

# Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

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## Like Everything Else

Adrian Oktenerg

Like everything else our language is particular to us  
 Outsiders cannot learn it it's gibberish to them  
 Yesterday I heard a woman say "This war has destroyed my life"  
 Why do we always say "this war"?  
 To acknowledge the wars that came before?  
 To remember future wars?  
 To say this war is to acknowledge that one  
 the last one and the one yet to come  
 When we say "this war" we already envision another  
 But which war is the last war? Will there ever be one?  
 That woman who spoke she was a Serb caught outside Banja Luka  
 in a Croatian artillery barrage her ten-year-old killed  
 she and her nineteen-year-old seriously wounded  
 Severed arteries in her leg and arm If she recovers  
 what will she recover for? This war  
 begets another and another  
 an old testament book  
 The new testament  
 love and charity and forgiveness the lilies of the fields  
 that one hasn't been written

*From The Bosnia Elegies – © 1998 Adrian Oktenberg.*

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