

Over Here, 52nd Tour

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

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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 . . . dogs, ears raised, pause to
gage direction of the strained call...
. . . *over . . . here*

I take up the coward's *wiseman-crawl*—saucer eyes raking plight of
burst sandbag-mounds. I snake my shivering creeping hands plowing
fingered-furrows through rancid-sand—
and worse things I dwell not upon—
my patting cold flesh fingers a brailing
for pulse on the neck of a headless man.

From somewhere, a faint plea wings forth and sighs a siren's call . . .
As if pleading someone, come and save me... a gentle breath to stoke
life's fading flame—cheat this lingering grave too soon to be, and
remember my whispered name.

Last breath severs an orphaned soul
fears and pain grow eternally cold
Who heeds decaying echo's rebound . . .
stifled eternal by hearts last beat and hiss,
. . . *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-
appeal . . . lost within yesteryear's toll . . . a webbed carousel without
a ring to snag; gleeful tunes of not-to-be, indifferently sailed away.

The battle's done . . . yet battlefield's danger carries with
sleeping snares, and enemy's scopes sweep wounded prey's
chest should a breath raise ever so slightly—

The dark one hovers patiently awaiting
the 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 nearby.

The dark one awaits his guiltless due . . . fallen angels search out their
prey. . . voice raw and silent, stabbing pain flings a wretched cry . . .
naked soul laid bare . . .
shadow of ignoble death descending,
gaping-maw's fangs aglare—hot breath upon his throat—
color long-fled from his face.

Lord of Evil smiles, another soul undone.
Darkness drew his finger through blanket's veil fog-curdled trail begun.
Enemy rifles swiveled toward the plea as the dogs sniffed quietly along.

Raven lurked in ruined tree's charred branches
cloaked in darkest haze, as wings unseen take flight,
seeking mournful another meek plea;
. . . over here...

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

A waning cry . . . a dying wind-waving bray and
wounded blood-gargle, and gurgling-croak . . .

Alas, echo's the long parting breath that fades last cry of life that was, and called . . .

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