

# Word War

*Verses for a Wounded World*

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## **Dedication**

To Kathryn and the children, for whom I fight life's war of words.



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## Where War Is

There's a place where nothing matters  
But the will to fight and live.  
Where flags, ideals, and duty's honor quickly disappear.  
Desire for life crowds out all else,  
Time narrows down to now.  
The world fades fast away as you face down your fear.

To kill or die, your only choice,  
It's the enemy or you.  
No time to contemplate the why of bitter war.  
The chill of death is chasing you.  
Swift action is your grasp on hope.  
A moment's pause, and you will live no more.

The enemy faces are all alike,  
Their eyes reflect your own.  
Their life, your life, it's all the same where war is.  
Blood's blood, no matter whose,  
No matter what the cause.  
In war your will to live is just the same as his.

So, fight you will the best you can  
Until the war is won.  
You kill your unknown foreign foe as you've been told.  
There is no rest nor reason,  
Just the enemy and you,  
Alone with no tomorrow to be hoped for or to hold.



Tomorrow doesn't matter there,  
This moment's all there is.  
To see another sunrise means you must survive today.  
Where's the next one you must kill  
To stop his killing you,  
Behind that tree, beneath that porch, invisible deadly prey?

It's nothing new, this place of death.  
It's been used for many years  
By men who play with human lives like toys.  
They call us by their bugle calls  
To fight and die for them,  
Far off where they can't see or hear the noise

Of gurgling throats filled full with blood,  
Of grown men weeping in the dark,  
Of cries for mercy, mangled legs, of eyes that see no more.  
The carcass stench in our filthy trench,  
Blood-soaked bodies mired in mud,  
Unanswered prayers, lost hope, and horrid senseless gore.



We know the place too well, we do.  
We die there every single day,  
Because our governments' can't agree, we die because we must.  
We die so you can live in peace,  
We band of brothers joined in death,  
Forever together, eternity bound, and tied by a sacred trust.





## **Standing Ready**

The battle outside is raging,  
Warfare blind people are waging  
To conquer some thought,  
That we know they cannot,  
So we wait,  
And we watch,  
And stand ready!



## Farewell

Cradle your head on my wounded arm,  
And keep quiet. The enemy's near.  
We're safe for now. I'll stay with you, friend,  
Till the Signalman says, "All clear!"

My arm? It's ok. Don't worry 'bout me.  
I've been wounded before, as you know.  
'Tis nothing. A scratch. How you doin'? Much pain?  
Your bleeding is starting to slow.

Don't you worry 'bout Sue, she's got Maggie and Mom.  
Is there something you want me to say?  
I'll tell 'em. Be sure. As soon as I'm home,  
If I live through the fighting today.

I can almost just see where the other boys are,  
In their foxholes just over that hill.  
I would carry you over my shoulder, old friend,  
But, the enemy's watching us, still.

Your bleeding has stopped, and that's a good thing.  
But we're pinned down, and I'm feeling weak.  
They shot us all up. They shot us up good.  
Hold on, buddy. Don't try to speak.



Lie still. I think I hear footsteps!  
They're searching for us in those trees.  
There's a dozen or more, and they're closing in fast.  
Here they come now, so keep silent, please.

It's been a long battle, this battle of ours.  
We fought hard for the red, white, and blue.  
But, this battle is lost. The enemy's won,  
Though our purpose was noble and true.

A moment more, and we'll both be gone  
To a much safer place than here,  
A heaven where warriors will battle no more,  
With no orders, no pain, and no fear.

Cradle your head on my wounded arm,  
And keep quiet. Our victory's near.  
You're safe with me now. I'll stay with you, friend,  
Till the Signalmans say, "All clear!"



## **The Falcon**

The falcon sat calmly, no reason for life,  
My nemesis question, with eyes like a knife,  
He sat on his platform, unsupported and seemed  
Captive only of the moment, guardian only of his dreams.

Outnumbered, surrounded, while cannon explode,  
Trumpets raged rampant, and the dust from the road  
Sifted soft through the window, a visage of doom,  
But the battle of meaning, was here in this room.

Outnumbered, surrounded, we waited the night,  
Till stars of the morning, gave way to the light,  
Blood red, a warning! But, then came the blue  
As I looked around me, and saw only you.

Outnumbered, surrounded, by all we could see,  
I sat with the falcon, who never saw me,  
For I'm but an image, somewhere in your eye,  
I'm just another falcon, and you another I.





