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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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