

# The Boy from Bucharest

Durian Sukegawa (Novelist, Clown)

The first hole in the Berlin Wall was created in November of 1989. At the time, I was 27 years old and working as a freelance broadcast journalist. Anyone who watched images of East Germans destroying the wall with sledgehammers could see that it signaled the beginning of a transformation in the conflict between two principles that had separated the world into two. The following year, at the end of January, I left Japan for East Europe as an impromptu correspondent for a Tokyo radio station.

I would report in detail over the telephone twice a day what was happening right in front of my eyes. That was my only role as I roamed the streets of Berlin. I couldn't speak German at all, nor English very well for that matter. I would simply report day after day what I saw walking through the cities of Berlin, Prague, and Bucharest.

Civil war had broken out in Romania to overthrow the dictatorial government of Romanian Communist Party leader Nicolae Ceaușescu. The dictator and his family were eventually executed by the army, but civil strife ensued, and most of the city of Bucharest still faced power blackouts. It was in during this time, that I saw among the dark shadows of the city, a boy holding a small

puppy in his arms and crying.

I reported back to Tokyo the situation in Bucharest where hotel employees would intrude into the rooms of guests looking to get a hold of U.S. dollars, as a result of even just one international phone call being made. But I never told anyone about the boy. This is because I wasn't able to speak to him and ask him why he was crying. Perhaps the boy's father was someone who was among those ousted by the new government.

Over twenty years have gone by since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the series of revolutions of the Yugoslav civil wars. Children of that era have grown up and become adults by now. Today, I believe that I could do a better job of reporting than back then. I wish that I could get on an international train, stop at each city, and ask people about what their lives have been like up until today. I would especially like to ask people who were among supporters of the old regime.

What do you believe in and how have you lived your lives? Whatever their answers may be, I would like to accept their words head on and wholeheartedly.

(Translated by Caroline Mikako Elder)

## ■ Live Performance

*Photo Slam: Bucharest / Phnom Penh / Chernobyl / Fukushima*

Live Performance: Arlequin Voice Theater

(Durian Sukegawa[vocal], Pickles Tamura[guitar])

10/13 21:30- [F4] | Admission: 2000 yen (1800 yen with festival ticket stub or pass)