

Turn over



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RIFLES by Andrea Bruno







CAN YOU
SEE THEM?

I CAN
ONLY SEE
SMOKE.



SO THEY
KILLED AN ANIMAL
AND NOW THEY'RE
HAVING A PARTY.



LATER ON
THEY WILL START
SINGING...



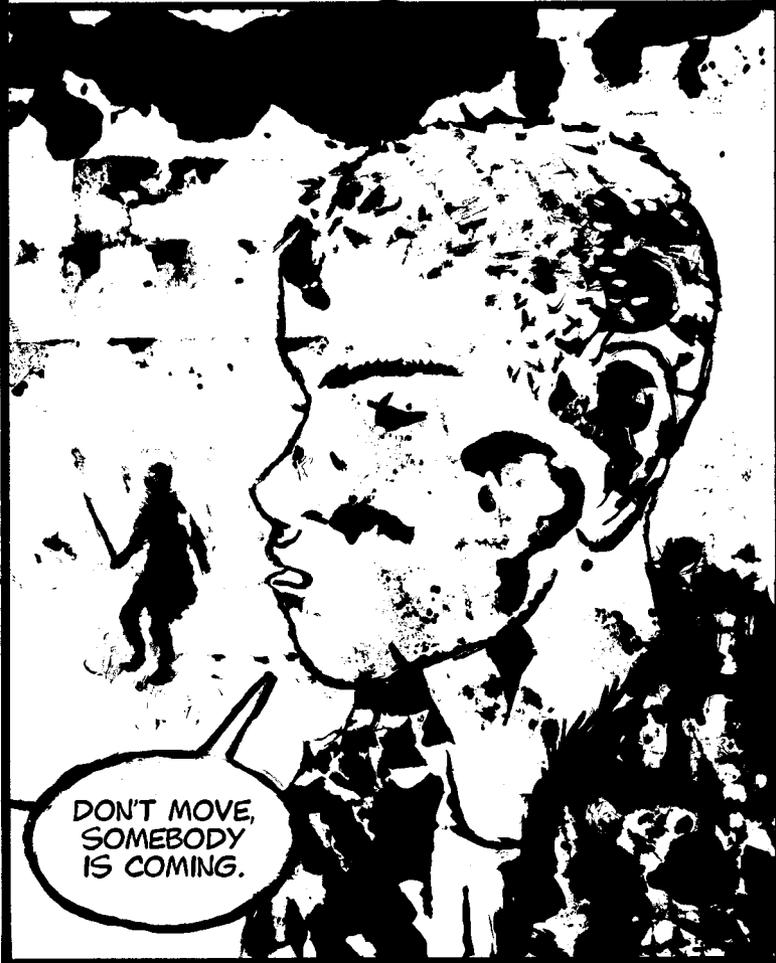
IF WE'RE LUCKY
ONE DAY WE'LL BE
ABLE TO CHASE
THEM AWAY.

A FEW DAYS AGO ONE OF US FELL.



ONCE AGAIN IT WAS THE DOGS' FAULT.

RUBIO FELL BEHIND WHILE WE WERE RUNNING AWAY FROM THE SQUARE. SOME OF US CALLED HIM RUBIO, WE DIDN'T KNOW HIS REAL NAME.



DON'T MOVE,
SOMEBODY
IS COMING.

THE DOGS CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AND TORE HIM TO PIECES BEFORE THOSE WHO WERE CARRYING THE RIFLES COULD FIRE A SINGLE SHOT. SOONER OR LATER WE NEED TO FIND A WAY TO DEFEND OURSELVES FROM THEM.





IT'S JUST THAT THERE ARE SO MANY DOGS.
AND THEY ARE HUNGRY.



IT DIDN'T GO TOO WELL TODAY EITHER.
IT RAINED.

NO!



QUICK!
TAKE COVER
FROM THE
RAIN!

WE DASHED UNDER A ROOF AND IN THE HURRY
WE LEFT BEHIND THE BAGS WITH THE FOOD.
INSTANTLY A LEPER APPEARED AT THE
END OF THE STREET.



THEY ONLY COME OUT WHEN IT RAINS.
THEY'RE ALREADY USED TO BEING IN THE RAIN,
THEY'RE NOT SCARED OF IT AT ALL.