## At Dawn's Gray Fog

Dear friends in the field,  
At dawn's gray fog,  
Awaiting day and battle,  
Permit me to remember you  
And sing your dying songs.

The night is fading into day.  
Soon the enemies' guns  
Will sicken you  
With death,

While I rest in the quiet of my room  
And write of the peace  
Your pains purchase  
For me.

Let me sing your songs well,  
As you go, brave friends  
To your battle and the call.

Make your mark.  
Find your destiny.  
This, your dying love,  
Is Love indeed!

For, love that loves  
Is love that gives  
The final measure  
And forgives.



## **Melrose Goodman**

In an unmarked grave on the side of a hill  
Lie the bones of a man with the truth.  
Melrose Goodman,  
Too early retired,  
And beside him his sweet wife Ruth.

Melrose was faithful as faithful can be.  
He fought with the Texas Brigade.  
Tall, handsome, he fought  
For the cause of the South,  
With his long rifle, handgun, and blade.

They charged across two miles of wide open field,  
'Gainst a rain of cannon ball hell.  
Of five-thousand men,  
Three hundred survived,  
Where young Melrose Goodman fell.

A sergeant went later to give his report  
How the men in that mission had tried.  
Sweet Ruth heard the news  
In a torrent of tears.  
Two weeks later the poor woman died.



The war was lost, of that we are sure.  
And there's no way we'll ever regain,  
The cost of the blood,  
And the tears that were shed,  
Or the souls of strong men who were slain.

But, Melrose knows. He's asleep by his wife,  
And the two of them know the truth.  
War cannot right,  
The lives that were lost,  
To brave Mel and his sweet wife Ruth.



## Where Then?

We're only a few of the many,  
Who fought to make peace and failed.  
We made peace with each other,  
But not with them,  
Within whom blind hatred prevailed.

There is a time that time will tell  
When life has tolled its toll,  
When all that is  
Is all wrapped up  
In the heart of a warrior's soul.

Where will you and they be then?  
Will your songs be with sorrow or mirth?  
Where are you now,  
When you're oh so near  
'Neath your own six feet of cold earth?

The time will come when God will call  
An end to the cries warriors sing  
In this star-spangled world  
Of make-believe,  
Where the goal is some gilded ring

For others to wear in their cozy homes  
Made from factory workers' sweat  
And the blood of us soldiers  
Who die for them  
And the gold that helps them forget.





We're just a few of the many,  
Not those who survived battles' hell.  
We fought for your peace,  
'Twas the thing good men do,  
And we did it (we did) very well.

Now we lie here together us few in our sleep,  
Aware that the call will come soon,  
When we'll stand once again  
To a new bugle call,  
And sing a much happier tune.

Wedded to Christ forever at last,  
Souls saved for glory, and then,  
We will stand strong and fast  
'Till that last trumpet blast,  
Brothers in arms to the end.



## After the Rain

Many's the heart that's sad and blue,  
Why must our soldiers be slain,  
Leaving us waiting for their return,  
After the rain.

God will make good, that's what they say,  
Washing away the pain.  
But what kind of memory can bring back our joy,  
After the rain?

Let God be God, my friends say to me,  
Someday you'll see it plain.  
Sunshine dispels the sorrows of life,  
After the rain.

But, slaughtered by bullets of lies they were,  
Murdered for governments' gain,  
Death stole their future that never comes back  
After the rain.

Many's the heart that's breaking now,  
Millions who share our pain,  
Praying for soldiers' safe return  
After the rain.



Days tick our moments to bitter dust,  
Time we can never contain,  
All will be better someday, they say,  
After the rain.

Maybe tomorrow will bring new life,  
Breaking war's horrible chain.  
Maybe tomorrow will dry our tears,  
After the rain.



## One Man Said

One man said to another man's dad,  
"There's something you ought to know.  
Johnny's talkin' back to the town hall clerk,  
And he's fixin' to start quite a row.

He was down at the Courthouse just this last week,  
Shoutin' and wavin' his arms,  
'Cause the town hall clerk said he had to pay tax  
To help Chrysler and Home Dairy Farms.

They're in bankruptcy, you know.  
National security at stake.  
So the leaders said chip in and pay,  
So the farmers and Chrysler can make

A profit for shareholders out on the ridge,  
Where the fancy rich folks win  
With steak and wine, far from mobile home life,  
And Johnny says he won't give in.

