

Classic Poetry Series

Pashko Vasa

- poems -

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Pashko Vasa()

Oh Albania, Poor Albania

Oh Albania, poor Albania,
Who has shoved your head in the ashes?
Once you were a great lady,
The men of the world called you mother.
Once you had such goodness and such wealth,
With fair maidens and youthful men,
Herds and land, fields and produce,
With flashing weapons, with Italian rifles,
With heroic men, with pure women,
You were the best of companions.

At the rifle's blast, at lightning's flash
The Albanian was always master
In battle, and in battle he died
Leaving never a misdeed behind him.
Whenever an Albanian swore an oath
The whole of the Balkans trembled before him,
Everywhere he charged into savage battle,
And always did he return a victor.

But today, Albania, tell me, how are you faring now?
Like an oak tree, felled to the ground!
The world walks over you, tramples you underfoot,
And no one has a kind word for you.
Like the snow-covered mountains, like blooming fields
You were clothed, today you are in rags.
Neither your reputation nor your oaths remain,
You yourself have destroyed them in your own misfortune.

Albanians, you are killing your brothers,
Into a hundred factions you are divided,
Some say 'I believe in God,' others 'I in Allah,'
Some say 'I am Turk,' others 'I am Latin,'
Some 'I am Greek,' others 'I am Slav,'
But you are brothers, all of you, my hapless people!
The priests and the hodjas have deceived you
To divide you and keep you poor.
When the foreigner comes, you sit back at the hearth
As he puts you to shame with your wife and your sister,

And for how little money you are willing to serve him,
Forgetting the oaths of your ancestors,
Making yourselves serfs to the foreigners
Who have neither your language nor your blood!

Weep, oh swords and rifles,
The Albanian has been snared like a bird in a trap!
Weep with us, oh heroes,
For Albania has fallen with her face in the dirt.
Neither bread nor meat remain,
Neither fire in the hearth, nor light, nor pine torch,
Neither blood in the face, nor honour among friends,
For she has fallen and is defiled!

Gather round, maidens, gather round, women
Who with your fair eyes know what weeping is,
Come, let us lament poor Albania,
Who is without honour and reputation,
She has become a widow, a woman with no husband,
She is like a mother who has never had a son!

Who has the heart to let her die,
Once such a heroine, and today so weak?
This beloved mother, are we to abandon her
To be trampled underfoot by the foreigners?

No, no! No one wishes such shame,
All dread such misfortune!
Before Albania is thus forlorn
Let all our heroes perish with rifle in hand.

Awaken, Albania, wake from your slumber,
Let us all, as brothers, swear a common oath
And not look to church or mosque,
The faith of the Albanian is Albanianism!

From Bar down to Preveza
Everywhere let the sun spend its warmth and rays,
This is our land, left to us by our forefathers,
Let no one touch us for we are all to die!
Let us die like men as our forefathers once did
And not bring shame upon ourselves before God!

Pashko Vasa