

SIEGE OF SARAJEVO

I

How easily you could have been on the wrong side of a room, open to a sniper's view, appearing through a scope illuminated by a tritium plate. Or seen by a Chetnik in a tank on the hills surrounding Sarajevo.

How easily you could have been caught under a bus turned over by artillery fire on a road that leads to Old City. It would have taken only an error in the time of day, the time it takes to send a bullet into the bend of wind.

How easily you could have been watched by a Serb in a sniper's nest, leering through a slit between two apartment windows, the sound of a shot like a sledgehammer striking an aluminum wall.

Instead, blood from a boy's head made another shape next to him on the ground, his alternate.

83

II

You said night looked like blue blobs of light in war: bloated stars. I watched it on television with a native's dapper rhythm.

You could have been a sculptor in Sarajevo, instead of counting pills in a hospital in San Francisco.

A prayer in Arabic, covering and clasping.

Instead, you curse drivers in a language you adopted out of a need to work.

Long hours chopping, testing the temperature of food.