



Book Review 'Zagreb, Exit South' by Edo Popovic

By Katarina Tepesh

Enormously gifted writer, Edo Popovic, introduces us to a group of characters in 'Zagreb, Exit South.'

We meet Vera, who has worked for years as a junior professor in the English department. "That sounds great, I mean the junior part, but unfortunately, that only applies to my status and salary, not my age. It seems like I'll be going into retirement as a junior professor."

Robi, meeting a new woman, studied her face, 'It was a pretty face. So pretty that Robi started drooling, sensing a wounded doe that has trustingly taken refuge in the lion's den, and the lion has noticed her, is showing her his benevolent face. Oh yes, he would have her, why not? First he'd lick her wounds, and then go in for the kill!'

Magda, she was like those old island women who had never swum in the sea, for years and years. And then a typhoon showed up, lifted her off the ground, and dropped her right in the middle of the deepest ocean. Stjepan! It was nice in the beginning. Stjepan told interesting stories about the sea and faraway harbors, he was polite and all that, and then one night!..

Elza, with a heart of a lioness, whose husband died in Petrinja, because it didn't occur to him that the war was being waged so that new gang could throw the old gang out of the villas that the gang before had thrown the Jews out of.

An alcoholic, nicknamed Baba, was thinking about how he'd rather walk through a minefield than go home and face his wife.

Strolling the streets, Baba and his buddy noticed two policemen with Kalashnikovs over their shoulders standing in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Baba said, 'Little Red Riding Hoods are working inside, and they need to protect them from the two of us and all the other wolves out on the streets.'

Later, Baba felt the cans of beer lined up inside the refrigerator. Right the way, he felt better. And his headache subsided a bit. He took out a beer and a bottle of vodka. To the Slavonian soul, vodka and beer. To the wounded heart, vodka and beer. To the jet-black eyes, vodka and beer. To the cracked carburetor blocks, vodka and beer. He got up and went for a new can of beer. To the vodka and beer. To the landlord's dentures, vodka and beer. To you, my friend, as he raised the glass toward the shadow that passed in front of the window, vodka and beer.

In addition to the fascinating characters, described with great details and humor, 'Zagreb, Exit South' is the exceptionally well done translation by Julienne Eden Busic. Edo Popovic was born in 1957 in Livno, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has lived in Zagreb since 1968. His previous books include Dream of Yellow Snakes (2000) which was dramatized by Canadian theater director Danijel Margetic for Reeve Secondary Theatre in Calgary, Concert for Tequila and Prozac (2002), and A Dancer from the Blue Bar (2004). His fiction has been translated into German and Slovenian.

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