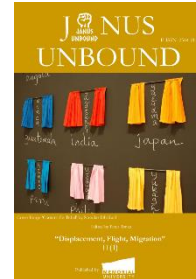


Title: Memorial/Immemorial

Author(s): V. Varsam

Source: *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*, vol. II, no. 1
(Winter 2022), pp. 50-53

Published by: *Memorial University of Newfoundland*



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V. Varsam



*Janus Unbound: Journal
of Critical Studies*
E-ISSN: 2564-2154
2(1) 50-53
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2022

Memorial/Immemorial

You will have forgotten me

you will

you can't disagree
because there is no you
there is no I
only a number

hard to remember

and shifting every day
of people rising and falling over mountains, valleys and flatlands
across rivers, seas and oceans
and another number, unknowable, vast yet no less significant
the readers of our heaving, shivering numbers
the long-distance viewers in front of small screens
with little clippings and short statements full of peremptory knowledge

watching

not us, but the fate of numbers
from regions probably unheard of for most
and never to be heard again
turning already into marks in dusty books
that keep track of our kind
of numbers

so many all the time, different every year

appearing briefly, and disappearing even more quickly
how

it seems long to you
every day, every hour the reports numb you further

while

every minute, every second we accept the pain more
no more

infinite futures of generations

no more

familiar footholds of the past to lean against on

slow evenings
no more

sweet nostalgia of homecoming

only a bitter, heavy stench of burning

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flesh of humans and animals, food and fabrics, bricks and wiring
and all those little luxuries you and I daily prostitute our time for
in anticipation of the pleasure they will keep giving us
if time keeps going on
a smooth train running, a ship sailing on calm, translucent seas
suddenly usurped, overturned, interrupted
a funeral pyre in your living room

I walk out alive and that is all
I, no longer named but hidden in
a number, constantly moving

Who are these enemies that do the burning, the killing, the kidnapping?
(Yes, of course, I know, you know)
But what kind of war memories will he and she and they have
those faceless soldiers
the enemy
will sit at home one day, or in a bar, warm and cosy, and say
what they did in the war
or maybe keep it secret?

Can it ever not be a part of them?
I know it is part of me

a big, gaping hole
spewing
poisonous and painful fumes
to breathe
day and night and again

day and night
it's cold and hot
too hot and too cold
there is a constant moving

laboring up and down hills and fields
hiding in forests and river banks
into places of nature we too had ignored
but now cannot learn to love fast enough

in return
we give to the earth
our friends, old enemies, children, neighbours, ourselves
by force we make her fertile with our blood
and she is indifferent to it all,
animate, inanimate, organic, inorganic

all extinguishable,

Memorial/Immemorial

I am no different from you or any other number

one more,
one less

years of antagonism, hatred or struggle for peace
hundreds or thousands of years of presence
before

(call it)
a heavy broom of soldiers
a rainy season of bombs
a scorching fire

we will all be gone
a clean sweep

marks our passage.

V. Varsam

Biography

V. Varsam writes poetry and fiction. Her poems have been published in *Literature Today* and *Glass Zine*. She is currently based in Europe.