

After the Storm

by Jake Barnes

I watch from the cabin window the death of the sun, hear the howl of the new-born storm. The lake boils, then an unseen hand sweeps away the whitecaps, the rising wind howls. It begins to rain, pours, pounds the roof like bullets from a Gatling gun. There is no storm cellar, no place for me to hide. It's too late. Oh, well. As the fella said, if we go in, we go in with it.

For a time I cannot see out. Soon the storm passes, the wind abates. Water runs in rivulets on the window pane. Later the sun peeks out. Clouds scud across the sky. I go outside, check for damage. The air smells like ozone. A neighbor's tree is down, pulled out by the roots. The hole in the ground is as deep and wide as a bomb crater.

I wander across the wet grass. I stand at the top of the hill, look out at the lake, my hands in my pockets. The sky is a miracle of colors: red, pink, blue. I look up and down the shore. Not a boat, not a dock is left. Kindling piled on the eastern shore of the lake, no doubt. Crystal beads of water drip from the trees. And down by the shore, at the very tip top of a tree, a single bird is singing, singing for dear life.

