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Like Everything Else

Adrian Oktenberg

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

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