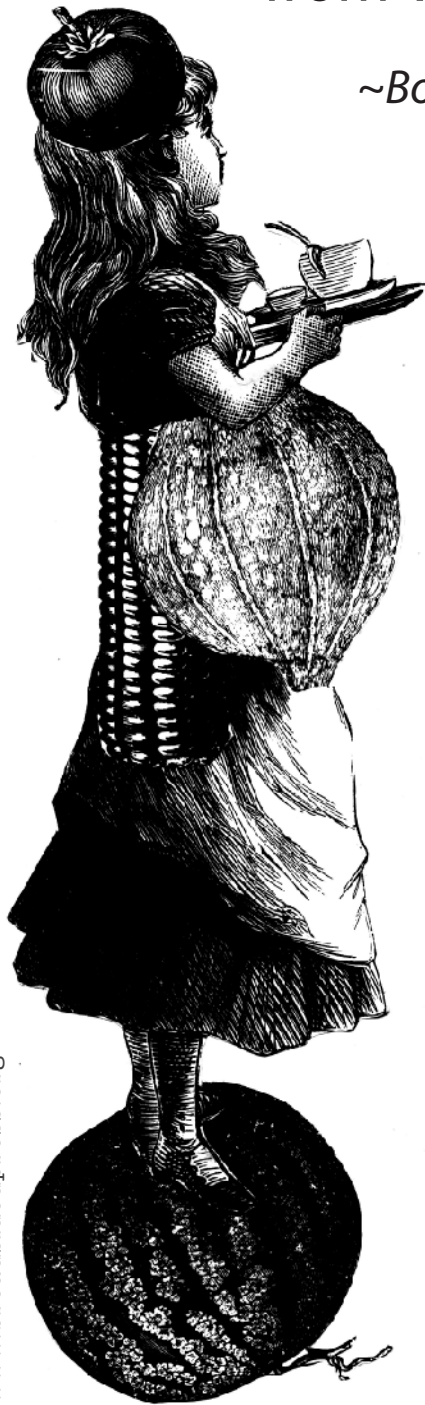


Ghazal for the Woman from Vitez

~*Bosnia and Herzegovina*



It's the best watermelon in the world
but there's no way to say it in words.

She had squatted in the space for apples and pears
under the staircase, a year, beyond the place of words.

Now she comes back with tea, examines me closely,
my out-of-date phrase book, my mispronounced words.

I ask for the toilet and she shows me the bedrooms, bombed
by neighbors who should have known how to use words.

We walk out to her garden in late afternoon light,
survey squash plants and corn stalks, we re-enter words.

In Bosnian, the tomato is called *paradise*, sweetness
transferred from some other country's words.

We drink rounds of whisky, call her sons on the phone
laughing because we have found a way out through words.