Edina Pajt, senior in United World College from Mostar First prize in the contest of "Bošnjaci" Fund, Sarajevo

I was running. The village left behind me in long flames that reached the sky and swallowed everything what was sprouted as a result of hard work.

I had no time to count steps, and I couldn't see where I was going. Only a scream is heard – broken and beaten it was hanging in the air and ripped my ears.

I knew only that they arrived.

The window was only way out to salvation. Mother pushed me telling me to run away, not to turn back, that I mustn't fall down, because if I fall down the beasts will smear me. What kind of beasts, God Almighty? I walk faster, and feel some tingling in my body. I feel how odd breaths of beasts slide on my back, and expect every moment that beast's paw mows me down and smears. O my God, what happened to us? Are we humans? Who are beasts, and who are humans? I can't see anything in front of me due to darkness that spread around, and I also can't see anything in myself. I can't follow my own thoughts. Perda is between me and world. In my head only one thought is drumming that beasts will smear me.

I was crawling unnoticed between the haystacks and heard cries ripping this bloody skies dome. Innocence disappeared, they were stealing it, and they bit clean bodies like rats when they bite the ropes. All the curse of the Earth is united tonight, at this place, here. The beasts came to eradicate our traces, to disgrace us, to bleed from their hands and that our births became our punishments.

I'm afraid of this evil which flared up among us, and I'm so afraid that I can't think either about salvation or about escape, so I do not think what will happen later if I don't come back, if I never see my mother. Only one fear is sitting inside me and scattering slowly through my senses, and everything is transformed in it. And I became a beast on the alert. I'm listening to noises and see contours where they are not, I forget praying for salvation and I'm staying confused. My legs carry me alone, and I don't know how they didn't get numb and how I didn't tumble in pain to the ground that smell like mildew and rot...

Shot.

Slurry liquid, as hot as boiling water spilled over my upper arm. My clothes were sticking to the body, and there is more and more of something what flows out of me. There is more blood, and less me, less my soul and less a human in me. I don't give up. I continue to walk. Was he aiming at me, did he see me while I was sneaking out, running away from his cruelty, from his bites and filthy pagan wish to kill my soul? The beast is behind me, if it feels my smell and smell of my blood, it will ruin my youth, ruin my life and what I would live will be only memories of sin that wasn't my fault, but the act of others' malice and deformity.

There is no more fear from evil, only regret because of all hearts which are sick and which make it. There is no more thought, everything is emptiness now, and pain resides in it. I won't be able to walk any longer, at dawn they'll find my traces. I must save myself, must help myself, must ask from God to help me, must hope, and must believe if I want to live. I mustn't go back if I want to stay what I am, I must get out of here, from this what was my life until now... A fancied scarf floats in my dreams... Wind brings me rose petals. And smell of hopelessness together with them. I hear that nothing remained from the village. They burned everything to the ground, and rode away to the new campaigns and new destructions because their souls are so hungry of suffering and their minds are ruined by insanity. I wake up, but don't want to do it. This is the worst morning of my life. In the corner of my eye I look at the muddy alley and snow remnants contaminated by the last night delirium. They are saying to me that it's not horrible. Then I look around myself, and I saw the room as white as blossom of trees in spring, I felt hardness of the mattress below me and coldness of iron bars that I was leaned on like a doll with glassy empty view and bloody, butchered legs.

This is not my world.

I don't know which morning this is, and I don't know how much time has passed since that night of suffering and destroying of everything inside me and on me. The world was spinning tremendously, and on every hemisphere word HATE was written in capitals. And then it came to me, it emerged out of me for what I myself did not know that it exists, a salutary thought splashed me together with cognition that I'm alive and that is what is good. We altogether, attacked by butchers, we who have been chosen to disappear, we who are life and world for ourselves, we are not for lying and despairing on hard beds. We need to reply by good. I have to forgive because they don't know. I have to forgive and pray to God, I have to pray to Him to erase their ignorance and their desire to hurt us only because we are different. I'm not such a person. I'm one of us. I don't know how to hate.

From the moment when I could understand some things, my mother would take me in front of her and next to our rippling fountain talked me how love is the greatest gift. "Don't allow to anyone to kill that smile. This is the strongest weapon against malice. You have to like hope and to pray to God that it never abandon you…" She talked to me like she knew what will happen, like she felt in the scent of daffodil that evil is preparing, bigger than mind can accept.

Something broke inside me. Last night, or a year ago, I could hate, because I was afraid of what happened, I was afraid of them because they are insane, I was afraid of myself, because they made me losing my mind, I was afraid of dark and fog, I was afraid of intrigue that was seeded with every new step and later it grew out like immortelle and filled air that I was breathing.

I stand up today, because I have something to hope for, I have someone to ask him to bring me days by fountain and smell of blossom sprinkled by rain. Today, I know that I have to build my own world. The pain of horror remains in my soul, a scar of a stray bullet and malicious thoughts flourishes on my upper arm to mark me forever as one who has been supposed to die. I don't either forgive, or forget them who had taken everything that my life was, but a golden bird rips the sky, shines the Earth by its wings and I know that I didn't survive accidentally. My task is to talk the story about the road that is different than the wrong one is. I have chosen the harder way, with much more thorns but here I am, alive, I breathe, talk and remember, amazed and happy and I hope for justice and one new morning when instead of the Sun a new hope will rise for all those anguished souls to whom everything is stolen and do not have anyone in the World.