

Sarajevo on the Phone

For the first time in over twenty years my parents are back in our native Sarajevo. And they telephone. I imagine the cool rush of youth opening my dad's chest, fast, too fast, and I want to wrap my arms around his neck to protect him from feeling. I am envious too. I am not there. My parents are excited and exhausted on speaker phone, they talk over each other. They stand in the Bascarsija Quarter. Fruit is so inexpensive, they say, a pound of plums for just a mark. They had sat in the street and eaten chestnut puree. Do I want them to bring me just a copper coffee pot or do I want *fildzani* as well? Might be better to get the whole set. I look at my office desk and wish I were there, among passersby, narrow streets, cobblestones, rooftops close to ground, sagging but alive, alive with pigeons and people and tables in front of cafes. I long to see just one day. A whole day. Light changing into evening. That hour when behind buildings boys run with friends and yell things out and kick the ball with eyes on the ground.

Lana Spendl's chapbook of flash fiction is *We Cradled Each Other in the Air* (Blue Lyra Press). Her work has appeared in *The Cortland Review*, *Hobart*, *The Greensboro Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Quarter After Eight*, *Fiction Southeast*, *storySouth*, *Monkeybicycle*, *Gargoyle*, and other magazines. Visit lanaspendl.com.