

THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 5 | 1996

Story About Bešo Goran Simic

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Goran Simic

STORY ABOUT BEŠO

After he had worked for a year in the Australian jungle, Bešo got sick of everything. He was disgusted with the machine for producing smoke and with the hundreds of small black snakes running away from him, leaving the sugar cane fields to the pickers. He despised the natives who gave him their daughters in exchange for his shirt button. "You have become their amulet from the day you stopped carrying the serum injections. Only a man of God can despise those five seconds of chance after the snake's bite," said the manager when they parted, not noticing that Bešo trembled at that terrifying realization.

He poached on the river Darling for a year, throwing dead crocodiles shot by a Czech sniper upstream into a rubber boat. Only when the police chased them away did he realize that his gun did not have a firing pin. "The shots could have given us away and you would not have a chance with a wounded crocodile anyway," explained the Czech to him. He did not notice that the cigarette in the corner of Bešo's lips quivered.

Not until the shell whizzed through his apartment and exploded in the neighboring yard did I see him descend for the first time into our cellar colony. "Hurry up, Bešo," I shouted, running downstairs, and he just grinned as if he had heard a good joke. And sluggishly he went down without noticing that he was walking through the blood of his neighbor whom we had taken away just a moment before. Someone should tell him that the war has lasted a whole year now.

Translated from the Bosnian
by **Amela Simic** and **Christopher Merrill**