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The Legs of Nermin Tulich

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THE LEGS OF NERMIN TULICH

Ivo Soljan

(Sarajevo, Bosnia, 1992-3, and beyond)

“Nermin Tulich, a young Sarajevo actor, lost both his legs in the artillery attack on the bread-line...”, AP, on Bosnia’s misery)

What has shorn off the legs of Nermin Tulich?
What madness has left them twitching on the street?
What screaming fear has doomed the city to slow death?
What brains, what nerves, what bones, what demons...?

“There’s special Providence in the fall of a sparrow,” he sang.
A sonnet rang, profound, derisive, light on his lips:
“Ah, wherefore with infection should he live
And with his presence grace impiety...?”

The swarthy little man, a friend, a player,
Strutting and fretting his hour in the street,
Becomes, in a terrible instant, the news, a story,
To feed the ever hungry ears and eyes, possibly souls,
A vital, life-giving, bit...

What has shorn off the legs of Nermin Tulich?
What brains, what nerves, what bones, what demons...?
“Ring the alarm bell! Blow wind, come wrack!”
But, look, Nermin Tulich is dancing, wildly dancing, again!