

Before I came to Romania, a friend who had spent a year told me I would find it first of all "a land of nature's contrasts" – and this is a first truth about the poetry as well. In this discussion I seem to have emphasized a central *mythos-body* of poetry, and have perhaps said too little about the contrasts. By looking at the poetry comparatively I stressed a kind of singularity that I found most interesting, but almost any single poem contrasts with it. And a reader may discover (with pleasure, I think) some poetry that contrasts with his former ideas about poetry – at least that was true in my case. I also discovered in the encounter the need to re-examine some biases (for example, against traditional content and the uses of sentiment).

And I discovered another thing, which I hope the reader too will feel, in a poetry that still trusts its shamanistic powers. This requires a little story for illustration. A certain man said, "In my village we had a painter. He made icons that cried real tears. There was a woman who sang forest-doinas that took away all your longing. And we had a poet who could make verses to ward off evil or put a poultice on your wound. He could say a poem that would heal almost anything." What I discovered is that many Romanian people still feel that way about their poetry. The poet believes it, too.

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