

peace, *n.*

1.
children of army depots schooled at bomb shelters
misspelling word 'peace'
in essays about their dreams

therefore I have to make 'piece' into 'peace' at least once a month for almost a decade

2.
year by year
they have almost forgotten what it was and had to look for the meaning of the word in
month by months
they have almost forgotten what it was and had to look for the meaning of the word in
day by day
they have almost forgotten what it was and had to look for the meaning of the word in
every minute every second of war
they have almost forgotten what it was and had to look for the meaning of the word in
seems endless
they have almost forgotten what it was and had to look for the meaning of the word in
makes peace less and less plausible
they have almost forgotten what it was and had to look for the meaning of the word in

3.
there are two main questions regarding peace
teachers of humanities have to struggle with
in military depots

question 1: how to protect children who have never seen peace
from an outdated concept they have learnt from books
once the treaty is signed
question 2: how to protect our own memories of peace
from the retouch of despair

4.
when the peace was announced
I could almost appreciate nice spring weather flowery dress and heels on my way to school

but I could feel sharp fragments of war
where the clothes was touching my skin

till the last of my days

Written in English, November 2022

ambassadors of war

we wrap ourselves in a blanket of war
we are on a military diet
war war for breakfast
for lunch for dinner
war pours out of our eyes
wears out the soles of our heavy boots
gets in small pieces under our skin and starts to fester

we bear the war in our heads
we bear the war in our mouths
on foot in trucks and cars in buses between cities and
suburban trains
across the borders of large and small settlements
across the state borders
radio broadcasts are exclusively about war war now
turn on your TV – war war
we fill waiting rooms other people's houses phone calls roads with war
we retell what we saw heard and the news from the fronts
trying to speak the war out squeeze the war off wash
the war out from ourselves
but the war leaves none of our bodies
words do not stop in the depths of our mouths

translated from Ukrainian by Tatiana Bonch