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A Woman's Blouse

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It's getting dark. And in the west somebody's foot has tipped
over a wine jug, pouring it all over the horizon.
The new moon looks like the horns of the helmet in which
Moses appears in movies. Pines smell
of lemons and incense mingled.

A soldier, tall and brittle like a rye stalk, is doing sentry duty.
Brittle with love and youth. He pulls out of his bosom
a woman's white blouse. And plunges his face in it.
He drinks its scent. Those five or six grams of fabric
he could pull through a wedding ring.

A sight divinely indescribable. Explaining it in words
would be like measuring the weight
of a sun's ray on a scale.

Suddenly, because of all this—the wine-colored west,
the new moon with horns, the woman's tiny blouse whose
scent, like a thread, can lead you out of hell—
suddenly, because of this, I feel my soul relieved,
more at ease with the world.

You know that war still exists on earth
like a black ball of yarn, but the soul
can play with it like a kitten. Death still
shows through, not like the blunt-nosed
skull gaping through the skin of the face, but like a seed
through a grape: making it more magical.

Translated from the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin by Omer Hadžiselimović

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