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Enduring Freedom

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Enduring Freedom

I received my deployment orders, an impossibility with all we had survived. You had known the desert's fire and survived it twice, but I was a soldier of happenstance—caught in enlistment's wide-tooth snatch. We questioned whether to have a child, to change the sentence. A nautilus unfolding within me, each cirrus shaping into such detailed softness. I imagined a small pink heart arising from the darkest sea. It is not interesting to think of what could have been different if we hadn't chosen war together—if we hadn't the violence of the ocean lapping between us.

In the mornings, I feel the pain of another life, its smaller victories and forfeits—of a family fighting for time, quiet moments at dawn, before the explosive awakening and growing of children wanting—the holystone of laundry and dishes. What does it matter that we trade one battle for another? As we grow we seal off the camerae we can no longer live in, moving around the curvature of ourselves, becoming something other.