

*AN INSURRECTION*

A new rebellion had started up. Bombs dropped like skeet shot from the sky. They shelled us for three days. Then it started to rain.

The wind came up strong for a bit, then stopped.

The girl was running in the rain, without a headscarf.

I was smoking a cigarette in the doorway of the remains of a building – sheer walls intact, all else gone.

I could see her hair, snagged in the wind. She was barefoot. I fall in love with barefoot women.

I had a bad feeling. I wanted to protect her. I could have sworn her eyes were green.

My mother had green eyes. My mother died while I was stationed here. I got an email and a call.

The girl ran slow, then faster, then slow again.

I think she was out of breath.

I stepped from the doorway where I was smoking.

I told myself I was in love.

I threw my cigarette butt out into the driving rain.

I shouted at the running girl.

I shouted, “Hey!”

I began to run out to her, into the street, out of my doorway.

My platoon leader, my friend, grabbed me by the shoulder. I hit him in the face and I tried to run.

He was bigger than me; he wrestled me to the ground. I was pinned to the ground by him and by another soldier.

I could see my cigarette butt, wet and snuffed in the hard rain.

The shots from a rooftop – I’m not sure which one, not that it matters – cut the girl down quickly. The shots were many. She fell first forward, then back. Like JFK, I think.

My friends let me up off the ground.

I made to run to her.

They tossed me back to the pavement.

They let me go again.

I stood up again and lit another cigarette.