

# Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal  
Me?unarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezi?ni, online ?asopis

## 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.  
Published with permission from Paris Press, Inc. (www.parispress.org).*

The preceding text is copyright of the author and/or translator and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.