

# Even the Snow is Loud

## Brady Peterson

It is winter and there is snow on the ground.  
A young American GI scouts an Italian  
village, behind the advancing tanks  
and infantry, looking for a possible  
base the second tiered command  
would need as they move forward.  
He makes his solitary way  
through the ancient town, past the stone  
rubble in the street. The guns are quiet  
now, and yet the noise never really  
abates. Even the snow is loud.  
He looks inside the door of a building  
still intact, but the feel of it is wrong,  
and he moves on.

His thinking is cluttered.  
In his mind he sees the riddled  
body of a woman, once pretty  
he imagines, though death  
had drained any beauty  
from her face. A collaborator  
perhaps, someone who had slept  
with a German officer, shot and hung  
for the Americans to see. The dead  
were everywhere, but this one  
clings to him.

He touches the edge  
of an envelope in his pocket.  
An old letter read and reread,  
written by a girl he barely knew,  
a girl who had married him  
suddenly one afternoon in November  
when the urgency of a moment  
seemed to be enough.  
But now she hadn't written in weeks,  
or was it months. I haven't heard  
from you, but I know you are writing,  
he says to her in his own letter,

but he fears it isn't true. He tries  
to visualize a woman too beautiful  
to remember, too beautiful to really  
love him, and his thinking  
is cluttered with the image  
of two faces fusing into one  
as he descends the stairs  
into a basement full of German soldiers.