

# Invisible Wars

There are no memorials for the lost. The casualties will not be given a granite wall with their names etched in stone. No solemn ceremonies will be held for the prisoners of war locked behind bars, made of cold steel and the invisible bands within society that imprison their voices. But they fight on, even if these fights rage beneath the skin of this nation. They are branded the virus, and we are thoroughly drugged so we can be numbed to their pain.

Too often, stories that are the most important to reveal remain the most invisible. Popular media outlets turn their backs on the complex, tangled narratives of those suffering from this war in favor of something easier, more tame. An invisible war isn't just the struggle to survive the bullets and bombshells being fired, but the struggle to be heard. Since taking a political stance that's against the mainstream is controversial, since swimming against the tide is exhausting, these voices are often the first to be washed away. Or if not, pushed aside and painted in such a way as to disarm those fighting for their lives.

For our closing section of *Intertext*, we wish to shed light on this pain—this fight. The authors selected have used their writing to strip away the bars, both metaphorical and literal, that have shut off their voices. We were surprised and delighted by their vision, clarity in voice, and determination to be heard and understood. We want these voices to have a space of visibility, so their stories could be a site of growth, renewal, and understanding.

—André Douglas, Tevion Johnson,  
Johnathan McClintick, Jessica  
Palomo, and Amber Watson

