

## Morning's War

Through tears, the barn before <sup>Excellent</sup> me bleeds into the landscape. All its warmth has escaped through the unhinged door. As grief and anger exchange blows in my head, snapping twigs offer a cadence I can not follow and a sparrow cries "why?" The photo in my hand, while carried with a father's fondness, weakens me further with each glance. Lifeless, entangled rose bushes lock thorns, creating an inescapable barbed-wire barricade on both sides of the flagstone path. There lies a dead robin with a muddied breast. Stripped of flight and future. Another family broken. Between the flagstone and the barn rests an aged wooden trough. Bone dry and coffin-like, it has accepted Autumn's last breath.

Gray fog wraps the morning. Like a heavy, military-issue blanket it provides temporary warmth, but not comfort. The season's cold has taken flowers as well as weeds with no consideration for the former's beauty. Dew drips from the grass like dreams from a child.<sup>good simile</sup> A sturdy oak, grieving the loss of its leaves, ignores me. Dried sap coats its wounded trunk like useless semen. The barren maple branches point out my sins. Dampened voices deliver the morning's dirge from a distant schoolyard and a teacher's angelic voice summons young souls to heaven. A sword of sunlight slashes earthward and shouts to me from the barn's upper window, "there is a wonderful place that is not here."

*Mike, the images & word choices here are very good. The only danger is that since every sentence is so powerfully evocative, to piece together on the edge of "purple prose."*