

Out of Uniform

by Elizabeth Kate Switaj

Between the wars, I hung around in an air-conditioned room. It was tiny, and I was shoved to the back, but after living outside on another man's back for months of bullets and bombs, I welcomed the stuffiness. White paint kept close walls from reminding me of the trenches' dried-out mud. Did you think we'd done away with all that? That soldiers played with joysticks rigged up to drones and only wore camouflage like me for show? If you saw my pixellated sisters, you could be forgiven for that. We're not fighting an eight-bit war.

Maybe one day we will. We don't know what kinds of resolutions aliens live in, do we?

My partner was wearing me when he came home. I hung between him and his husband when they had their first kiss since the armistice. Their first kiss since war was declared a police action.

I hung behind suits, jeans, and T-shirts. Only soldiers iron and starch those things. I dreamed of growing moldy. But that was just between the wars, and now I'm being worn again. They say the enemy's the same, but I swear this plane is flying over a different ocean. Does the world ever change?

