

Poem – Atonement of the Balkans

On the banks of the river stood an old man
His beard of eighty testament to the tempest of life
The green river flowing through the Bosnian hills
Silent witness to centuries of bloody Balkan strife

On the hill above the river, their caravan settled
In medieval times, fifteen hundred years ago
In Balkans they found a green, mountainous, sunny home
The corner of Europe condemned by imperialist ego

Did they not know that they settled a cursed land?
Where every stride of earth was to be soaked with blood
Endless wars and invasions, hurricanes of death
Brother against brother, of violence an endless flood

Balkan Peninsula is Europe's bastard child
Dracula is a racist metaphor for its people
To Europe's West, the blood in our veins runs wild
To them we are unpredictable, bloodthirsty, and simple

Children of Byzantium, grandsons of Attila the Hun
Our blood is indeed violent and wild
A mix of Slavic, Illyrian, Alexander's Macedon
The Thracian Spartacus was Balkan's ancient son

The Romani Gypsies found in Balkans a home
Contributing to our mosaic their nomadic blood
And I lament for the suffering of the Gypsies that roam
May we be worthy of forgiveness, for their pain that is a flood

We are children of four major religions,
Orthodox, Jewish, Catholic, Islamic
Rivers and mountains divide these warlike people
Quick to passion, a temperament most organic

Children of the mountains, indomitable and free
A living wall, defending Europe's southeast border
Five hundred years of sacrifice in blood
To stop the Ottoman Empire, to save Europe from its horde

And how did Mother Europe repay her bastard children?
The Balkans were crucified by European discrimination
Denied the right to freedom and self-determination
Only fit for torture, death, and extermination

Empires succeeded one another
Dictating our lives and our destinies
Many a child was torn away from its mother
To become slave soldiers of the colonies

Centuries of rape, murder, and pillage
Enforcing artificial divisions based on religion
Enduring symbol of Balkan, blood-soaked, burning village
Millions perished across the Balkan regions

And yet, we stubbornly survived
Preserving the wild blood within our soul's well
Blood-soaked independence our ancestors attained
But fascism unleashed upon them its demonic hell

And like all other demons of Satan, we slayed that beast
While forsaken by the Allies, we fought surrounded and alone
We humiliated Hitler, beat fascism down to its knees
With Tito, achieving freedom and peace, until he was gone

And again, Mother Europe crucified its bastard children
Yugoslavia torn apart by inner and outside enemies
Half a million dead, five million refugees
Its once prosperous territories, reduced to pathetic colonies

So to my Balkan brothers and sisters, I implore
Cast away your hatred and rivalry with each other
As the world moves forward, we are going extinct
Let us break the chains created by our hateful mother

And to my brothers and sisters of races coloured
Who endured slavery, colonization, oppression
Together we bonded through the Non-Aligned Movement
To break your chains, to instigate your freedom's progression

The world is not a struggle of white versus colour
It is not a war of Islam with Christianity

By Vedran Eminovic, March 19, 2016

It is a struggle between the rich and the poor
Your hate is your own defeat, do not give in to its insanity

The enemy is imperialism and unchecked capitalism
The enemy is law purchased with power and gold
Recognize that kleptocracy is the true colonialism
It exists in every racial colour, its soul to Satan sold

But if you want to speak of white privilege
Then educate yourself in history and political science
To blame an entire race is illogical and sacrilege
Contrary to every religion, to God Himself defiance

Within the European race, there are distinct fault lines
North over South, West over East
Slavic is inferior to many racist Western minds
Mediterranean Europeans, deemed lazy, violent beasts

Did I forget to add one important fact?
Balkan people belong to the white races
So if you blame all Caucasians, please have some tact
All whites are not equal, despite our fair-skinned faces

Oh, irony of Balkan identity, how I enjoy thee!
To many visible minorities we are enemy and white
But to many Western Europeans, we are resident evil
Not white nor European enough, never right

Cursed blood-soaked land, of green valleys and rugged mountain peaks
May God grant you absolution from the atonement you bear
The sacrificial lamb for all Europe's violent sins
May God absolve you, for you have no more blood nor tears

Only in humanity and tolerance we shall overcome
And overcome we must, lest we want our cultures to live on
A united Balkan, decolonized, sovereign, free
A Balkan of peace, from which hatred and bloodshed are gone

The old man of eighty stood at the banks of the river
Its green waves flowing into obscurity
His prayer was answered, his Balkan was free
That old man standing, for all eternity, is me

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