"I'll pay when hell's solid froze over."  
He said, "No!" with a stamp of his foot.  
And the town hall clerk, with a sly crooked grin,  
Made a note in his giant green book.





Poor Johnny, he just won't give in like the rest.  
He fights hard, and sometimes he wins.  
And, when he talks back in that way that he does,  
He gives his wife Jacqueline grins.

She thinks just like he does. Well, she *does* you know.  
She likes Johnny just as he is.  
They've a place out back of the diner on Tenth,  
A lean-to garage, and at least thirteen kids.



## **In God's Hand**

We're in God's Hand today,  
Cause we battled as we should,  
By our officers' orders to obey.  
We fought the best we could,  
Righting wrongs by what is good,  
Hoping war would keep the violence at bay.

Now, time has had its consequence,  
And all we did is done.  
There's eternity for recompense  
To know what love has won  
By the battles we've begun,  
And we pray all our killing makes sense.

We weren't fighting for land,  
Nor the flag or status quo,  
Or some principle rich folks think is grand.  
Breath and blood we let go,  
For Mom, Aunt Martha, Kate, and Joe.  
Safe at last in God's Eternal Hand.



## Crystal Ball

In front of every crystal ball  
(in front of and behind)  
There sits a soul who wonders at  
The very many kind  
Of folks who search this planet round  
For what they never find.

The seekers seek, the seers proclaim.  
Each one their will to please.  
The one would know, the other tell,  
What neither of them sees.  
The seer predicts for money,  
His greedy voters to appease.

Today's not all we hoped for.  
Tomorrow's still yet to be.  
There's brighter days ahead we're told,  
Unlike the history  
That marks our bloody past with pain  
And death's dark mystery.

A crystal ball they scrutinize,  
Their eyes ablaze with hope,  
The one that he'll receive his pay,  
The other (what a dope)  
Who thinks that anyone can see  
Tomorrow through their voter scope.



So politico-economists,  
With wisdom we dare not disdain,  
Give government the thoughts by which  
Our sovereign power they profane,  
While soldiers die by laws they make  
To shift their justice balance frame.

While warriors pay with blood to know  
Which way our Union's flag will swing,  
Soldiers are squandered, bleed and die,  
In fields that never will see Spring,  
While Washington chats and watches the Dow,  
Counting profits more wars can bring.

We'd like to see them tote a stone  
Or clean a loo or two.  
We'd like to see them huddled close  
When toes are turning blue,  
When there's no kitchen filled with food,  
No shelter, bread, or stew.

It makes no sense for us to die  
(it's not our fault, the debt),  
Yet pay we pay, and pay some more,  
When all we give cannot abet  
The promises they promise,  
With our blood, our tears, our sweat.





They claim to know the future  
Of our homes, our jobs, our trade.  
We've trusted them thus far, at least,  
(in spite of the mess they've made).  
I wonder if they really know,  
Or if they're over-paid.

They promise brighter days ahead  
To put us in the pink  
By laws they write and ponder  
In their politician rink,  
And all the while we're dying  
From our wounds of crimson ink.



## Cherokee Ashes

Feathers in their hair, they carried pride.  
A people filled with love and peace, until their children cried  
As stallions charged across the land, beneath their Indian sky,  
To rob them of their riverbanks. Some Indians had to die. ... Cherokee.

Living through their songs today, a story's told  
Of ancestors before them, so very long ago,  
'Neath the shadow of Indian yesteryears  
Lies a trail of Indian blood from soldier swords. ... Cherokee.

Sitting by an open fire, the quiet evenings go.  
With tales of times and taste of teardrops,  
The old ones' stories flow  
As their aging fires turn gray in ashes.  
They will soon be gone. ... Cherokee.

A trail through winter's hardship, toward Oklahoma land,  
Sixteen thousand at gun-point of that once noble band.  
Four thousand died in freezing snow and burning sand,  
'Cause Stonewall disobeyed the law's command. ... Cherokee.

Now spirits charge across the land, beneath God's Indian sky,  
And songs ring out from silent lips of hearts that cannot die.  
A once proud peaceful people forced to fly  
And many of them forced to die,  
To make more room for you and I. ... Cherokee.



## Fools on the Hill

There is a town where I long to go, and stay until I die.  
My friends are there, the ones who care,  
And there I would go I.

But the hard times are now.  
There are fools at the brow  
Of the hill armed with iron and steel.  
So we'll stick to our guns  
'Till there are no more guns,  
But the guns of our iron-hearted will.

