

Theories of Non-Violence

A frightened rabbit kicks its hind legs so hard that it can break its own back. Someone thought to record that pain on tape. Someone said *Shelve this under non-violent tactics*. Just a line item, buried in daily reports from the siege: after blasting Ozzy Osbourne and dentist drills, before using flash bombs and gunfire, they played *Rabbit death scream*. *Repeat loop*. Officers wrote the wail was like a teakettle's whistle, but endless. My father, in uniform, used to speak of war in terms of the sword and the scalpel. *Scalpel*, meaning we kill only who we meant to kill. Meaning, *clean*. Meaning, *better*. *Sword*, meaning we kill anyone who gets in the way. Even now, watching news of each new explosion, I wait to see if our flag flashes onto the screen. If not there's that tiny, cool blink. *Well then*. An old lover calls to tell me they finally made him a doctor. *First do no harm*, they made him swear. Then they said *To save that man, you'll need a sharper knife*.