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Mrs. Isak

Amela Mustafić

Born as wheat was sown,
registered as it was reaped
and Mehmed loaded
his horses to sell a few sacks
in town.

They told her she needed
just a few letters
to sign her name
and that schooling was:
make bread, knit socks,
marry off a chaste daughter
and bring up good sons.

She married Isak and lost her identity
and the hope of growing old with the one she loved.
Her sorrow was soothed by
her sons' smiles,
her daughter's beautiful face
and strong body hidden by loose dresses.

She saw herself as an accomplished woman.

And a shot.
A cannon.
A grenade.
They took Mehmed, and Isak, and her sons.
With her girl she was taken,
from wire to wire,
from house to house,
from forest to forest.
In one, she was killed for the last time,
as she saw soldiers violate her daughter's honour.

She died after she laid to rest
the bones of even her youngest son.

Translated by Amira Sadiković

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