

Reg Saner

Wake Me

Consider just one sacral tableau: five nails
to drain a god. Then how, ever after,
misbelievers have piled up thick
as centuries. Even while we speak
fresh corpses accrue and conspire, refusing
to see it that way—till everything's re-runs,
late-breaking history all over the place.

Nudged by the just thud of humanitarian
bombs it may seem that a national heart
like an angry red planet kept hurling
itself against the bars of its cage
but for all our wise sayings preserved
in alcohol, it was only the Balkans' bitter end
returning to its beginnings. Victims fled
riding any old thing, wagons, farm carts.
The very roads were refugees. Under the remote
control of scriptural myth, fear, misery,
and rage took turns swallowing each other
as the worshipfully Orthodox knelt to Our Lady
of Carnage, and Albanians drilled Serbs
in the Mosques of Persuasion: scenarios
even gods couldn't worsen. Small wonder
they've sailed off the edge of the world.

How lucky for us these opposable thumbs
evolved in time to help carry our grudges,
though none of the other planets fidget or fuss,

they just roll round and around and around
like ball bearings. Whereas here? The good
soldier's earth-colored: those he wears and lies in,
with man crawling toward man on his belly
across rival axioms. As each aims and fires
at a difference in cloth, each wins the day,
dragging by rope naked elders to the quarry.

Wake me when eternity starts, will you?
I don't want to miss it.