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Massacre at Srebrenica

Kristina Pepelko
Grand Valley State University

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Massacre at Srebrenica

Bosnia, July 1995

The Muslim boys lie on the ground
like washed-up fish—
faces pressed against the grass,
hands tied behind their backs,
legs squirming like tails
as a round of gunfire
slices into the hot summer air.
For now, it's just a scare tactic—
yet one boy in the sardine-packed group
lies still as if he is already dead.
Letting the dry roadside lawn
prick his soft, tanned skin,
he closes his eyes
remembering
the smell of grilled trout
and a different summertime
when he sat in his backyard,
plucking one green blade
then another
to the slow rhythm
of "Kad ja pođoh na Benbašu"—
a song his mother hummed
as she cooked that night's special večera.
Soon, the gunfire slows
to just one shot at a time.
Opening his eyes, he imagines
reaching out to touch
the grass blades
with the tips of his fingers
and reading them like braille
with the hope they might tell him
where is his mother is now.