

By Melita B. Gardner

### My Dubrovnik

In this city, where many years ago  
actors strutted on high ramparts  
and the Adriatic splashed below

guns now rattle and bellow  
pounding holes in the sacred walls  
of the city where many years ago

we held hands and searched for the glow  
of lights, the thrill of music and lust  
while the Adriatic boomed below.

Ancient rituals of rage and woe  
play against the storied walls  
of the city, where many years ago

Hecuba and Harlequin, Romeo, and clowns  
entertained the world and us  
as murky waters crashed below.

Croats wait on ramparts for the slow  
world to stop the fall of ancient walls  
of the city, where, as centuries ago  
the eternal sea still plays below.

Note: Dubrovnik, a Croatian city on the Adriatic, was founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by Roman refugees; later it became a center of Croatian culture and literature. Its ancient walls and forts remained untouched until the Serb forces bombed it in 1991 after the Croats declared independence from Yugoslavia. One of the city's tourist attractions is the plays performed on the forts' ramparts.