

Fragments That Remain by Nevena Kovacevic

I often think of you, my brother, my friend
Not so long ago, we feasted on lamb
Drinking the wine of grapes we picked from the overflowing vineyard
The very wine I feel in my mouth like spilled blood

You, on one side of the cold trench
And I, on the other
Two margins of the same story
Coin suspended in the air
Whose side will it land on?
Yet only one is thought to be the right side
Like the other one does not exist

You were only eighteen when the rifle replaced
books in your hands
You were only eighteen when the smell of gun powder
and weed replaced the scented breeze of pine and sea
You were only eighteen when hard liquor burned your insides
daily, making you forget the enemy front line
My family, my brother, my friend
Standoff at gunpoint is imminent
Only one side tells the truth
Our blurry eyes can no longer tell the difference
Now we fight to survive

The horror of my nightmares makes me grip the radiator by my bed
I scream in agony, pulling the burning rifle off the wall
My kids and my wife awaken in fear of a madman
Whose memories of war make him immersed in the past
Present and future do not exist

Only fragments of shrapnel remain in my bloody red car
I am not allowed to forget
We fight against each other, my brother, my friend
Your side wins the propaganda war
I desperately want to believe that my side is the good side
I am not convinced your side is the bad one

Whose war were we fighting here?
The blood we spill is the blood of our brothers and sisters
Corpses float in rivers like dying algae on the ocean surface
We shoot at each other, hoping to survive
The madness of war
The conviction of men
That evil is to be fought with evil
Until none of us survive
And all that is left are the ashes of burned bodies and fragments of Hell in my mind

You are no longer my brother nor my friend
You are the invisible face I fight on the front lines
You are not a person
We never drank wine together
We never laughed together
All that is left is the hate in your eyes for the youth you were robbed of
All that is left is desperation in my soul and fear of God
What if your side was wrong?
What if my side was wrong?
And people died for nothing
And now we need to live with ourselves
Knowing that every step forward leaves a bloody footprint behind