Pears

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References


BARBARA WILLIAMS

Blood-Flowers

for the victims of Timisoara
and Bucharest, Romania
December 1989

gunfire shatters
sunset's dying blaze
in forest stillness emptied trucks remain
animals have fled this scene of human carnage
raw and red
bayonets have fixed the last one to the ground
(the driver of the final vehicle)
no witnesses but nature left around
and you have left
your last breath warming snowflakes as they fall
your life-blood spent, melts crystal-frost on rock
your last gifts to this land blood-flowers on snow

BARBARA WILLIAMS is a Toronto writer. Her work has been published in ANTIPODES, ARC, Descant, Fireweed, NIMROD, Poetry Australia, and Poetry Canada Review.

SIBELAN FORRESTER

Pears

Jela walks through the Zagreb market judging the bounty of autumn: peppers yellow and red, lemons, late potatoes from the Zagorje, oil-cured olives and sugared figs. The little Albanian vendor who praised my gold-rimmed glasses years ago still offers soft golden mandarines: the skin comes off like a glove, he says, and no white fingers cling to the pieces.

But she is remembering the pears that grew around her house in Bosnia where now only mines are planted, where bombs bloomed in the place of the spring's white lace: kanjuske, zutavke, slatke, yellow and sweet, the tiny tart ones, the red-cheeked ones, the ones from the tree her sons would climb.

She remembers all the kinds, like a woman in a New England nursing home, rehearsing names of the old local apples, of orchards whose farmers died so long ago, back in someone's childhood.

Sibelan Forrester is Assistant Professor of Russian in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, USA.