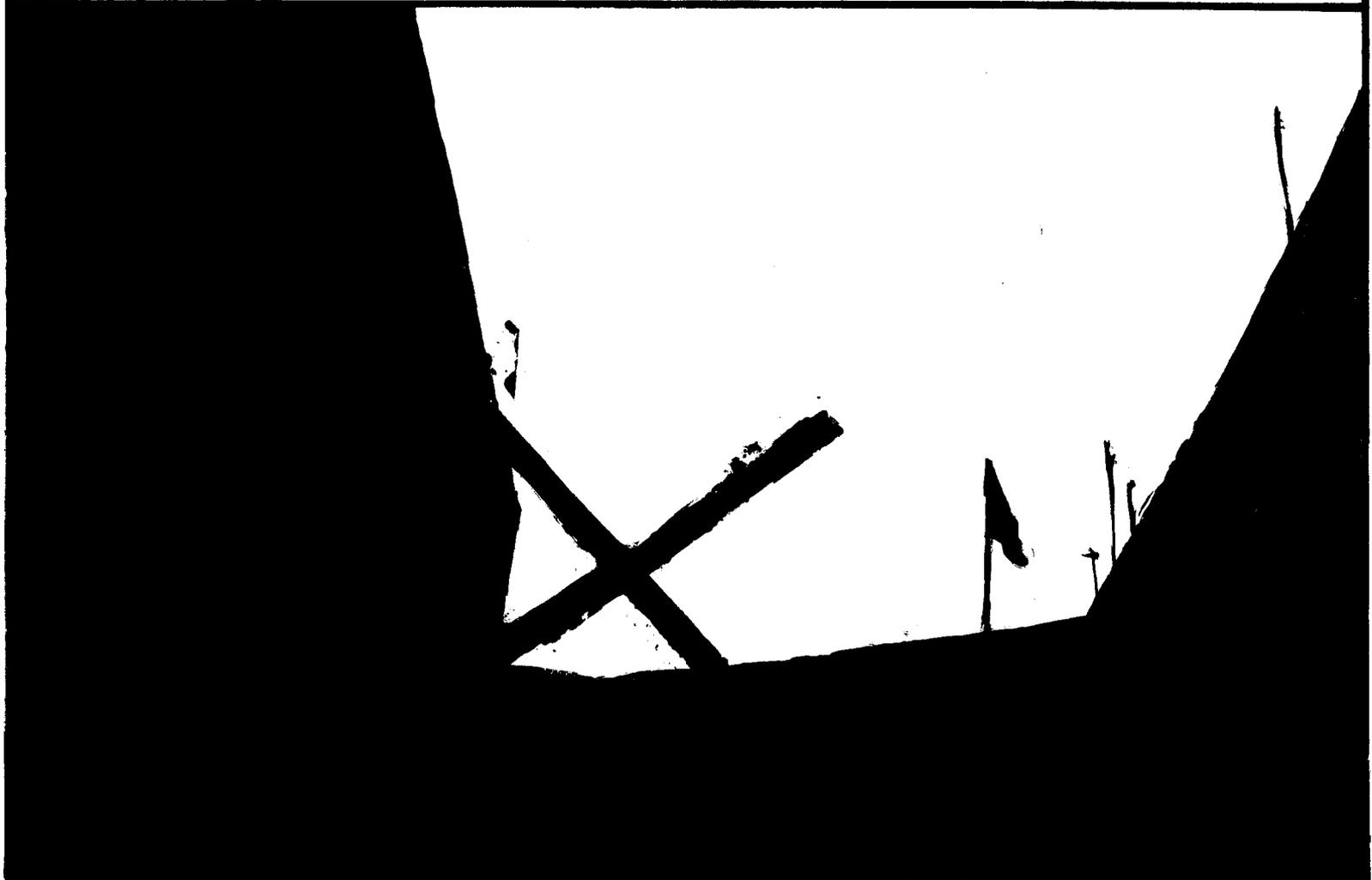




THE TRUTH IS THAT THE FOOD HAD GONE BAD. BUT WE HAD FOUND IT. IT WAS STILL OURS.



WHO ARE THESE STRANGERS THAT HAVE SACKED THE CITY AND BROUGHT RUIN TO THE COUNTRY?
WE DON'T KNOW. SOMEBODY SAYS THEY ARE NOMADS, MOVING FROM CITY TO CITY,
PILLAGING EVERYTHING. BUT IS IT REALLY TRUE?



THEY HAVE KILLED AND BURNED, THEY HAVE
TAKEN EVERYTHING THERE WAS TO TAKE,
BUT STILL THEY ARE NEVER GOING TO LEAVE...



AHH...

THEY ALMOST NEVER LEAVE THE OLD TOWN, AND
EVERYTHING AROUND THEM IS GOING TO RUINS.



