

## Rain

It rains here like nowhere else. It feels like drowning.

Ed dug. His hole was completely full of water but he had been told to dig so dig he did. He had left his clothes in the tent to spare them the wet, that's what you did. They all dug in a row, naked. One of the men tried to sing but the rain was too loud, you couldn't hear him 2 paces away. There was little to sing about. The lieutenant walked down the line of naked men, naked himself save for a wide-brimmed hat which drooped under the rain. He shouted something but you couldn't hear him 2 paces away. Their world was mud and trees and rain. They had seen no action these last four months and would see none for the remainder of the war. Their love of war had been extinguished. The lieutenant reached Ed.

YOU DIG TOO SLOW. DIG FASTER YOU FUCK.

Ed said nothing. The lieutenant hit him across the face and walked on, shouting. Ed got back to digging.

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They sat on beds in the tent. Ed read aloud from a book. He read Richard Kowalczyk's *The Great River* and the men liked it.

Rosa looked down at Harry with a tear in her eye. Together at last, but at what cost?

That was the end of the chapter.

What he would give to write like Kowalczyk! The characters were more real than the men sat in that tent. Ed had no talent for words as his father had told him many times. His father was an educated man and knew Ed would never make a writer. Joining the army though had made him very proud and Ed thought what a great day it would be when he got to go back and see the pride in his father's eyes again. He packed away the book in his sack and got up. He smoothed the blanket where he had sat and walked to the tent flap. It was still raining. Ed allowed himself to think of family and home.

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The man Ed was on watch with was looking at photographs of his wife. She was very beautiful and he looked at her photographs every day.

Ed. when you get back you gotta get a gal. I shoulda never have come here. She told me not to and I shoulda listened. She's always right. I should have listened.

Ed turned away from the rain.

Yeah I will, I will. I'll get myself a real beauty.

Ed had never kissed a girl. He wanted a wife and many kids. His older sister already had 2 young sons with her husband.

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A letter came informing Ed that his father had passed away last month. He read it several times over. He folded the letter into a small square and put it in a pocket. The lieutenant patted him on the shoulder and walked away. Ed had never thought his father could die. Now he was gone, a month gone. Ed wondered what had he been doing when his father had passed. Had his father thought of him at the end? He hoped so.

Ed felt very far away from his old life.

It was raining outside.