



Only the Nails Remain: Scenes from the Balkan Wars

Christopher Merrill

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Only the Nails Remain: Scenes from the Balkan Wars is a chronicle of poet and critic Christopher Merrill's ten war-time journeys to the Balkans from the years 1992 through 1996. At once a travelogue, a book of war reportage, and a biography of the imagination under siege, this beautifully written and personal narrative takes the reader along on the author's journeys to all the provinces and republics of the former Yugoslavia—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and Vojvodina—as well as to Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Turkey. His journeys provide the narrative structure for an exploration of the roles and responsibility of intellectuals caught up in a decisive historical moment, many of whom either helped to incite the war or else bore eloquent witness to its carnage. What separates this book—the first non-native literary work on the conflict—from other collections of reportage, political analysis, and polemic, is its concern for capturing the texture of particular places in the midst of dramatic change—the sounds and sights and smells, the stories and observations of victim and perpetrator alike, the culture of war. Here is a literary meditation on war, a fascinating portrait of the poetry, politics and the people of the Balkans that will provide insight into the past, present, and future of those war-torn lands. Hear an interview with the author on NPR's Weekend All Things Considered, February 20th, 'Balkan Poets.'

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