WHAT'S
UP?

THAT
DREAM
AGAIN...

WE ARE YOUNG, WE REALLY DON'T HAVE THE FORCE TO CONFRONT THEM AND THEN AGAIN THERE'S TOO FEW OF US.

IN THE DREAM I WAS ONE OF THEM...

QUIET, OR YOU'LL WAKE UP EVERYBODY.

AND WE FEAR THEM, WE HAVE SEEN WHAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF DOING.



THEY ARE MERCILESS MURDERERS, AND THEY KNOW HOW TO CAST SPELLS.
IN THEIR HANDS LIVE MEN AND ANIMALS BECOME SMALL AS DOLLS.



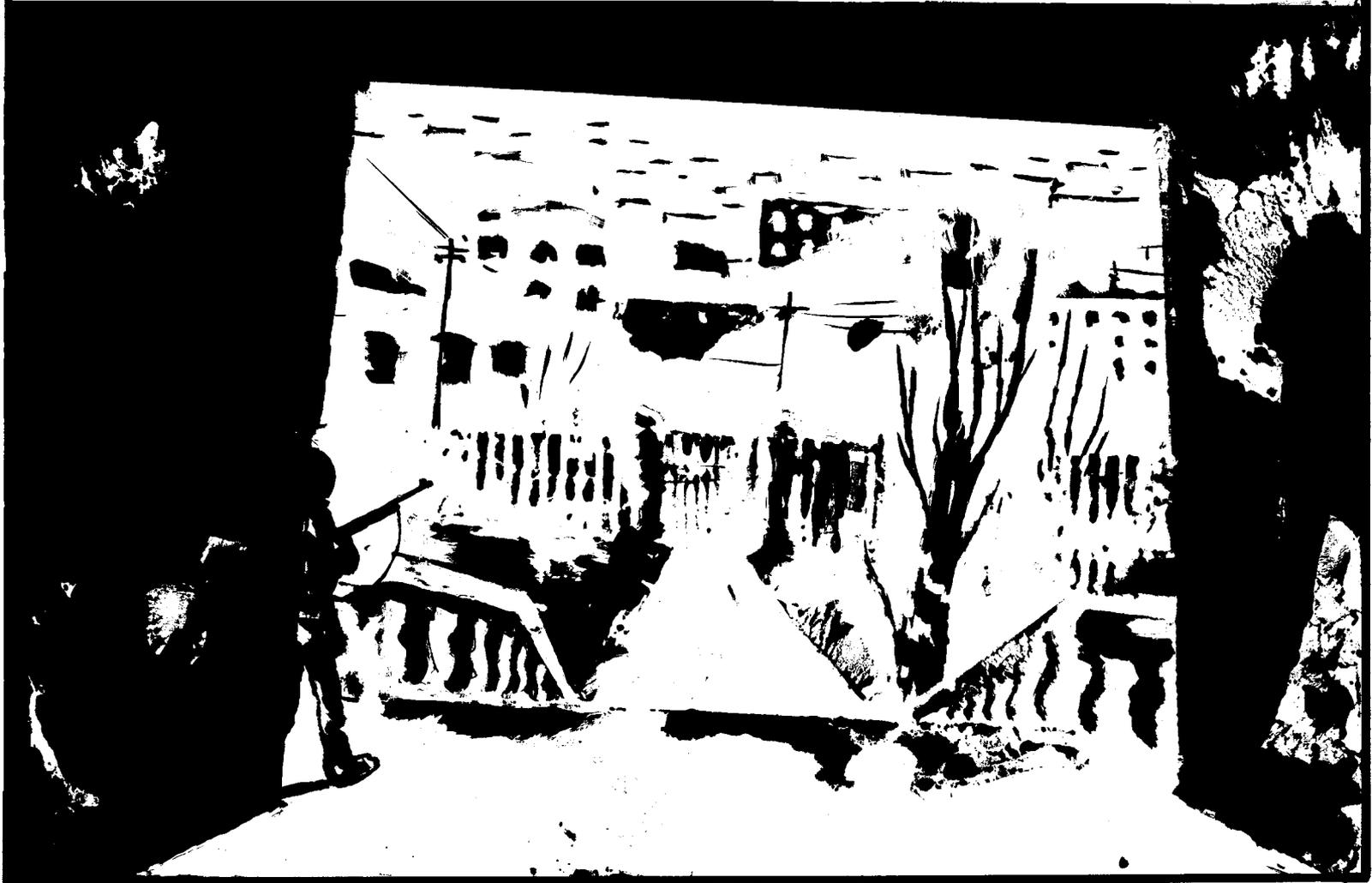
OUR HIDE-OUT USED TO BE THE SCHOOL. THE OLD CLASSROOMS WHERE ONCE THE LESSONS WERE HELD ARE NOW OUR DORMITORIES. THE COURTYARD IS WHERE WE PRACTICE OUR MOVES. THE GYMNASIUM IS NOW OUR PANTRY.



