

Another Life

Peter J. King

At right angles to my history,
meeting it, touching at a point,
but only at that point — at the beginning,
my essence still intact.

My childhood shattered
by a pointless war that came from nowhere,
spring offensive, sending me a refugee
to who knows where, away from air-raid sirens.

What would I become?
How would I become it?

No siblings, parents, family, or friends;
language, full of different sounds
become familiar — like the songs and rhymes
in brightly coloured books,

and children's programmes
on the wireless whose mottled bakelite
is burnished, like the voices of avuncular
announcers reading stories that I'd come to love.

How would I be different?
Who would I become?

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