

"Hello Mum"

by Mark Trichet

It's not what she hears that day
No. It's what she sees,
The image very nearly killed her
The neighbours say the scream was heard two blocks away
Though she can't recall hearing what was said

No. It's what she sees alright
Even to this day, she can feel the envelope
She can see the "WESTERN UNION" through the milky window
She can see the "THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS..."
What she doesn't hear, is what the Telegram Boy had to say

She still has the Telegram
Its yellow parchment a little brittle, the typed words
"HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON..." a little smudged, tears she guesses
Though she doesn't remember any tears, they came later
Along with the pain of not knowing, and the sorrow of knowing

Then almost a year to that day, it's not what she hears
But what every mother would want to see
What every mother would want to feel
And every mother would dearly love to hear
"Hello mum, I'm home..."

"One Master"

Written by: Janece Terry
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I signed a contract with the state
to use my body as they will.
My mind they did manipulate.
In the name of freedom, I would kill.

I never questioned right or wrong.
Obeyed all orders without thought.
I strove to be Army strong.
My loyalty and heart were bought.

The flag I served flew overhead.
My uniform bespoke my pride.
A true soldier born and bred,
I marched on while others died.

As time went on, before my eyes,
I saw a different point of view.
I prayed to God my soul baptize,
wash clean my sins, be born anew.

I threw down my master's glove.
I left the life of blood and sword.
My orders still come from above,
but now I serve the Lord.

"The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The Man He Killed

By Thomas Hardy

"Had he and I but met
 By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
 Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,
 And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
 And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because —
 Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
 That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
 Off-hand like — just as I —
Was out of work — had sold his traps —
 No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!
 You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
 Or help to half-a-crown."