

Why?

It was dusk and the battle that had started at dawn * had subsided by now. A little while ago, there was still some sporadic rifle fire. Some hot-blooded man was defying the enemy.

But now it was completely quiet. The big sun that had scorched friends and foes all day long had turned to rest. It was tired of seeing people killing each other and closed its eyes to forget.

The young soldier leaned his rifle and helmet on the rock, opened his arms wide to cool off his upper body, breathed deeply a couple of times and hurried down the slope, to reach faster the stream where he had spotted * a small vein of clear, pure water since yesterday. It was cool down there and the wet grass smelled nice. The young soldier bent over the overflowing little spring * and drank plenty of the cold water. The fire went out of his guts.

“Ah, what a relief...”, he said. He bent again, scooped up the water and poured it on his face and over his head. He cooled off, cleaned up, brightened up. * He became a different person. He lifted his head high, looked at the peaceful sky and spoke happily.

- God, life is beautiful for man. Make this war end soon, so I can go back home near my old mother who is waiting for me and near my siblings.

He finished his words, caressed with his hand, with his eye the fresh water. He got up to leave. Suddenly he heard footsteps next to him, there, from the other side of the hill, and turned his head abruptly to see.

Another soldier, an enemy, was coming down too carefree and unarmed, * to drink from the spring, to cool off and, in this way, to thank God for protecting him and keeping him safe that day too.

But the first soldier forgot everything he had just said gazing at the quiet sky and in an instant he pulled out his pistol from his waist and pointed it at the enemy.

The other one who was coming thirsty from the all-day heat, * and already felt the running water quenching inside him and cooling his burning guts, frightened now in front of the extended pistol raised his hands quickly and said something in his language pleadingly, with a scared, moved voice. He probably wanted to say:

- “Look at me, brother, I am alone and unarmed. I was very thirsty and came to drink some water. Have mercy on me, I am innocent, spare my life. Look, I am very young and you know, an old mother who has no one else in the world is waiting for me”.

But the young soldier forgot God in an instant. He lost his humanity, pressed the trigger and the bullet slid from the barrel and hit the enemy in the chest. The man rolled on the ground writhing and moaning. The young soldier, very nervous, approached the wounded man and stood over him looking at him. The stranger was lying on his back. He twitched spasmodically, moved his legs and clenched both hands on his chest. His pale pained lips moved silently. His wide-open eyes looked full of wonder and fear at the young soldier. And over all his face: forehead, eyes, lips, human pain and astonishment were poured out. It seemed to the young soldier as if he was asking him:

“Why did you do this evil thing, brother man? Why did you want to sin *, to take on your neck the blood of an innocent? I prayed to God to keep me well and to return quickly to my village, to hug my mother”.

And as the young soldier looked at him, he thought that the bitter lips of the wounded man spoke to him, told him their pain and complaint. “And still, as if he said to him, a girl was waiting for me. We had many dreams together and she waited for this cursed war to end so I could return to my village. But now, brother mine, look how you made me”.

A hard hand squeezed his heart. An iron ring passed around his head, tightened it and hurt him. His eyes burned. He felt a strange evil and started running up the hill. He slipped, fell down, jumped up again and ran again. A thought stuck in his mind: to hurry up, to help the wounded man.

- God have mercy on him have mercy on me he muttered leave him alive He reached the stream approached the wounded man touched him he was warm stretched out his hands passed them carefully under the injured body hugged it around held it tight like that. His heart beat dipped in agony. Tenderness and pain love and care all these together took him over.

Gently carefully he brought him to the spring and leaned him on the grass took the water that he had come down to drink with longing and wet his hair cleaned his youthful beautiful face erased the thin bloody groove that had dried there on the left side of his mouth. He took his hand stretched it over his open palm and caressed it softly

- Brother mine he said sweetly tenderly brother mine forgive me and the tears ran hot. He wetted it and soaked it. The night came down completely and spread darkness over them .

- My dear my pained brother he whispered the young soldier crushed. Forgive me my dear .I did not want it I am not a murderer. I swear to you. I am not a murderer. Just for a moment I forgot that I am a human being. I forgot that you are a human being my brother. That a mother is waiting for you too in her poor house , mother and father and siblings. I forgot because these villains wanted me to forget.

He remembered the words they had taught him and turned his gaze over angry and wild in the dark. Then pain took him over again. He caressed the hand of the wounded man and the tears overflowed and soaked it. But the other one could no longer hear or feel .His soul had flown away and his tormented body began to stiffen *.

The darkness thickened more and covered the two men: murderer and victim who stood side by side and who one caressed the hand of the other and whispered words of love and pain, as if they were old friends, as if they were brothers .

Words of love that the other one could no longer hear.

G. Magklis, There are no sinners,

dawn: early morning * had spotted: had located * little spring: small source of water *
brightened up: became cheerful * to end: to finish * unarmed: without weapons * heat: high temperature * to sin: to do wrong * to stiffen: to become rigid