We'll breach the wall and capture them all,  
And turn them out of war.  
We'll breach their wall and capture them all,  
And turn them out of war.

But, the hard times are now.  
There are fools at the brow  
Of the hill armed with iron and steel.  
So we'll stick to our guns  
'Till there are no more guns,  
But the guns of our iron-hearted will.



For the fools on the hill armed with iron and steel  
Are thicker and thicker, not thin.  
There are fools on the crest of that hill, don't you see,  
Armed with cannon and phosphor and steel.  
So we'll stick to our guns, 'till there are no more guns,  
But the guns of our iron-hearted will.

For there's hard times right now.  
There are fools at the brow  
Of that hill armed with iron and steel.  
So we'll stick to our guns  
'Till there are no more guns,  
But the guns of our iron-hearted will.





## Men Who Won't Fit In

Tell the general we'll be marching in the morning,  
If ya' see 'im, sir. If he's alive, that is.  
'Cause there's a trumpet calling morning,  
Just as sure as time will tell,  
And we'll be marchin' in the morning  
Straight to hell.

There's a way that seemeth right  
To us men 'twixt dark and light,  
And a few who follow what we know within.  
We don't answer to our wives,  
Nor to our friends, nor kith or kin.  
We just follow what we're ordered,  
'Cause our orders come from him.

Some of us have courage,  
Some of us have none,  
Some are simply muscle, skin, and bone.  
But, we do the things we're called to do,  
Believe in what he says,  
And wish we weren't so very far from home.

We'll attack the strongest forces,  
Ignore the fiercest fires of hell,  
And we'll walk the very truest second mile.  
We will give until we're spent,  
Fight until our hearts are rent,  
Just for the gen'ral's nod and for his smile.



If ya' knew him you would understand.  
He's been there with us hot as hell,  
And he told us, "Keep on fightin' 'til the end,"  
'Cause the general is for us.  
He'll go anywhere we need.  
He'll charge the hill against the stiffest foolish foe,  
And he'll make it back with most of us,  
A victor all the way,  
It's for him that we'll be marching in the morn.

It's for him, and Jim and Jeb and Joe,  
For Abraham and John.  
Tell the gen'ral we're not quittin'  
Tell the gen'ral we'll be there.  
Tell the gen'ral we'll be marchin' in the morn.

For the bells are heavy tollin' in the churchyard.  
There are women cryin' heavy in the rain.  
There's a lot of us who just ain't comin' home,  
And that's for sure,  
But, we're marchin' for the gen'ral.  
Yep! We're doin' it for him.  
We'll be marching for the gen'ral just the same.

Here's to all the boys and girls,  
At home with sodas and their curls,  
We would like to be there with you,  
We would like to hold your hand.  
We would like to sing and dance and cry and win.



But, we're marchin' in the mornin'  
An' that's all there is to that,  
'Cause the gen'ral said, "We have to,"  
And we're doin' it for him.

'Cause rules is rules, as the gen'ral taught,  
And we're trustin' our lives to him.

If we're wrong, we'll pay heavy  
In hell, that's for sure.  
For sure.

But we'll know in the end  
That we followed our friend,  
And we're marchin' in the mornin'  
Just for him.



## Arrows in the Sky

Are there arrows in the sky to show the way,  
Angelic chevrons stained with soldier's precious blood?  
Do we see the signs that call us to the battle of ideas,  
The War of Words?

Or do we leave our children to a future that's unseen,  
Hoping someone else will struggle for their peaceful fate,  
Praying some strongman will fix what's wrong  
And right our capsizing ship of state.

We work in our own way, each of us do,  
But what we've been doing or not  
Isn't working.

Broken families. Lies in Congress.  
Religious fervor wreaking terror in the name of God.  
Wolves on Wall Street.  
Where will it lead?

Christian leaders say the world must end,  
That satan's in control,  
Yet none will take the helm of state,  
Lest they lose their tax exemption.

Our nation's in a shame-full fix.  
Who'll fix the fix we're in?  
Please, someone, step up to our plate  
And hit a home run for us.





## Drop Outs

They saw clear through the cause of society's ills,  
Smelled the stench of the traps and the trappings.  
They noted there's nothing worth notice at all  
In the rompings and stompings and flappings.

They saw that our rulers weren't ruling us well,  
Were on guard against those who'd propose  
To fix what is broken by the simplified token  
Of putting a ring in their nose.