WHEN NEEDED, EVERY WINDOW CAN BECOME A LOOPHOLE FOR SHOOTING.



UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN IF WE FEEL PROTECTED WITHIN THE REFUGE,
WE HAVE TO GO OUT EVERY DAY TO LOOK FOR FOOD SUPPLIES AND OTHER THINGS WE NEED.



OUTSIDE WE PRACTICALLY HAVE NO DEFENSES, SO WE ARE FORCED TO LEAVE ALWAYS IN GROUPS, AND ONLY AFTER A CAREFUL STUDY OF THE CITY'S TOPOGRAPHY, THE SHORTEST STREETS, THE SAFEST ONES...



DOGS HAVE CAUSED OUR BIGGEST LOSSES, BUT THERE ARE ALSO STREETS FULL OF MINES,
AND WE ARE CONSTANTLY AFRAID OF BEING BURNED BY THE RAIN.



NOT TO SPEAK ABOUT THE DANGER OF MEETING ONE OF THE STRANGERS.



THERE WAS A BIG EXPLOSION IN THE OLD CITY. THEN STRANGE THINGS HAPPENED...
THE CROWS FORMED A BLACK CLOUD THAT MIXED INTO THE SMOKE, DOGS SHOUTED,
IN A SHORT TIME IT SEEMED THAT ALL THE BEASTS OF THE CITY HAD GONE CRAZY.



YOU COULD HEAR THE STRANGERS SINGING.



FOUR OF US GOT OUT FROM THE HIDEOUT
TO SEE WHAT WAS HAPPENING.



A FEW DAYS WENT BY, AND NONE OF THE COMPANIONS CAME BACK.



WE LET ANOTHER SQUAD LEAVE, FORMED BY THREE OF US AND A RIFLE.



AFTER A FEW HOURS OF WALKING WE REACH THE BRIDGE. THE STRANGERS HAD LET IT EXPLODE.





MAYBE THEY ARE
AFRAID OF US, THEY
WANT TO PROTECT
THEMSELVES FROM
OUR RAIDS.



THE NORTHWARD
BRIDGE IS STILL
STANDING. WE HEAD
TOWARDS IT. LET'S
GO THERE.

WE DON'T LIKE TO COME INTO THE OLD CITY.
YOU HAVE TO CROSS THE RIVER THAT STINKS TERRIBLY.
AND ONCE YOU ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE YOU GET THE FEELING OF BEING OBSERVED,
YOU SOMETIMES CATCH A GLIMPSE OF HUMAN FIGURES HIDING BEHIND WINDOWS OF OLD BUILDINGS
THAT WE KNOW FOR A FACT TO BE EMPTY. THE OLD CITY IS STRANGERS' TERRITORY.



ONCE WE'VE CROSSED THE BRIDGE WE HEAD INTO A BIG STREET THAT BRINGS YOU TO THE HEART OF THE CITY. OTHER STREETS ARE SHUT DOWN BY RUINS AND BARRICADES.





WHEN WE HAVE ALMOST LOST THE HOPE OF FINDING THEM, WE RUN INTO SOMETHING.T











LISTEN!

THAT
SONG AGAIN,
CAN YOU HEAR IT?
IT COMES FROM
OVER THERE.





PEOPLE HAVE LEFT THINGS IN THE CENTRE OF A SQUARE. IT LOOKS LIKE STRANGERS WERE HERE JUST A FEW HOURS AGO.



AT THE END OF THE SQUARE SOMEONE IS SINGING. IT'S FILO.



WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO SHOUT FOR HIM WHEN WE NOTICE THAT HE'S EMBRACING AN ANIMAL.



