

*Serbo-Croatian "folk" poetry translated by poet Charles Simic & showing an imagination alternate to that which won out over the old mythological consciousness, etc. in Europe. Not so much the product of a diluted literacy as survival of a tribal / oral poetry: part of an ancient & worldwide tradition.*

THE MESSAGE OF KING SAKIS AND THE LEGEND OF THE TWELVE  
DREAMS HE HAD IN ONE NIGHT

1

I saw a gold pillar from earth to heaven.

2

I saw a dark towel  
hanging from heaven to earth.

3

I saw three boiling kettles:  
one of grease, one of butter and one of water,  
and grease boiled over into butter  
and butter into water  
but the water boiled all by itself.

4

I saw an old mare with a colt  
and a black eagle pulling grass by its roots  
and laying it down before the mare  
while the colt neighs.

5

I saw a bitch lying on a dunghill  
while the puppies were barking from her womb.

6

I saw many monks soaked in pitch  
wailing because they can't get out.

7

I saw a beautiful horse  
grazing with two heads—  
one in front, one in the back.

8

I saw precious stones, pearls and royal wreaths  
scattered over the whole kingdom,  
but fire came down from heaven  
and burnt everything into ashes.

9

I saw the rich giving workers  
gold or silver or rice,  
but when they came back to ask for their rewards  
found that no one was left.

10

I saw evil-faced rocks descending  
from the sky  
and walking all over the earth.

11

I saw three virgins in a stubble field  
bearing wreaths of sunlight on their heads  
and sweet-smelling flowers in their hands.

12

I saw men with narrow eyes,  
with hairs standing up and cruel fingernails,  
and these were the devil's own servants.