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## SREBRENICA IS A FALLING STAR

Sarajevo, July 00.

I would swear by One,  
in Whose hand is my soul,  
that Srebrenica is a falling star.  
Still, I would swear,  
five years later,  
to the same.

\*

And the man said: "When I drank Srebrenica's water,  
my heart hurt no more.  
Good water, good air, trees fruited:  
apple, pear, cherry,  
nothing's not there. . .".

\*

Everything, just no Srebrenica.  
No, silver, Bosnian, falling, star.  
Fell.

Tuesday,  
the eleventh of July,  
one thousand-nine-hundred-ninety-five.  
("I'd go back to die there!")

\*

That date,  
around Srebrenica's neck,  
was threaded up a thread of names,  
all the jewels from the necklace of Civilisation,  
who on earth would ever believe it!

\*

Ah, had they only wished, men,  
whenever they saw how falls a star,  
that no mother give birth to a youth<sup>[1]</sup>,  
to call,  
gun in hand:

"Straight to Potočari!"  
to hunt,  
human, beings!

\*

Ah, had they desired, men,  
each time they saw falling, a star,  
that no Montenegrin she-wolf rejoice<sup>[2]</sup>  
to suckle a son,  
not as the Roman, Romulus and Remus,  
with true culture's joy,  
but with the dark of Naught.

\*

Had God only granted them,  
watching the stars as they sink,  
into darkness,  
to desire, men,  
the whole Planet to be,  
from Genesis to Judgement Day,  
rather enslaved,  
than a Požarevac mother give birth to freedom.<sup>[3]</sup>

\*

Ah, had they only known,  
and therefore wished,  
whenever they saw headlong,  
into the abyss,  
of night,  
a star,  
that to every living creature it be dearer<sup>[4]</sup>,  
to be killed itself,  
than follow the order:  
on Braljevo farm to shoot,  
male,  
Srebrenica,  
backs.

\*

They would also have wished, men,  
(had they only known what lay in wait,  
had they had even the slightest clue)  
as they watched a falling star,  
that it be no mother's joy<sup>[5]</sup> to bear a son,  
to glory in a chain,

around his neck,  
of Srebrenica crimes.

\*

Rather,  
if already seeded,  
kill him; in her very womb,  
or,  
if she must give him suck,  
suffocate him with her own, swollen, breast,  
with her own, milky, bitterness poison him,  
only not to hear him,  
"five years later"  
as,  
all bloody,  
he swears,  
before all the world:  
his innocence.

\*

Ah, had all the mothers,  
Dutch, and others,  
watching the fallings of the stars,  
desired  
their sons crushed underfoot heather-like,  
rather than,  
in the land of Bosnia,  
an army-in-waiting  
on Crime.

\*

Had they known, men,  
whenever they watched them sink, the stars,  
into darkness,  
what one ought to wish,  
would not be to this very day,  
in the twentieth, and a century more,  
in the age of reason, not magic!  
instead of the criminals,  
guilty the victims.

\*

Would not be forced out, hungry, barefoot and bare,  
even five years later,  
again in some, human, name:

into the streets.

\*

Would not wander the earthly globe,  
despised, for being a little distinct,  
the widowed patterns of Srebrenica dimija<sup>[6]</sup>,  
nor would the dark of political lobbies fill with tears  
the eyes of Srebrenica orphans,  
(in whose blue hues,  
I would swear,  
has settled,  
the sky's,  
azure).

\*

Nor would soundless sob,  
un-hearthed and un-kinned,  
the toothless old-age of Srebrenica fathers.  
Nor would,  
if someone else must pay in the name of the guilty,  
guilt be cast at God's,  
instead of the Safe Havens  
of The United Nations.

\*

Nor would,  
even five, long, years, later,  
the guilt be with themselves,  
those ten thousand and eight hundred dead,  
and missing,  
and those, in containers. . .<sup>[7]</sup>

\*

"I will bring", says a lad, of Srebrenica,  
grown tall in exile,  
"three flowers,  
to the door:  
for father, mother, and brother".

\*

What should bring and for whom, the Srebrenica mothers,  
desperate with pain?

A withered tit for the hungry Srebrenica small?  
Or a withered hope; for them, and for themselves?

\*

Are the women of Srebrenica,

instead of planting their gardens,  
to place, dead, flowers, on, imaginary, graves  
of their sons, husbands, brothers. . .?

\*

Are they, still, five years later,  
by day, to adorn with themselves, and supplicate aloud,  
the altars of power,  
and by night, soundless, cry,  
under the open sky,  
to the Only God?

\*

And, at the break of the sixth, martyr-year,  
have only one, permanent, place  
of abode:  
in the syntax of genocide.

