

## Walking Away

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Waiting for a tropical night to come forth

Drizzling edge of Monsoon

A young corpsman hunches in a muddy hole

Feet already immersed to the ankle

Struggling for the illusion of dry

Miserable but safer still

Than above ground

Alone with thoughts of

“What the F is it all about?”

I’m scared, tired, sore, lonely, SCARED

Sleep flits by sliding between

Mosquito hum

Sleep is rest depriving, fitful

While other young men drift through the night

Searching for marines to slay

One more check of Unit 1, everything in place

Find it by memory

Then the soggy thump, and 20 more

Sleep flees into the mist, no walking away

The knowledge there before the screams of “Incoming.”

Guts churn, and shrinking becomes

Life’s most pressing goal

Amid the suctioning crump of rounds landing

In the paddy, inside the line

Piercing between the blasts

**“Corpsman, Corpsman”**

**A half second of denying the sound**

**While the body stands to go**

**Towards the sound, towards a brother**

**Cracks and whines slice the rain**

**Each one carries an end**

**No Walking away**

**Red and Green Hornets suture night’s blanket**

**Green seeking to kiss your life away while reds**

**Probe the trees slowly silencing the green**

**Sliding, falling to his side- “Where you hit?”**

**As skilled fingers become eyes searching for things**

**That shouldn’t be on a 19-year-old body**

**The hot, sticky, slick covers his fingers**

**Finding, pressuring, wrapping, cursing the mist**

**“Stay with me, I’m the best, you’re going home.”**

**But he leaves anyway with a rattle and a weight on your soul**

**As life drains into a nameless paddy**

**And there is no walking away**