inexorable, and unstoppable Heraclitean flux of things.

The eighty lovely, thoughtful and often poignantly touching prose poems in this attractively bound and physically slender, but intellectually, emotionally, morally, and aesthetically very rich and versatile collection are deliberately divided into four groups. *Tango* (20 poems), *Moonlight Sonata* (12), *Human Symphony* (38), and *Christmas in the Old Country* (19). Each of these sections is based on certain principles of selection which, though imminently defensible and completely justifiable, are not immediately obvious but represent an analytical challenge to the careful critical reader looking for significant unifying themes and common semantic denominators. The book has no