

The Air Raid Shelter

Sirens pierced the silent night and Pieter rose, half-awake, from his bed. It was a weary parade that stumbled to the shelter; a child draped in a blanket still warm with sleep, her mother too tired to be afraid. His breath hanging like crystal in the icy night, Pieter stopped. The stars seemed to beckon to him, a spray of diamonds scattered on a jeweller's tray, as if he could choose one at random as a gift. Suddenly the stars fused into airplanes, coming steadily closer, and the night's curtains were rudely ripped apart by a wave of falling bombs.

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Amanda Hurley