

THE WAR REPORTER PAUL WATSON
ON THE KNOCK AT THE DOOR
Dan O'Brien

Lying in bed with the lights off listening
to the bombs dropping like a thunderstorm
rolling over a summer lake. The knock
at my door's desperate, lovesick. Hammering
like the crumbling Socialist edifice
of the Grand Hotel Pristina might split
apart like balsawood. Corralling crews
into the hallway like *Goya's May 3rd,*
1808. Lining up some weeping
newsmen for execution, opening fire
into the drywall beside their heads. *Slide*
into the coffin beneath your bed. Fear
is what they're after. Why are you tempted
to give him what he wants? The rifle butt's
slapping the lock in my socket. A gruff
word calls him off. My disappointed love
sighs, murmuring to himself. Mud-smothered soles
on mildewed carpeting. When the battering
picks up at my neighbor's door someone's voice
cries out and they kick her door in. A rule
that's always served me well: When your knock comes,
don't answer.