

From Winter's Glen
By Don Zolidis

SAM, 28, a war photographer.

(SAM has returned home to Iowa after spending years photographing horrors around the world. After dealing with his own tragedy, he meets a strange girl at a local bar and brings her home with him.)

SAM

This was early on. Back in Bosnia. Ninety-five, I think. Um... I forget where we were going to, but we were staying for the night in an old bombed-out church. No roof. The walls were crumbling down. There was a special viciousness they reserved for the churches over there. It was in the spring, but it was cold, and we were huddled in this ruin to keep out of the wind, okay? And I remember sitting there, with my back against the wall, thinking about what I had seen that day—and sometimes, you know, it's crazy, it's crazy the way these faces flash at you, how they materialize off the corpses... The thing is, the thing is, I was sitting there, and it began to snow on me. Right out of these orange and brutal clouds comes this snow. And it's coming in huge snowflakes too, like the kind we've got here; it was the same snow from childhood, and it had been transported to this place, it had come here, and I... And all of a sudden it was so quiet, so I got up, and I climbed the wall to get a better look at the snow, and I saw it falling on the craters and the churned up mud, settling over the land like a sleep, like peace...

(he stops)

And I heard a noise. So I turned my head to the side—and there, where part of the roof was still intact, was a ledge that was sheltered. And all over this ledge... were birds' nests. It was filled with birds' nests. No birds at all, but they were waiting, for spring. And the thought occurred to me: The birds are making homes out of our tragedies. And it seemed so perfect to me, that the birds would do this, that it somehow gave order to the whole world. And I looked out at the craters, and I knew that someday the birds would make homes there too. That all of us, you know, all of our struggle, is slowly transformed into cradles for the future. And right then... I saw God in that. That was the first time God ever made sense to me. So before I left the next day, I took a picture of it.