

The Warrior ...

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He is a young man, this fallen warrior, newly slain.
I chance upon him as if pursuing echoes of wavering
sounds of distant battle—
terrible Armageddon of thundering hooves,
soughing to and fro in gentle winds.

He is not posed in death to battle's glory.
How still, he lays,
quiet ...
unmoving ...
though not abandoned nor discarded in fields of trampled grass.

How gently carried was he by comrades,
from the raging meandering battlefield,
placed thus upon flat stone pedestal—protected from
beasts—hidden from searching, killing, human eyes ...
yet vulnerable to flying creatures of metal or flesh,
and elements of nature that would reduce him to
dust.

Carried to this granite bed ...
granite alter ...
granite final resting place,
his arms composed across his chest
not in death, but defense ...
a weapon in his hand.

Hours have passed since comrades laid down young
Warrior and rushed back into the fractious.

His wounds, not yet mortal,
still painful,
still glisten in the sunlight.

How goes the battle? He drifts in twilight of
shimmering heat waves of waffling sight and
gleeful cries for riotous vengeance and astonished cries for mercy.

His shield arm sags to his side ...
His Sword arm dangles toward earth with open palm ...
beckoning the human touch of love past, and undiscovered
...no longer in need of weapon.

Streaks of blood have dried away ...
a shadow of life's stream that pulsed and
flowed, and now sounds a distant drumbeat.

A poncho draped o'er form and face
—shade from harsh light—
warmth from night's chill, should comrades tarry
—and to their fates they tarry still.

His soul, like a tuft of hair, waves in a whisper-breeze
and flutters a threatened flight, like the dandelion before sighing trees.

He listens ...
alarmed by growing silence.
Where fled the faded cries of victory?
Why fell quiet the murmurs of wavering
discourse and horns of muffled advance or
retreat?
Here now abides unknowing
silence, and the wind through tall
grass.

maretail clouds streak the heavens, fire-pink with last-
light, drawing released souls from battlefield's plight of
dark stained earth, newly moisten red, plowed and torn asunder.

Wispy comrades of hours past, arise without fear
and hold wide the gates for comrades ever near ...
and those too soon to will follow.

They beckon an *all-clear* to him ...
when he is ready ...
though still life-clinging he cannot release
this peaceful place of inviting slumber.

They are patient with time's certainty
... as first night of eons draws nigh.

No need of weapon for self, or last defense
... No surgeon, nurse, or friend at his side ...
Nor even guard of honor or enemy.
No tribute. No flag.

Timeless veteran casualty ...
This fallen Warrior...
Patriot of homeland...
Victor and Vanquished.
Alone, he soars...
loved ones still unknowing.

*Starlight descends, horizon to horizon...
twinkling souls across the lake.*

He is a young man, this fallen warrior ...
newly slain. If per chance you happen
upon him as if pursuing echoes of
wavering sounds of distant battle—
terrible Armageddon of thundering
hooves, souging to and fro in gentle
winds—Pause and remember him ...

As he was ...
As he is ...
As he will ever be—

The Warrior.