They worked in the subways and kitchens and banks,  
They bought groceries, and movies, and gas,  
They were livin' the good life, no doubt about that,  
With their drugs and their drinkin' and sass.

Their opinions, like noses, stuck out on their face,  
They dropped out and did naught but complain,  
They were kids of the 60's who knew right from wrong,  
And, from dying they knew to abstain.

So others could fight their fights for them,  
To pay for the fun back at home,  
Drop outs are drop outs, and that's how it's been,  
When soldiers who fight don't come home.



It's always the same, right or wrong, you see,  
And, it's not war to blame for our fall.  
The problem is us who let things go wrong,  
By doing nothing at all.

Words stop wars.

Ink not blood.



## Hay Bales

"They're mowin' the low forty now," Ivan said.  
It was time.  
They was strong.  
I was sick.

It was damp inside our old stone house  
Where we all lived,  
Damp, dark,  
Drab and dingy,  
Cold, sweaty walls in winter,  
Moldy all the other months.

Even summer didn't dry the damp,  
Then winter brought more rain.  
Dirt and dust filled places  
Industry would never clean,  
Nor dreams rub dry.

Our homes are stone here.  
We're not so rich as some suppose.  
We have good hay and cows.  
But, the weather is raw,  
Ugly, gray, windy, and cold.



Even the wind has a name.  
They call it Old One.

The cows don't mind.  
They wander in 'round sundown,  
No matter what.

Old Ivan and Sue set to milk them,  
Long into night they carry them buckets,  
Cleaning ladles in the light of oil lamps.

Bob died last week.  
He had no place to go.  
Threw bales last season then turned dark around the edges,  
Got weak all of a sudden.

Murielle down the road said she'd make a new potato pie  
If I'd come down for dinner next week.  
Might bring some fresh bread from Evans' bakery  
If I get paid on Friday.

Sure is hazy.  
Can't see the stars as good these days.  
Best time's midnight, I reckon,  
When all the kids is gone to sleep.





Oh, one thing more,  
Those folks in Washington are missin' the point,  
Some of 'em.  
We ain't no debutante at the governor's ball.

We're the people,  
And there's a whole bunch more of us than there is of them.

Just then the door burst open,  
"Ivan Ivanovich?  
State police!"



## Waiting Orders

All day horsemen stood along that long frozen ridge,  
Five hundred well hidden from the valley below,  
Down by the river where teepees were pitched,  
Small children playing in soft drifts of snow.

Puffs of white and strands of grey,  
Trailed up from every tent,  
But as dark stole the day, the horsemen prepared  
To ride down 'fore the long night was spent.

Sharp whistle in the dark after sundown.  
Snort of horse as riders approached from the East.  
Fire ordered down on that Indian town.  
Progress must punish the peace.

Resigned to their duty, they reined in their steeds,  
And began the long sidle down,  
Down into darkness with guns at their sides,  
Hard faces froze in one murderous frown.

Downward they sidled toward killing and death,  
Down to the valley's wide floor,  
Sudden screams, loud reports, that was all to be heard.  
It was over. Indians lived there no more.

Into the camp rode the horsemen,  
All English, all warriors, all tall.  
Death was quick, undelayed, without mercy,  
By their orders they slaughtered them all.



Killing was over by morning,  
When the sun found those Templars of right,  
Returning to camp with their vict'ry in war,  
Epaulets and shining brass buckles.  
Waiting orders.

But, deep in their hearts they carried a scar,  
Tormented in secret by what they had done.  
Men without conscience, now conscious at last,  
Lost in wonder at what death had done.

Are we better today, now those redskins are gone  
From their prairies and mountain retreats?  
Did our killing them off bring us peace?  
Or did we curse our future for future defeats?

'Cause a deed once it's done, like a nail driven in,  
Leaves a scar that requires our repair  
By changes of hearts, and new ways to be,  
Instead of just words that buffet the air.

The screams of just one child, frozen in death,  
Should shout a higher, nobler call  
To us now alive in this present troubled hour  
To do all we can do, 'till there's no killing at all.



## An Eye for an Eye

There in the ruin wrought by ignorance again,  
In the twisted wasteful wreckage of a bomber's evil scheme,  
Where democracy demands what wise men know it cannot have,  
Lies the soul of our great nation going blind to our great dream.

