

Sunday, February 28

Potocari, Near Srebrenica, 2005

Groundsheets of mist.
The sweating of grasses.
It covers the boots of the workers
breaking the earth in their windcheaters
and bright anoraks.
It eats the blades of their shovels.

Down on their knees
among them are the women, opening
the soil up with their hands.
They might as well be digging their own graves.

The clucking of stones like worry beads.
Hands and the blades of shovels like plates
presenting the dirt; everything
they have left, which is almost nothing.
Gusts of grief and longing.

Hair torn loose from a headscarf.
Red fruit for the workers. And coffee. And row after row
of graves, each one the length of a body even though
all that might be left is a tiny tray of bones

or, more often than not, much less than that.

*The woman holding part of a shoe with a thread
hanging from it. The shoe of her son
which she had mended. The woman sobbing
over a single rib. The woman who recognizes
the teeth of her husband. And begins to kiss them.
The woman who has nothing but the memory
of making love, blinding herself
to the fact that their country had gone to war
since they last bought groceries. The woman
who has nothing. The woman who has less
than nothing.*

*The woman sitting quietly beside a tiny cairn of bones
Who says: "Please, let me touch him just once more."*

*Jude Nutter, from **Selling Honey on the Road to Sarajevo***