There are events which are so great that if a writer has participated in them his obligation is to write truly rather than assume the presumption of altering them with invention. –Hemingway.

Incredible shimmering heat and black roiling smoke like fog that reeks of shit trash and opium. Harsh unfiltered desert light and hearing the world through earplugs. Everything sounds far far away.

I feel like an astronaut walking on a needle-strewn desert planet.

The cry of babies blends with the barking of dogs over compound walls. It is non-stop.

I follow the footsteps of those in front of me. I step over a used needle only to step in human shit.

Tan yellow compounds line the dirt road and push into each other. There are small alleyways between them. There is no vegetation anywhere. This is a world of dirt and smoke and shit and death.

Afghan men, high, shuffle through their blue doorways and shut the doors behind them. Small faces peak out as doors shut and windows are shuttered.