An eye for an eye is the story that they tell,  
I have heard, for I know where it begins.  
There are fools on the hill, who ignore the people's will,  
So it happens, and it's happened once again.

The dead were not quite finished, hadn't learned, did not yet know,  
All the wonder that their lives could one day be,  
Or the horrors we have caused in retribution,  
As our noble Rule of Law devolves to anarchy.

An eye for an eye is the war cry killers yell,  
I have heard and I know well where it begins.  
There are fools on the hill, who ignore the people's will,  
So it happens, and it's happened once again.

How can we show them they must love us all or none,  
Not just our children here at home, but also over there?  
'Cause love for self alone ain't truly love at all,  
And a world at peace requires much more than prayer.





An eye for an eye is the madness mongers yell,  
I have heard, and I know where it begins.  
There are fools on the hill, who ignore the people's will,  
So it happens, and it's happened once again.

When will we show them that we mean what we demand,  
That we don't intend to let the balance swing,  
That it must stop where law treats equally each one,  
So the bells of global liberty may someday ring?

An eye for an eye is the gospel that they sell,  
I have heard. Yes, I know where it begins.  
There are fools on the hill, who ignore the people's will,  
So it happens, and it's happened once again.

When will we walk as equals, side by side,  
Take from none to give to others, as we do?  
When will our nation see the nation it can be,  
With stripes of red surrendered to those stars within the blue?

An eye for an eye is the chant that leads to hell,  
I have heard, for I have been where it begins.  
There are fools on the hill. They ignore the people's will.  
So it happens, and it's happened once again.



When will we use peace to put an end to terror?  
Fight with words instead of bombs and guns and blood?  
When statesmen praise high principle and teach the Rule of Law,  
Instead of pandering to partisans and slinging ugly mud.

Who will cure the sickness that is killing us within?  
The disease that only fairness and equality can cure?  
When will the worldwide factions finally agree  
That only by her blindfold is Justice ever pure?

Why, then, does it happen, the horrors of war?  
Why are the innocent killed?  
Why are the terrors of hatred unleashed  
And the voice of dissent harshly stilled?

Where is the answer to stop all this pain?  
Where the shelter to which we can run?  
Where the Truth that was told on that Fourth of July,  
One for all, all are equal ... all One?

An eye for an eye is the stench that I smell,  
I have heard. Oh, yes, I know where it begins.  
Those fools on the hill still ignore the people's will,  
So it happens, and it's happened once again.



Long ago the doors were closed at Independence Hall in June.  
They fought with ink, those men who sought to set us free.  
Wise men locked together in that crowded summer room,  
They locked horns with words our leaders now refuse to see.

On that day when global peace first raised her golden head,  
We were told the Truth we desperately need today,  
That every nation should be independent, free to choose,  
How to live, how to believe, and even how to pray.

We need to tell the world this Truth,  
The light of law, the hope of peace, our guiding star.  
We need to tell our leaders, "Make things right for every child!  
Regardless of their gender, skin, or the other things they are."

Make our government obey this Truth  
Ring out the old. Ring in the new.  
Down with red. Up with blue.  
Begin at once. Begin with you.

An eye for an eye is the rule we must dispel  
From the hearts of hate filled men where it begins.  
Only mercy can bring peace, heal the world with God's goodwill,  
And fix our hearts so bombs need never strike again.



## Where is the Balance?

Where is the balance, my stout-hearted friends,  
Wherein weighs darkness and light?  
Where hang the ponderous decisions of life?  
And who will decide,  
And how?

Where is the truth our teachers said would win,  
When war and lies are banned?  
How long must we wait  
Till our leaders get it straight,  
And joy rings all over our land?

Where is the balance?  
Who holds the string?  
What are we learning from them?  
Are they wise? Are they true?  
Are they really for you?  
Or is love by their law now condemned?

When will we see Justice for me  
And for you and for them and for we?  
When will the balance be clearly revealed,  
And the lies sent to hell  
And our families healed  
From this death of our leaders' big deals?





When will we demand  
What can only be ours  
When we stand up and fight  
For the things that are right  
And demand that the balance be free?

The haters don't hate us for nothing.  
A better way to live is what they see.  
So they slaughter innocence with violence,  
While we return fire from land, air, and sea,

As if our response by military might  
Could change their determined minds,  
While all the while we ignore why they hate us,  
Thinking ourselves better, we make ourselves blind.



## Young Tartan

Fair bonnie Billie lies a-dyin' in the field,  
In the grass where so many were slain,  
Felled by a foe who would not yield.  
Dinna' let him die in vain.

