Anzac Cove, 1915

Ronald P. Silverio*
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-To the men of Gallipoli

I shuffle
through the man-canyons
toward the shore and see
men rest, write, reload.

Meters away
Johnny Turk lobs
us grenades and,
on holidays, gifts. We
return in kind.

I walk along
the sunken trails, trying
to reaffix my pants with
a piece of string. Pausing,
I blink sweat from
my eyes, and gaze
at the cloudy sky.

Beginning again,
I take short strides
around mates, and mounds
of debris and dirt.
Bullet shells lie scattered, brass
ants in our human hill.

Round the next corner,
Captain Barten counts
heads, and keeps track
of the missing ones.
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At his feet,
two dusty soldiers splice
together the telephone line
leading back to headquarters.
Theseus’ thread
had meant as much.

Our boys repair
the trench nearby with
sandbags. Trying to stem
the tide of dirt
bleeding onto,
bleeding into us.
A young man’s rotting
hand hangs out
of the clay, welcoming
newcomers to the front.

Approaching the beach,
I weave around crates
and cookware. Duck
under hung laundry,
and hop over sleepers.

Gazing back
at the cliffside, I
see a signaler
with his back to
the clouds, arcing
his arms like an
Icarus lost.