

## 52nd Tour

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(Tôi Không Hiểu ... I don't understand)

I reap the dreams of war I've sown ... plowed fields mulched dark red ...  
and nightly trod those furrowed rows, of vanquished hopes and dread ...  
within my soldier's heart toil nightmare-shadows . . .  
grim spoils strewn from battle's gallows . . .  
where warriors twine in murky roil . . . fateful plight at hand . . .

Ravening dogs glean fetid droppings ... gnawing life from those who sing . . .  
Too weak to fly, too weak to crawl, his prayer wisps away  
. . . over ... here . . .  
and a few dogs slip away.

I spy a fighting-hole blown asunder,  
sheltering the wail from man-made thunder ... and gage direction of the call  
. . . over ... here

I take up the coward's crawl, saucer eyes rake the plight of burst sandbag-mound. I  
snake a hand--plowing fingered-furrows through rancid-sand,  
and worse things I dwell not upon—  
patting cold flesh, feeling for a pulse,  
the neck of a headless man . . .

From somewhere a faint plea wings, and sighs a siren's call . . .  
someone ... come stoke life's fading flame, and cheat this unmarked grave ...  
dust too soon to be.

Last breath severs an orphaned soul . . . fears and pain grow eternally cold  
Who heeds decaying echo's rebound ... stifled eternal by hearts last beat?  
over . . . here . . .

Final utterance, distraught, faint, fading, and now the long sleep.  
Lost within the nothing ... my dreams stir anew.  
No one came for me.  
No one.

I hear the daunting imperceptible summons ... a wounded, haunting-peal ...  
lost within yesteryear's toll ... a webbed carousel without a ring to snag; gleeful  
tunes long sailed.

The battle's done ... yet battlefield's linger with sleeping snares, and  
enemy scopes sweep wounded prey's pulse.

The dark one hovers . . .  
patiently awaiting harvest of bleating souls crying for help.  
Like an old four-post bed canopy that silently lowers in the night . . .

ever closer ... cocooning-embrace . . . smothering . . .  
soul sucking from its withered prey.

Devil's padded, swirling-wakes of fog ... another over-here should do ... whispered plea so  
faint, fell to earth ... lost prayer in search of a god ...  
and he listened . . .  
the curs are feeding near by.

The dark one awaits his guiltless due ... fallen angels search out their prey...  
voice raw and silent, heart-felt if-prayers promised,  
Stabbing pain flings a wretched cry ... naked soul laid bare ...  
shadow of ignoble death descending . . . Gaping-maw fangs aglare ...

Hot breath upon his throat.....color long-fled from his face.

Lord of Evil smiled ... another soul undone.  
Darkness drew his finger through blanket's veil ... fog-curdled trail begun. Enemy rifles  
swiveled toward the plea ... and the dogs sniffed quietly along.  
Raven lurked in ruined tree's charred branches . . . cloaked in darkest haze  
Wings unseen take flight, seeking the mournful plea . . .  
over ... here

Search in vain I cannot find what festers raw my Id . . .  
a momentary twilight-counciousness, dare not awake . . . someone is calling . . .  
wavering sigh-echoes adrift, taunts talons eager for prey,  
over ... here

A waning cry ... a dying bray . . .  
a wounded, blood-gargle, fluttering croak . . .  
Alas, echo's the long parting breath that fades last cry of life that was, and called . . .

over . . . here . . .  
over ... here...  
over here