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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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