\*

For still today,  
after five, long, years,  
everyone's guilty,  
only the guilty are not.

\*

Guilty, of course, most of all, is Srebrenica.  
For she is a falling star!  
Guilty of falling too fast, for those,  
living on her, falling,  
to shift to the other  
Safe Havens.

\*

So,  
what,  
and in whose name,  
commemorate today,  
after a, desolate, five years,  
the official believers journalists presidents actors  
directors, foreign and ours?  
For whom do they perform this funeral in absence,  
as the loud-speaker, thundering,  
fills their ears with the promise,  
of the first among Bosnia's, international, guardians:  
that "experts will decide where,  
and in what way,

a place of memory be raised:  
to Srebrenica"?

\*

As though he did not know, this man,  
that never, no one, nowhere, has found the place  
where fell a star.

So how to find Srebrenica's?  
What kind of expert knows how to find a non-place?

\*

And, there again, some people say,  
that such stars, in fact, never fall to Earth.

That only,  
in falling,  
they burst  
(perhaps from pain!?)  
and turn to,  
star,  
dust.

\*

Maybe that is why, to this very day, no Srebrenica?!  
Maybe that's exactly why she will never be again?!

Maybe because she's truly a falling star,  
those 7,000 Srebrenica bodies shall never be found?!

Maybe their mothers, wives, sisters, children. . .  
will never be able to bury them decently there,  
where we believed we all come from:  
in the earthly dust.

\*

Maybe God,  
far above is He what they attribute to Him!  
made them,  
unlike us,  
instead of clay,  
of stardust.

And maybe that is why,  
instead of into earth,  
He made them return to it,  
silver,  
in July,  
one thousand-nine-hundred and ninety five,  
when Srebrenica fell.

\*

Allâh rahmetile!<sup>[8]</sup>

PostScript:

I must, at the end, honestly, confess,  
that my poem  
Srebrenicasafallingstar  
(as I, so ungrammatically, pronounce it to myself)  
is old-fashioned.

Just as it was an old fashioned crime  
committed against Srebrenica.

Only the subjects in its syntax:  
Slobodan, Mladić, Radovan, Dražen, Radoslav. . . ,  
the Dutch battalion, UN, European community. . .  
(who on earth would ever believe it!)  
are pure conceptual art.

\*

Nothing is as it sounds!  
There is no freedom, no youth, no joy,  
there is neither dearness, nor glory. . . ,  
nor is, there, love, between united,  
European, and other,  
nations,  
nothing of all these is there in, the mentioned,  
subjects.

Still less is there in,  
the bloody,  
Srebrenica,  
predicates.

\*

I have yet to recall Holland and Brussels,  
I have yet to call for help their geniuses,  
Hieronymus Bosch and Brueghel,  
I have yet to ask them,  
to paint:  
the regions turned to Hell,  
the torment of the innocent,  
iconostasis of horror,  
and, then, to thread up, a caravan, of, satanic, faces,  
the horde of the damned,  
lost souls,

on their, blood-soaked,  
course,  
in the twentieth century,  
to Gehenna;  
as they pass through  
Bosnia.

\*

To paint them, in sort of – classic way.  
None of the modern arts of conceptualisation.  
Everything exactly as it appears to be!

In Sarajevo,  
from Thursday, 13. July,  
about twenty minutes past eight in the evening  
to Friday, 14 July, the year 2000,  
finishing exactly at twenty three minutes,  
eighteen seconds past four a.m.,  
at the dawn, then, of a, new, ordinary, day,  
and the dawn of the sixth, Srebrenica, year,  
the first version of this poem,  
which has lain for five years in the pit of my heart;  
as in a grave.

1 Youth = mladić ≠ Ratko Mladić, a commander of the Serb army in Bosnia, currently wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague. "Straight to Potočari" was his instruction to his followers to pursue and kill those fleeing the fallen city of Srebrenica

2 Recoise = radovati se ≠ Radovan Karadžić, a war leader, originally from Montenegro, also wanted by the Hague Tribunal.

3 Freedom = sloboda ≠ Slobodan Milošević, the President of FR Yugoslavia, born in Požarevac, recently indicted by the Hague Tribunal.

4 Dearer = draži ≠ Dražen Erdemović, a Hague Tribunal indictee, now a witness against his commanders.

5 Joy+glory = radost+slava ≠ Radislav Tadić, a Hague Tribunal indictee for the atrocities committed under his command during the fall of Srebrenica.

6 The loose multicoloured trousers worn by the country Muslim women in the Balkans.

7 The repository of the remains of the unidentified Srebrenica victims.

8 May the mercy of Allâh be upon her!