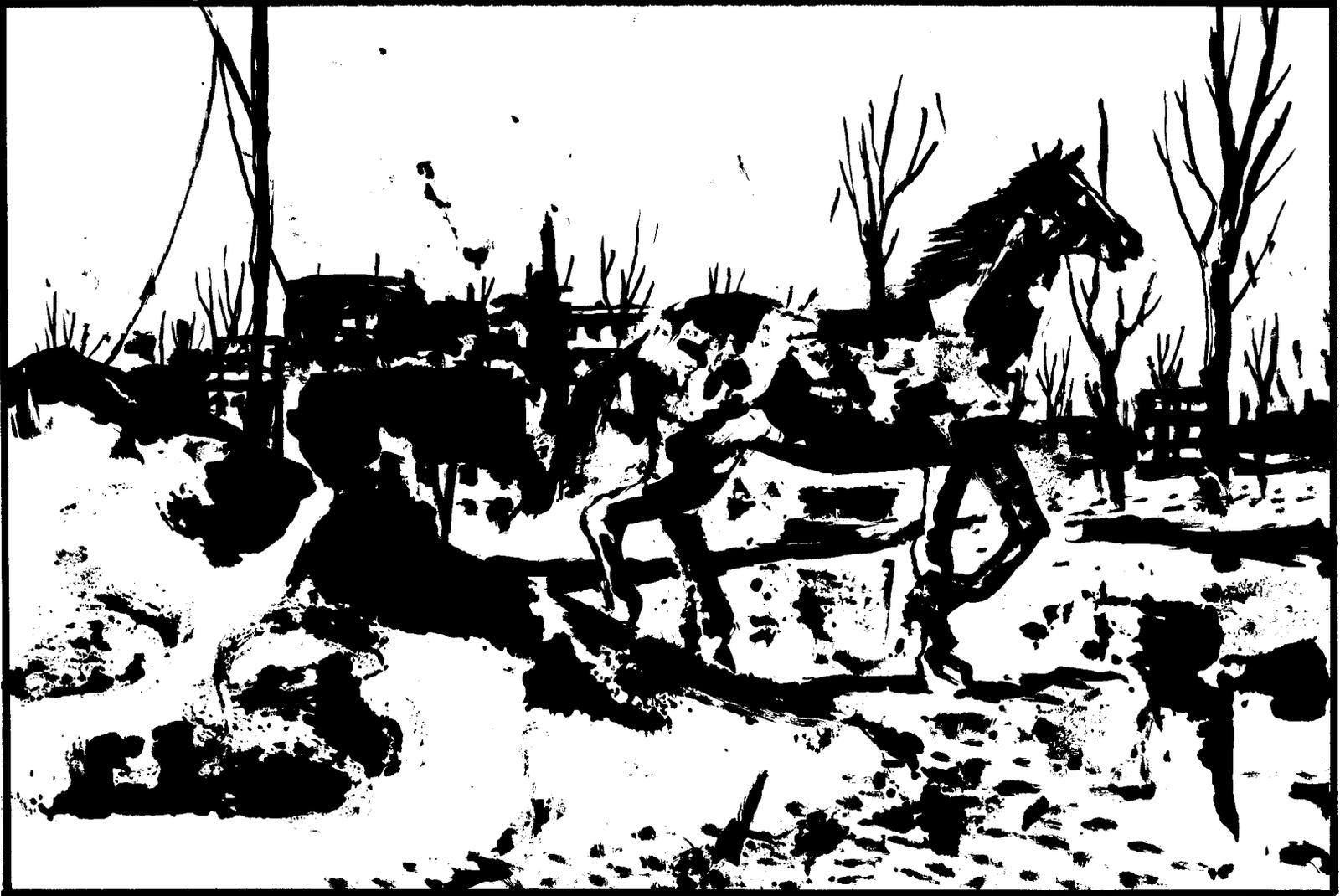
FILO SEEMS TO NOT RECOGNIZE US.
HE KEEPS ON SINGING IN A LOUDER VOICE.



HE MUST STOP. THIS WAY HE'LL ATTRACT THE
ATTENTION OF THE STRANGERS. WHAT IF THEY
HAVE NOT GONE FAR FROM HERE?



MAYBE, EVEN IF WE CAN'T SEE THEM NOW THEY'RE KEEPING US UNDER THEIR RIFLES' FIRE. THEY ARE INFALLIBLE SHOOTERS, AND THEY HAVE EXTRAORDINARIES WEAPONS.



WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT RIFLES.



BUT IT'S AMAZING TO SEE HOW, AFTER YOU
PRESSED THE TRIGGER A FEW TIMES, THERE IS
NOT REALLY MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT.



ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CLEAN THEM ONCE IN A WHILE TO MAKE THEM WORK, JUST LIKE ALL THINGS.



END

ANDREA BRUNO/04



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