

VENGEANCE

nearly-black hardened blood. I am wearing a boot of congealed blood, it seems.

Wounded, I say to myself again and again. Wounded—home—no more war now—no more lice—a bed.

I am glad. I look gratefully at the torn boot, at the blood-soaked piece of earth on which it limply rests. I am glad—glad—soon I will see lights coming from houses and hear the voices of women and feel their cool hands on my face.

Yes . . . I am happy.

I begin to cry.

A sharp pain shoots up my leg.

I feel in my pockets for a cigarette. Fortunately I have one. I light up and fill my lungs with the soothing smoke. I exhale with a sigh of happy relief. My pain seems less. . . .

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I am thirsty. My mouth is gummy for the lack of saliva. I crawl out of the shell-hole,