

*In memory of the 1941 Kragujevac Massacre, in which Nazi German troops executed thousands  
of Serbian civilians, among them hundreds of elementary school children*

# Bloody Fairy – Tale

by Desanka Maksimovic

(translated from Serbian / Croatian / Bosnian)

## Bloody Fairy Tale

It happened in a land of farmers on  
hilly Balkan  
far, far away;  
a troop of students  
died martyred  
on one single day.

They were all born  
in the same year.  
For all of them, the school days were the same:  
They were all taken  
to the same festivals with cheer,  
they were all vaccinated  
until the last name,  
and they all died on the same day.

It happened in a land of farmers on  
hilly Balkan  
far, far away;  
a troop of students  
died martyred  
in one single day.

And only fifty-five minutes  
prior the death moment,  
a small troop of fidgets  
sat beside their school desks  
solving the same hard math quest:  
“If a traveler goes by foot,  
how much time he needs to rest...”  
and so on.

Their thoughts were filled  
with same figures and tags  
and there was a countless amount  
of senseless As and Fs  
in their notebooks and in their bags.

They were squeezing  
a whole bunch of secrets that mattered--  
either patriotic or a love letter--  
on the bottom of their pockets.  
And everyone of them supposed  
that he would for a long time,  
for a very, very long time  
run under the blue sky--  
until all math quests on the world  
were done and gone by.

It happened in a land of farmers on  
hilly Balkan  
far, far away;  
a troop of students  
died martyred  
on the same day.

Whole rows of boys  
took each other's hands  
and leaving the last school class  
went to the execution quietly,  
as the death was nothing but a smile.  
All friends in rows were,  
at the same moment,  
lifted up to the eternal domicile.

Desanka Maksimovic, 1945