

A Mother's loving touch. by Helen Tracy

*Gunfire, explosions and deafening noise;
trembling earth and trembling fingers of youth.
His eyes looked into the enemy's eyes -
as young, wide and terrified as his own.
Two boys with guns, taught and ready to kill
though each one is unknown to the other.*

*The shot was silent, slick and on its mark;
he slipped on mud and felt no pain as yet.
Hearing echoes, screams of dead and dying -
how could he know they came from his young self?*

*Ragged uniform matching ragged breath,
tearing in his throat and of little use.
Delirious now, he thought of his home:
of the father he'd never see again -
to tell him how he tried to be a man;
how he tried to feel proud to be dying
for his king, his country and for his flag.
Yet through the endless, agonizing pain
he most wanted his mother's loving touch,
the way she did when he was just a boy,
yesterday.*

*Far from blood-soaked lands, where death is hanging
in the air like the salt tears of grieving,
His heart-broken mother has heard the news,
and in mourning curses the faceless men
who manufacture wars that steal her son,
depriving him of all his future years.*

*The guns are still, the eerie silence loud,
The roll call answered with silent replies.
And they call war 'Civil' - not barbaric.
And they call war 'Great' - yet not horrific.*

*Never again will she hear him call her;
never again hang his clothes on the line.
Her heartbeat stutters as she thinks of him:
head held high, shoulders back, and proud, so proud,
to look like a man, in new uniform.
She hears again the sound of boots on earth,
sees the now hateful glint of brass and steel.*

*He paid with his life - but she wants him back
to give to him a mother's loving touch,
the way she did when he was just a boy,
yesterday.*

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