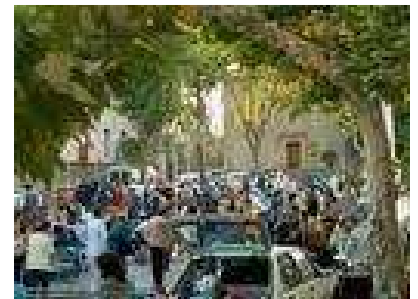


## West, East, Sunday

*"I didn't want NATO. I don't want you. I don't want the KLA.  
I want only peace."*

—Haxere Palushi, survivor of American bombing in Kosovo,  
interviewed by *The New York Times*.

Sunday the folks of Montpeyrroux got out  
their junk, threw open shuttered pigeonniers,  
eviscerated attics, let air in,  
undid buckles tied a hundred years ago  
of wild pigskin-covered trunks that stunk, still,  
of previous proprietors, unloaded  
lace, old linen, grand-mère's monograms,  
portraits, crusted as the ones  
just up the street adorning graves.  
They brought to the *marché aux puces*  
Barbies, bears, Nintendo games. Generations  
spread out, exposed and vulnerable on the *Place  
de l'Horloge* to fund the sixth grade's trip abroad.



The youngsters went to London, saw the guards  
at Buckingham, Di's flowers, saw Piccadilly  
Circus, bought souvenirs, never spoke a word  
of English, saw double-decker buses, came  
home like sausages in casing through the Chunnel,  
got to go to McDo's as a treat for being good.  
When they saw they'd overspent, they began  
the drive to drum up funds and here we are  
beneath the chestnut trees, beneath May's benevolent  
light sifting like haloes over our heads.  
My sometimes neighbors ask me (yet again)  
to explain the American propensity for schoolyard

massacres, my fellow countrymen's—boys—  
tendency to kill each other and their friends,  
and then themselves.

An *ado* splays his knees in his tipped  
wheelbarrow-cum-armchair  
and sells his GI Joes. He's grown up now,  
plays with real guys, watches *Scream*.  
Baby booties, bibs and bunting,  
hand-knit caps, mothers swap their clothes.  
Children chant "Hakuna Matata"  
in English and in French, Disney  
and Gap items sell fast (as *fabriqué en France*  
gets snatched in the U.S.) Naf Naf, Nike  
chic imprimaturs that squeeze the life  
out of "third world" kids, old before  
they're twenty. Straw covered casks, round  
as pregnant women, dinner plates trimmed gold,  
old carpets brought from Persia, mohair  
shawls. The largest item of all  
is the confessional, a massive,  
oaken presence Henri Gilbert, who fought  
in the Resistance, sacrificed. God knows  
where he got it, but it brought a handsome price  
as did the half-full (half-empty, if you will)  
bottle Madame Soto brought, memento of  
Our Lady's haunt just west of here at Lourdes.

—

East of here nine hundred miles  
the insides of another village are spread  
across the fields by bombs or loaded

onto wagons, what belongings can be brought.  
A forty-year-old son loads his  
father in a barrow, wheels him across  
borders, one village to the next for protection.  
The Serbs suggest under that bridge over  
there is best and the Kosovars, whose names  
are, father and son both, Agon, know only  
there's a war they must survive whatever way  
they can, stand, huddled, human shields  
while F-16's drop bombs on them. Still



Sunday in still another time zone, General Wesley  
Clark, the NATO boss, before the flash and buzz  
of CNN et. al, apologizes for eliminating  
Korisa's entire sixth grade population  
with a less-than-intelligent bomb.  
"...collateral damage in every war," he goes on,  
then quickly eats his word, "that is, military operation."

Translate the difference to Haxere Palushi,  
my sister who sobbed "He wanted water, I couldn't  
bring him some," about her son she'd had to leave  
behind to save her younger two. Or her neighbor  
Basha who spent the night in the same field  
outside the barracks our F-16's went at,  
watching her shrapnel-filled three-year-old  
turn cold at dawn and die.

— Julie Fay

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