No War

Timothy Liu
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Amidst the rush at Lincoln-Center, I settled in, checking my shoes, then untying one as I lifted up its hot mouth to my face, trying to locate whatever odor was about if not from me then perhaps my chair refusing to give up its former occupant, the others beside me oblivious to what began derailing the afternoon, the dis-smell I could not put out of mind until I noticed the double-handled Duane Read bag bulging out with all its owner seemingly owned—crosswords torn from the Times, scavenged gloves, scarves—his body glazed with whatever might attach itself to the sides of a city dumpster—nose dripping down to mud-encrusted shoes sopped with soiled sleeves—no choice now but to move, the way a rush-hour subway car is sometimes vacant but for two slumped faceless forms who get to keep the car all to themselves, not asking, just being who they are even as we lounge on a chaise in the Belmont Room at the Opera House, having flashed our membership card to gain admission into that chandeliered salon held spellbound in a cloud of perfume just off the Grand Tier, the two of us huddled in jeans, hardly ever in jacket or tie, you having come straight from work in a sweat, shouldering your backpack with “No War” stickers plastered over it, both of us willing to stare down anyone who wonders what right we have to be here.