

The Conflagration

It was only after I had fled my own apartment that I realized the whole city was in flames. The sky was lit up with an orange haze.

One might have expected mayhem, but the streets were empty, except for an occasional figure darting here and there. The only sound was the crackling of the fire.

The buildings were still intact, but tongues of fire were already licking their way through the windows. Through the shattered stained glass of a church, I could see the congregants dancing in flames as roof timbers began falling all around them.

The city was quickly becoming an inferno. I knew I had to escape. I raced down the avenues to the outskirts of town. I came to a house not yet on fire. A man was standing outside dipping a towel into an almost empty barrel of gasoline.

“What are you doing?” I cried.

“It’s going to burn anyway,” the man said.

He took the towel and disappeared through the open door. Suddenly there was an explosion. The house burst into flames.

When I finally made it out of the city, a cold moon shone down on wide-open fields.