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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.