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Christine Stephens

Grand Valley State University

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LETTER TO SARAJEVO

Christine Stephens

You smoked my cigarettes down to the knuckle, your mother frowning her way to bed. Mock philosophical questions lodged in your throat: “Tell me...” then English failed you, passion swimming like salmon in your Slavic blood. If I said I understand hate—knowing you must dig up soccer fields for graves and mark the hand-lashed crosses with chalk—would you smile as if I were a child? I might tell you I scan newsreels for your face or anyplace we may have walked. I want to point and say, “I was there,” but I recognize none of that bullet speckled cement.

My photo albums of your city have become story books, each frame telling its “Once upon a time” in the clouded pall of fantasy. So tell me—did sheep mow the lawn along the river where we used to walk? Was that us singing drinking songs while we smashed brown bottles along the rocks? And tell me, did you lift me from my feet in a kiss that set the entire city still and listening? My memory has frayed the edges of your face. I don’t even know if you’re alive, if you still carry your long body up the slopes of the Muslim slums, the cemetery’s white pillars our playground, the wide stone arches our shade.

SARAJEVO

OF CIVIL DISPUTE

As I scan the Grand Valley’s daily news from Yugoslavia. For many years, peace and bright Serbs, history, but at the end of the day which ethnic group they belonged to heritage and having another only added diversity of food, culture I remember most was forgotten many other stories along with I went along with reality there had no What has occurred lesson. While it is true the hard truth is that essentially emergency based on the place. People with different earth, since they are animals. For hundreds of generations killed by the foreign the primary encountered. If the relatives, given a