

Poetry from a Disabled American Patriot

University professor Helena Pericic, Ph.D. of Zagreb, Croatia writes that she has been translating a text of the poetry of classmate Chester "Chet" Beers into Croatian. Chet's grandparents were of Croatian origin.

She met Chet at a literary conference in Dubrovnik in 1987, while he was traveling through Yugoslavia, Croatia and along the Adriatic Coast. On that trip, Chet wrote several poems about his impressions of the area.

Dr. Pericic has since been attempting, unsuccessfully, to find his family members, so that she could tell them of his poetry collection and know more about him.

In 1987, Chet sent her a type-written copy of 70 of his poems, asking that she take care of it and perhaps translate some of them into Croatian. She also expressed interest in providing the poetry to a U.S. publisher who might publish it for U.S. readers, as she believes few in the United States have seen his poems.

A copy of the "Beers poems" were given by Dr. Pericic to a library in Hvar, Croatia, because he wrote some of the poems about the Hvar area while traveling on the Croatian side of the Adriatic.

Here are a couple from the collection:

Pathos For My Brother

*My old childhood friend
Like that abused apple tree
We played so rough in those backyard winters
of our broken branches
Succored by the sap and weeping grass
Of those leaping dreams
How your derisive laugh split the air!
But tarred time never heals, the mischievous
Fruit now removed
I grieve for that chaste season
When we shall bruise no more, and
While my failings stutter in an
uncertain dank wind
Pray there will be familiar music
For us again.*

7 February '87

Copyright, 1987, Chester Beers

My Umbrella

*I found the name of a friend
I had known in High School
On the Black Wall,
And then I found another.
I looked for my own name
But it was not there.
Under a rainy sky
Under my umbrella I remain
A wandering soul, groping
Inside a disabled body.*

Washington, D.C.

Copyright, 1987, Chester Beers

Chet Beers died in 1987 of complications resulting from exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. His name is inscribed on a monument near the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC.