

## Conditions

It had been suppressed from the beginning. There was no platform on which such rage could stand, for it was larger than himself -- larger than his tiny theater of the world. He could not even begin to fathom the size of the injustice, and so he left his rage to the winds of war -- so that it might swirl around him, ever-present yet ever-fleeting.

Even so, affairs were maintained much as they had been prior to that new year of broken lines and mended brotherhoods. There could be no pause here, for who, if not he, would push onward in that great forward movement of captains and corporals? In this question, he was decidedly invested.

“How could you not be?” A renewed voice came. “That constant battle, more similar to the Somme than you know, took the solid ground right from under you. That you should spend three years grappling for some semblance of consistency is a natural thing. I have seen men go twice -- nay -- thrice as long simply shaking off the shock of muddy engagement. I see no reason why you should exist as an anomaly to this.”

A sigh escaped through his throat, as though it were still pressed upon by the leaden boot of Dunkerque, and he began again. “And yet I--”

“And yet you *what?* And yet you sit there sniveling into your sleeve?” Her voice took on a mismatched tone. “No, you have pushed and pushed and pushed, but now that you lack another redoubt to take in your effort moving forward, you think it useless altogether. It is understandable, yet you will think it different in due time.”

The word “perhaps” had scarcely left his lips when the shells of Korea began landing all around him. The woman was gone -- again -- but her impression remained ingrained in his mind.

How could she have been right when the fight continued on in spite of her? It was injustice, yet he remained impartial to it as ever.

That good fight -- nay -- that great fight was moving ever closer to his home and ever further from hers. They had both been christened in conflict, yet she moved away from it as he repeatedly retreaded the old path.

“And what path is that, my brother?” A new voice reneged its earlier resignation. “What do you plan to do when that path leads nowhere as it always has in these recent days? Can’t you see that the very world falls apart beneath our charge?”

He stared at the speaking soldier and knew that the emissaries of death were retreating. Not from him, but from the prospect of peace. The cause was ailing, their resolve failing. Could they not see that it was only on these fields of battle that salvation would be reaped?

The woman had foreseen this, and yet she had not warned him. For the sake of all that was sacred, why? The winds of war were dying in these final days, just as his brother had been felled in that year of broken lines, but still he had received no promulgation of this new age, this new millenia of the mute.

It tortured him as he returned to the woman. She received him with affability of a secondhand nature, for she had grown out of the vices he now occupied. Indeed, she could not remember what it was to hate, and for that, he resented her. Could she not see his pain and know its origin?

She had served once too, but now she relegated herself to the passive judgement of his enemies. He wondered what had befallen the world that it would move in such a sickening way, and so he departed once again, the words of wisdom from her tongue barely remaining on his own as he shouted out across a new field.