

The Little Sailboat

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The world needs to open its eyes. People in Donbass, Ukraine are dying, but the world seems oblivious to it all. The country house that my mother and I grew up in, in Peski, is destroyed. Where once before there was a beautiful cottage, where children's laughter could be heard, and chickens pecked at the ground, now is just a pile of rubble. The land it stands on is barren and cold. It was hit with a bomb.

Russian and Ukrainian authors, and Americans such as Penny Rock have voiced their opinions about war through their poetry. But does anyone pay attention? No. The world's eyes stay shut. I dedicate this poem to the people of my hometown, Donetsk.

The disc sets in the bloodied heavens,
Outlining the ruins of the city.
Where cars honked and people hurried,
There is now a feeling of antiquity.

One street is deserted and black,
Rubble and litter all around.
Dead bodies are piled in the square.
A misshapen, horrifying mound.

Yesterday, there had been another riot,
Bystanders had been shot.
Thirty people had been trampled,
Their bodies left to rot.

The only sound now heard,
Is the soft buzzing of the flies.
Black clouds swarming,
Closing the corpses eyes.

A little paper ship,
Floats around the human mass.
Someone had let it set sail
In the thick pool of blood in the grass.

It had once been a treasured toy.
The prize of a small child.
But the winds of war had taken it away,
And dropped it in the red waters, exiled.

The sailboat was a little boy's,
An orphan, no less.
Searching for the bodies of his parents,
In the mutilated, terrifying mess.

He now searches the city,
Scavenging crusts of dried bread.
He is used to the darkness.
And the strong stench of the dead.

His brother had joined the army,
Wanting to do what was right.
But, when he learned the truth,
He got drunk and shot himself in the middle of the night.

A hand here, a severed foot there,
Paving the deserted town.
Where is this God everyone talks about?
And the Savior who wears the thorny crown?

Where is the fairness? The truth we seek?
Where can it be found?
It disappeared in the sea of blood,
Under the sailboat going round and round.

Ripples in the water.
Rain, the tears of the havens.
Dirt; mixing, swirling.
The solemn circling of the ravens.

The messengers of death will arrive.
The vultures will spread their wings.
The maggots will join the feast,
Among the other unsavory things.

The little orphan will lose hope,
Of finding joy in the world again.
And all thanks to a bunch of guys in suits;
Cruel, brutal men.

The journalists who want to tell the truth
Quickly get sent away.
The news reporters and their camera crew
Can vanish without a trace any day.

What will happen to this boy?
Will he find happiness at last?
Or will he tie a knot around his neck,
And make his pain disappear in a blast?

Will the people who are responsible,
Get the punishment they deserve?
Or will the men in tailored suits
Still be proud of the country they serve?

If you want to wage a war,
Just call it by its name.
It's not a skirmish or a conflict,
An unpleasantness or game.

If you want to wage a war,
Then look it in the face.
Remember all the loss of life
Is part of your disgrace.

You can't avoid the consequences.
You need to look them in the eye.
Mutilated bodies with empty, glassy stare.
That's how it looks when youth is forced to die.

There are sounds that you must hear,
The cries and screams of death.
The loudest sound is deafening silence
After their last breath.

To look at what you have destroyed
Requires decency, and respect.
And you must admit to your participation
And own up to its effect.

You can't look away from atrocities,
Or ignore the waste of lives unfinished.
Your choice to engage in legal massacre
Renders all humanity diminished.

Broken glass crunches underfoot.
Broken hearts as well.
The sailboat of Donetsk
Floats in and out of the gates of hell.