

1976

War

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War

You said: "I feel I am a part of somebody else's dream,
And when he wakes up, will he not be ashamed?"
You saw it all happening, the blasted trees, the dead
Hanging on the branches, your wish for a child
Bombed on the street where a child lay, in a strange way
Of sleeping. Never to have been a part of this stratagem,
Never! to hear the beds slashed, the tables broken,
The houses burned to make us turn our heads, and melt
In weeping. No. But what did you prepare, surely not
Just the bread for your husband, nor the fruits for the mayor
In town? Surely not anymore the music you wished to play
With the orchestra, dismantled now, and your violin
Whacked to pieces, the strings still vibrating like wretched nerves.
What did you prepare for? What answer to give the enemy
When he descends to ask you the question, What do you stand for?
But the horror of the moment is so unreal? the earth
You stand on is giving way? this torture never happened before?
But you know that only your acts are real, in this
One man's dream. It is still you who know how to kill
A chicken for your dinner. Your knife glistens still.
It can change the direction of the dream. It can change you,
Your hands all bloodied up, for that is how you make
A chicken ready for the table, that is how you play the violin,
That is how you bring forth a new child, or a new human world.

Translated by the author