

# Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

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## A Face From Widely Circulated American Magazines

Faruk Šehić

as we walk through a forest tunnel  
 above us hangs the unmoving December sky  
 the stars squint through the braided treetops  
 at seven o'clock in the evening  
 cold needles on the ends of a hornbeam's branches  
 they fall off and break on the aqueous foliage  
 the southern wind blows  
 I remember The Damned Yard  
 the dementia of ghosts in the air  
 branches rub on each other  
 they creak like the jaws of skeletons in a house of terror  
 under greasy uniforms  
 my body is a sweaty bedspring pressed down by gravity  
 and fear  
 we go on a patrol of a fire-swept zone  
 the swamp grass is moist and its long blades  
 lick our fists which squeeze dark metal guns  
 a burst of glimmering bullets goes behind a hill in a large arc  
 like a necklace of serially connected falling stars  
 I do not think they will make my wishes come true  
 in a dull body that thinks of the heat of a fire, cigarettes and food  
 of Azra's face that I cannot put together in my thoughts  
 of 89 Marshall Tito Street from which I was driven  
 of a half-liter bottle of beer that I often dream of  
 like a metaphor for freedom  
 we have come to the embankment of the railway  
 the stones are coated with a soft frost  
 my watch post is right there  
 anonymous and meaningless by the wooden tie  
 I watch the surface of the Una rippled by tiny waves  
 thick darkness of water  
 it is war, they say, revolution in the purest form  
 my grandpa Bećo Šehić founded a chapter of the Communist Party in Bosanska Krupa  
 together with his brother Ismet he spent two years at Jasenovac  
 they were both partisans

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my other grandpa, Almas Sedić, fought with the Red Army on the Srijem front  
I am in a bad war  
a hundred of my fellow soldiers, whose faces I still remember, were killed  
the dead are a pile of unknown names and surnames on wooden grave markers  
in an exceedingly bad war  
none of them will remain eternally young  
like Che Guevara  
a face from widely circulated American magazines.

*Translated by Sara Elaquad - © 2007 Sara Elaquad*

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