

# Essay on behind the bloody footsteps

[Life](#), [Death](#)



## **Behind the Bloody Footsteps**

“ After a war, people, should return to their homes, set everything right and start life again,” Eliza told herself for about the fiftieth time in the past fifty seconds. She heard a strange whispering voice and jerked her head around. Her lovely almond shaped green eyes were wide with panic and fear. Her breathing – no she was not breathing, she was holding her breath waiting to hear the voice again. Nothing, only the silence of the breeze across burnt out yards. She noticed that the yards were all flat and charred black. They looked like they were asphalt because they were so black and flat and no ash flew from them in the breeze. Slowly she let out her breath.

“ After a war, people, should return to their homes, set everything right and start life again,” she said like a wind-up toy repeating words to no one but the breeze. She hit her head with her hand that was wearing the ripped woolen glove. That was her own voice she had heard. Her own voice had scared her so much because she thought she was thinking private thoughts. But she was talking out loud like she was some kind of crazy mental case who had escaped some prison cell or a sanatorium’s locked room.

“ After a war, people, should return to their homes, set everything right and start life again.” She allowed herself to whisper the words out loud as she peeked around the hood of her jacket. There should be other people here like herself. Where were the people that lived in these houses? Where were the happy, joking people that filled the neighborhood until the day happiness was wiped off the map?

The black burnt wood at the foundations of the houses was charred. The doorways were huge black gaping holes that looked more like cave openings

instead of like doorways. But the worst, the worst of all - the windows were the worst. Eliza tripped and fell because she thought she saw some kind of wavering, white, transparent body lazily jump from a window. She laid out flat with her nose in the dirt, covering her head with her arms. Her whole body trembled. Thunder boomed over her head as grayish black clouds pushed grey globs of raindrops down on the cracked dry road. She got to her feet again. Eliza forced herself to look in all the doors and all the windows just in case someone was here, someone who was still alive.

Roofs were caving in and drooping sometimes almost to the ground. All the windows were watching her, their tattered, whispering curtains catching a bit of breeze and following her as she walked down the middle of the street. But now the rain was a thunderstorm and the ripped and burned fabric around the windows was blowing out of the houses in big gusts. Some of the pieces were billowing up above the roofs, free of the windows and the ruined houses forever. Some curtain pieces were so big. But how could they be bigger like long, long party balloons, and wide with shapes like shoulders and waistlines? She shuddered and started weeping as she ran. Finally she saw the house where she had grown up.

The house where she had spent her whole life until the soldiers came and she had to leave. She had run and run and run. She had run very, very far away. She thought nothing could be more terrifying than the wasted look on the faces of the soldiers. The strange way they shuffled their feet as if they could not move their legs; remembering that made Eliza shudder. Their legs were so strange. Something must have been wrong with their legs.

Lightening cracked next to her with a crispy, burning, loud sizzling noise.

She ran to her house even faster. She could not quit thinking of how the soldiers were not really soldiers. Every single soldier could only walk by small moves using their feet. Somehow they were able to move faster by hovering over the ground. They were android drones someone had shouted. Whatever that might mean she had no idea and she did not care. She wanted her old house and her own room again. She wanted everything the way it used to be.

The whispers at the refugee camp had been growing louder and more encouraging every day. "It is time to go back home." She heard that whispered. "There are no more soldiers." "The empire lost the war." "The people and the machines that tell the robot soldiers what to do are all DEAD, DEAD, and DEAD!" She heard all those whispers. People heard the whispers and they were happy but their faces were fallen in from lost teeth and no food so it was hard to see anything happy in their faces. The uranium depleted ammunition for the weapons the robot soldiers used made Geiger counters jump to their highest measurement levels and they made the teeth of the people fall out, too.

One week in the camp she kept hearing a faint voice getting louder and louder as the days passed. "Go home, Eliza." Go home, Eliza, where you belong." "GO home, Go HOME, GO HOME." Her head was full of the words "go home." Finally she could not bear hearing that noise in her head any longer. She had climbed the barbed wire fence around the refugee camp and snuck into the forest. The forest had been full of ghosts, but they were not really ghosts. They were just dead people's bodies strewn around like so many forgotten dolls.

She was frightened but she wanted to get home so badly she shut her brain to the dead people, the smell, and the weird positions of their corpses . . . too many dead in the forest to see them after awhile. Her house was in front of her now. She rushed into her house through the doorway. She reached for the door to close it but it did not fit any into the ruined doorframe. She shoved furniture up against the door to keep it closed. Then she fell exhausted into an armchair she had pulled into the entrance hall to help shut the door. Now she was glad for the lightening because that was the only light she had. With each new flash of lightening she crept closer towards the kitchen.

In the kitchen she found the emergency drawer with the candles and the matches. She had already decided to light all the candles she could find - even if there were hundred candles she would light every single one. She would worry about light for tomorrow night tomorrow. Her hands were shaking. Trembling she scraped the matches on the cover but the flame did not catch. After what seemed like a thousand tries she lit a candle, then another candle and another.

Eliza wanted to find something to eat but her foot bumped something soft under the kitchen table. She screamed. It was the body of their poor dead cat. The old dilapidated shoes she wore stuck to the floor like something sticky sweet had been spilled. Slowly she bent from her waist closer to the floor. The hood of her jacket got mixed up with her hair and she could not understand - what was she looking at? She stripped her jacket off and threw it in a bundle across the room. She pushed her hair out of her eyes and then she took a deep breath. She held the candle close to the floor and saw the

pattern of a child's foot shaped with blood.

Eliza gagged but she did not vomit because her stomach was empty. She stood very, very still to think what she should do now. All of a sudden she realized that maybe her little brother had found his way back to the house to hide. He must have stepped into the blood from the dead cat while he was running through the house. She used the candle to sweep over the floor to look for more footsteps made with blood. Eliza gasped and made a little screeching noise. There were more footsteps and they ran out of the kitchen. She slowly crept along the floor following the footsteps through the kitchen, then through the living room and up the stairs.

Eliza's only thought was that her toddler brother must be there hiding and soon they would be together again. She would take care of him and they would start a new life together. Fixing the house and making a garden. Eliza crept up the broken down, slanting, dangerous stair case holding the fluttering flame of the candle close to the floor so she could follow the bloody tracks. She thought about hide-and-seek games. Where were the footsteps leading? Where would her small dear brother hide?

The footsteps led into her bedroom! Eliza decided to carefully lift the pretty frilly skirt of her bedspread, because she felt sure her little brother must be there. But then the white, emancipated, wavering figure of the soldier waiting there in the corner rushed at her. The flames sputtered out as the two candles she had been holding skittered across the floor.