

Loop

by stephen hastings-king

Small groups of people run down long narrow streets; there are snipers on the rooftops, petrol bombs and shouting. Individuals become objects to be carried are surrounded by two or three or four who bend under the weight and hurry away from the ambiguous front line. Everywhere fear binds the elements: the surface of the street to neighboring apartments through the windows of which residents watch to the architecture of the highway flyovers to the straight lines flashed by tracers.

When he stops moving the cold stings his face; he can feel the war give way and hurtle backward, its organization breaking apart until it disappears into his memory again.

Again he moves out onto a vast white plane. His focuses narrows to include only the arrangement of thin black triangles in the medium distance like a geometrical barricade and the ways in which his hearing is filled with details uprooted and swirled about by the wind. He slows and pulls the black fabric tighter that is wound around his head.

When he stops warm air and the smells from the subway wash over him; he can feel the white plane and the arrangement of thin black triangles in the medium distance give way and hurtle backward, their organizations breaking apart until they disappear into his memory again.

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