

Stara Majko, Mila Majko, Moja Draga Majko

Old Mother, Gentle Mother, My Dear Mother (Serbo-Croatian)

I came upon her in her room,
weeping to a portrait of her son.
I asked her softly,
Stara majko, why do you weep
to that portrait of your son?
Because he has left me.

I'm going to the hills
where the forest will fold itself
around my heart. In my arms,
I'll carry my rifle.
It will sing through the trees.
It will soothe my torment.

I came upon her in a ravaged field,
weeping on the grave
of her son. I asked softly,
why do you weep on the grave
of your handsome son?

She kneeled and spoke to the wreath
on his stone,

My morning star,
my golden light in the heavens,
I will be with you always,
until time knows us both no more.

Her tears wet his stone and the grass
fell back. The soft ground
parted down to the medallion
on his breast.

Moja draga majko—

came a slow deep voice.

She saw him smile.

She kneeled and wept for the end of his life.

I asked,

Stara majko, mila majko, why do you weep
for the life of your son?

She cleared a space beside him.
The ground closed above them both
and the grass folded back into place.