*Please, just let me be.*

*I don’t want to fight.*

*I didn’t want this.*

Every thought came before a cut, a slice, a rush of cold as sequences activated, flickered with sparks, stole heat from air and flesh.

*I don’t want to fight you.*

Uppercut, swing, stab. He lived in the moments between, the moments when his opponent fell, before another came in, bullets flying across the vast expanse between their bodies.

*Let me be. It doesn’t have to be this way.*

He squeezed his eyes shut as another fell, the cool rush of sequenced magic calming his fluttering heart. Blood seeped through the soles of his boots as he readied another sequence, aimed the spear of cold and pain at his opponent. He squeezed his eyes shut and let go.

A cold rush. Reload, restock. Check supplies. Vials full? No. Get another. Load. Aim. Fire. Tears running down his face. Another one down. Was that his blood? No. He wished it was.

A ringing silence. He looked around.

He was surrounded by corpses, or the dying. He couldn’t tell. There was a thundering above him as a helicopter brought in more soldiers. People. The enemy. His opponents.

As he readied his sequences, vials full of phosphorous for heat and transmitters for pain, his thoughts began circling back around again. Looped like a tape.

*Please don’t make me do this.*

*I don’t want to hurt you.*