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Framed Memories

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there came a day when everyone
was dodging sniper fire

a. a woman looking for godot and a tree,
wearing a helmet and a flak jacket

b. a man conducting a crippled orchestra
in the skeleton hall of muffled history

c. a woman getting short-stemmed flowers
picked at impromptu cemeteries

d. a girl who sneaked out to find
a market and a book of matches

e. a boy who ran among garbage mounds,
trying to catch his strayed dog

f. an old blind woman who couldn't explain

why she suddenly decided to leave the cellar

d. e. and f. died that day
– how do I know that?
that day I died with them.

yet,

d. keeps going out,
although I got matches for her

e. keeps searching, although I saw
his dog float down the river

f. keeps standing in the open, although I
flail my invisible arms to make her go in

I watch them on my screen,
then turn off the colors
and gaze at the framed memories,
waiting to see myself break out
to give the girl her matches,
find another dog for the lost boy,
take the old blind woman by the hand
and lead her down the street:

the two of us smiling and feeling our way
under a bright sun that casts no shadows

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