Who ever could make war if they saw it through children’s eyes?

BY ROGER PULVERS

The many years of war seem for many long years as scar tissue in the minds of children deeply traumatized by it. And yet, there are not many works of fiction or non-fiction that have conveyed the carnage and past-felt suffering of children.

In Japan, perhaps Akiyuki Nosaka’s 1967 novel, “Grave of Fireflies,” the heartrending story about a boy and his little sister caught up in the U.S. firebombing of Tokyo, is the best. And yet, there are not many works of fiction or non-fiction that have conveyed the carnage and past-felt suffering of children.

I came away from Hando’s honest and moving account of war as seen through the eyes of a teenage victim with an overpowering sense of revulsion for the men and women who started wars, whatever the cause. The depictions of war in his memoir show that there certainly were sensitive adults who considered Japan’s war effort cruel and foolhardy.

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Page 1