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Stormy Battle

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The bullets come slow and sloppy at first.
So slow, in fact,
they should have been called something else.
I concentrate on my deep rasping breaths
and sound of ammunition
moving steadily through the trees.
Drawing a hand to the pain in my side
I give up, cowering as
the bullets bruise my headgear.
They come harder and faster every second.
The blank looming trees
wave at me blindly
accepting the bullets
with arms outstretched.
I try to disregard
the chaos around me,
forcing myself
into the rhythm
essential to Physical Training.
Toe, heel, toe, heel,
Breathe, stepstep, breath, stepstep;
Feet pounding
the stiff pavement path.
The end is in sight.
I take a blow to the nose;
liquid like warm blood
runs down my face.
I hasten to the shelter,
weary and bedraggled.
I report to the general that
the mission was worse than expected.
We discuss alternate forms of armor,
as she peels off my raincoat
and hands me a Kleenex.
Mom
doesn't know how hard it would be
to run with an umbrella.

STORMY BATTLE

GRACE LEONARD