

PILVAX

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Mario Susko, a witness and survivor of the war in Bosnia, moved to the US in 1993, where he had originally studied in the early 1970s. He is the translator of many distinguished American poets and writers. From a bibliography of over 80 books, his most recent work includes the anthology of Jewish-American short stories *A Declaration of Being*, co-edited with M. Schwartzman and translated into Croatian, and poetry collections *Eternity on Hold* (Turtle Point Press, 2005), *Life Revisited: New and Selected Poems* (Allahabad, India, 2006), *Closing Time* (Harbor Mountain Press, 2008), and *Rules of Engagement* (erbacce-press, UK, 2009). His new poetry collection, *Framing Memories*, will be published in 2011.

Poetry

by Mario Susko

SLIDES

pictures that keep coming
as if someone forgot to shut off
a slide projector and you do not know
where the power box is in your head:
 a man whose entrails are scooped
 back in as though a duffel bag
 got ripped open and things plopped out
you strain your ears to hear a warning
some images may be too graphic
justifying your going into the kitchen
to take something and avoid yourself
yet you stay needing proof it won't be
you in one of those dead frames:
 there every body covered by a sheet
 can be you, every charred head has
 your bone structure and the same number
 of horse-like front teeth sticking out:
 an arm picked up like a piece of wood
 and placed on a cart makes you cross
 your arms to feel they're still there

and so on and so on without end,
he said, sitting in the bleached room
with one painted window, her figure split

down the middle, leaving him one side
for the lunar, one, for the solar eye.

Do you dream in color,
she asked,
looking out at the tree crown exploding
in green, which he saw only as leaves
framing her shingled head, its midnight
black shade having him make out a tank
muzzle camouflaged by branches.

In Technicolor, he said, his face a grimace.

We could give you something
To ease or eliminate color intensity.

Really? he blinked. How about the pictures?

Those we cannot do anything about.
We are not that powerful or charitable.

*More of Mario Susko's poetry can be found in ISSUE 7 of PILVAX, locally available
in Budapest.*