

Wilderness House Literary Review 9/1

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Winter

IT WAS IN BUFFALO, NY.

Winter.

As only winter is experienced in Buffalo, NY.

Even when the sun shone and there was no snow on the ground or the remnants of a recent snowfall lingered in little black slush piles, it was Buffalo.

Icy winds.

Weak sun.

My friend and I had gone to a restaurant.

I don't recall its name or type of food served.

I only remember the neighborhood.

Two or three-story weathered, asphalt shingled storefronts.

The structures seem to be leaning on each other as if in a cartoon image of a decaying village.

We had finished our meal and begun to exit the restaurant and suddenly, I heard a muffled commotion. A small gathering of men, phalanx-like blocked my view.

"What happened?" I asked my friend.

They stood at the curb.

"What's going on?" I asked, trying to look around them.

My friend approached.

"Stay here," he said.

Were his arms out, as if to stop me from moving?

"You don't want to see this," he said.

A patrol car entered the scene.

The cold wind rushed down the street, entering the cuffs of my parka.

My boots seemed wet.

I saw a little, white arm drop lifelessly as the men bent down and picked something up.

And I knew.

I immediately knew.

"In the street?" I asked my friend, over and over. "In the street?"