

Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal
Međunarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezični, online časopis

Note on the End of the World

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The end of the world is happening every day, every evening and morning
 The four riders of the apocalypse are thundering over our heads. Do you hear them?
 Gliding from Bosnia to Rwanda, Afghanistan, they gallop to Iraq and Libya
 The first horseman, on a white horse, the conqueror, seduces people, drives them mad
 The second rider is on a horse as red as blood, begotten of massacre
 The third one, cowboy on a black horse, sows disease and famine worldwide
 The fourth, Death, gallops on a pale green horse over scorched desolation.
 The end of the world is happening every day, every evening and morning
 From the ascetic heads of fascists opium oozes, stupefying millions
 From under Stalinist caps issue the thoughts that murder thousands in gulags
 From the tiara and miter of religious headmen, plague and stench seep out
 And poison the world. From the grey heads of academicians creeps the bacillus of
 plague
 That transforms thousands of cradles instantaneously into a national park of graves
 The end of the world is the work of human hands holding Kalashnikov and knife.
 In Europe everyone experiences the end of the world at least once in their life
 Is there anyone among us who hasn't seen their own house being swallowed by hell's
 Flames. Is there anyone among us who hasn't tasted stinking powder
 Is there any mother among us who hasn't cried, bereaved
 Is there any woman among us who hasn't been dishonored by violence
 Is there any small girl whom they haven't tried to put in a brothel
 Is there any one of us whose lips haven't frozen into a scream.
 The end of the world is happening in our living rooms, where
 Every day we produce the greed and hate that poison our children
 Where we bow down to the powdered posterior of liberal capitalism and
 Sing litanies to the god of money, the god of gold hardened to the suffering of follow-
 people
 In our connubial beds where we record videos with hetaeras
 And later show them amid the Christian sensibility of our upright society
 Which relies upon the idols of deceit and the dead bones of our ancestors.
 The end of the world is happening every day, every evening and morning
 Set along the roads of my country, at every kilometer there are
 Memorial tablets giving notice that at that place there was
 A historic battle, which is to say a fratricidal slaughter. And that nearby there is a pit
 Where those armed to the teeth threw unarmed innocents. And that our

Heroes and our saints are only roadside robbers, brigands. Listen in:
Wind whistles through a bullet-pierced skull, rain washes over a white bone.
The end of the world happens at least once in every human lifetime
In the countries of the South Slavs even two or three times. One brother says:
The end of my world happened in the spring of 1992 when I left
Home and city and set off for parts unknown. From that time onward my eyes have
seen no
Joy and my ribcage has become the abode of nihilism. Around me
I feel only tear-gas, I palpate slime; around me I see pale corpses
In motion. And night, that falls and veils the brilliant pictures of my days.

Translated by Keziah Conrad and Ivo Marković
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