

“Postcard from Eden After” by Gretchen Cassel Eick

It is summer in Bosnia and Herzegovina and lavishly green--apples and figs, sprawling vineyards and leggy leafed geraniums. Hot-pink hollyhocks crowd the roadways maintaining their erect posture despite the breeze that tries to break them. The air shimmers iridescent with the collective sweat of those who go out at midday. Arrayed in their joyful drapery of trumpet vines the skeleton buildings look like medieval ruins instead of the shattered remainders of deliberate devastation.

The war ended a generation ago. It's better not to ask why folks don't swim in the Drina that falls away from the mountains gushing turquoise and white with memory. The fragile bones bleaching on its bottom can no longer be seen, nor the villagers' gathered, bloated bodies that dammed its course. Still the scent lingers, faint but fierce. The blood of Abel that Cain should never have shed.

This Eden was contingent on collaboration and ruptured by ultimate violence--neighbor killing neighbor, families expelled and wandering the face of the earth seeking refuge.

There are other children now, here and everywhere. Still they look for another chance. Can they--and we--remember?

This is summer from one end of the world.
