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Leg, Gun, Run

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LEG, GUN, RUN

JENNIFER DEMPSEY

My leg
bloats firm
like gangrene.

Doctor:
No decay.

Rot's stench
saturates
the field,
I say.

In Pacific humidity,
bodies rot
after death.

Blood clot, he says. Group of cells
gripping leg veins. Thrombosis, he says.
Thrombosis, it's a blockage.

You young folks.

We never had
thrombosis
back then.
Just groups of
Japs

and me,
gun,
blood.

Blood.
I touched my best
man's
guts,
wound that killed

his wife.

The telegram.
Blood on my hands.
Outside coloring

mud
khaki combat
red.

Blood runs,
he says, in your hands, yes,
but it stopped running in your leg. Blocked.



I kept running.
I left
for Betty—
she should never
get that letter

We were married two years when I joined.

Pain killers,
he says. They make you sleepy.

Let me sleep,
Doc. Let me sleep
away

from death,
the morgue
down the hall.
I'm coming, I

say. Tell Molly
I'm sorry.
His guts
wouldn't
stay.
Where's Betty?
I don't want
no telegram
for her.

Words, just words.

He says
no, blood thinners will heal you.
It hurts, but it will end. Morphine, Percocet,
they help.

I scratch the tube
and tape in my wrist.
Bullet
to my thigh.

Pierce
from behind,
straight through.

Clean wound.
Blood runs
clean, they say.

Clean blood.
Your blood's not
clean, he says. Clots, a large clot
in your leg, thrombosis, pulmonary embolism.

Breathes are
shorter
now,
unimportant.

Blood clot in lungs. We'll monitor you, he says.
Breathe slow, breathe deep.

Blood will run
again, I say.

Blood will run
again.

