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## Says Rebecca West

Marko Vešović

After the Balkan War, the Turks suddenly left,
but the hatred remained. Now it's exploding in Bosnia.
The hatred endures, although its subject has evaporated.
The human soul has always lagged behind the world.
The soul is a whirlpool mirroring in winter the cranes
flown south in autumn.

For five centuries the Turks were their guests.
And they left overnight. Had the hatred died out
what gap would break open in the former serf's soul?
What would warm it? What torch would it
stagger after through darkness? For five centuries you lived
off hatred. You carried it and it carried you. And after one hundred
ninety-one thousand, six hundred twenty-five days
of unjust and utterly undeserved slavery, suddenly—
the culprit has evaporated! So under the empty skies
you remain empty-handed. What do you mirror yourself in?
What will blow under your wing? What do you gather around?
How much water will the Drina carry before
the Turk migrates from his soul? For, as long as
the hatred endures, you are not hay without a stake.
You have something with which and on which to build.
You know who you are, from where, and where you're going.
And how you are named.

*Translated by Omer Hadžiselimović – ©2006 Omer Hadžiselimović*

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