Oh what an hour, what an hour indeed,  
With the shouts of that Tartan yell,  
For the time had come for that honored breed  
To cast their foe to hell.

They wished for peace, no ill at heart  
To kill the men they felled,  
They only sought to hold their ground,  
So, they stood, and they fought, and they held.

They did not cross the River Tweed,  
To invade where they didna' belong.  
But, the enemy came, so they stood fast as one,  
Made bold by their bagpipes' song.

They took not their battle to conquer a foe,  
They fought for their own Scottish sod,  
They waited, strong men, with pickaxe and pike,  
And they put all their trust in God.



Six hundred resisted some three thousand strong,  
And hundreds of enemy fell,  
Just a few dozen Scots gave their lives that day,  
And, young Billy Campbell as well.

He died for a cause that was noble and good,  
For a home and a wife and his land.  
His blood paid the price to let others enjoy  
The dream wee Billy Campbell had planned.



## Rulebook

Once there was a pleasant man, good to the core.  
He was one of the honest sort.  
He was kind. He was bright.  
Always stood for what's right,  
'Til death cut his happiness short.

They called him to fight in their make-believe war,  
For a cause that was flimsy at best.  
So he died in their fray,  
And they found him one day  
Clutching something close to his chest.

It was just an old book,  
Smearred with mud and bloody clay,  
And there in his grip  
The blue velvet strip,  
And a verse I remember today.

“Be of good courage, he will strengthen your heart,  
All you who hope in the Lord.”  
And there lay my friend,  
Still, muddy, and dead,  
And beside him a rusting steel sword.





'Tis not to the swift come the blessings,  
Nor to those who seek riches and gain.  
The blessings God saves  
For the men in their graves,  
Who give without counting the pain.

The Book holds a secret not many men find,  
'Bout a Mystery strange and sublime,  
Of the Spirit of Love,  
Who comes down from above,  
To bring peace in our battle with time.

With courage that Spirit will strengthen  
The daring who fight for what's right,  
Who live without guile,  
And look for a Smile,  
Through the tunnel that leads to the Light.

We share peace together, that's one thing for sure,  
Because of soldiers who never say, "Never."  
We're blessed by their war.  
That's just how things are  
For us on this side of forever.



## If You Let 'Em

To hell with them, those liars,  
They'll trap you by and by,  
Clip you on the chin  
Smirk through their grin,  
"It was somebody else, not I."  
If you let 'em.

Or, just as often, they'll try to say  
(If you let them, that is, they will.)  
That it's you causin' trouble.  
"You need to be fixed.  
See a doctor. Read a book. Take a pill."

Or, as often as not, they'll advise you,  
"See here, you're out of control.  
You simply aren't right.  
Let us show you the way.  
Take a label. Take a number. Give us sway

In *your* life, this *one* life that's yours, just for you.  
Don't look. Don't doubt.  
We've your best interest at heart.  
We are true. Just relax.  
Be like us. And remember!  
If you don't bless the bell curve,  
The bell curve won't bless you!"



## The Sapphire Ship

I saw a ship of sapphire stone,  
Carved by a fiery knife,  
And the sapphire ship was sailing,  
On the crystal sea of life.

Far, far beyond where time begins,  
Where truth is all there is,  
The sapphire ship sailed on and on,  
On toward the final abyss.

And I, alone, stood book in hand,  
My pen allowed no rest,  
For so long as I wrote, and so long alone,  
The stormy seas she'd breast,  
With the bow of an eagle's beak she sailed,  
And tall spars for the eagle's nest.

She rode the waves as handsomely  
As any an admiral's gig,  
And the stars were bright,  
And the endless night,  
Was touched by a moon so big  
That all the night was brightness for her joy.

"You will learn what is," came a voice from above,  
And I all electric within,  
Transfixed by a moment impossible,  
I saw what I cannot say.



## Ma? Is That You?

It's cold here, Ma, in the dead of the night,  
Then burnin' hot during the day.  
They shot off my legs this morning, Ma,  
And they're comin' to take me away.

It's not so bad, when you think of it, Ma.  
They got legs they can sew back on.  
It's not that I mind all that much, Ma,  
But, my girl Suzy will hate that they're gone.

They're shippin' me home, Ma, and that's a good thing.  
They say that the fighting is done.  
Not sure why we came here to start with,  
But, soon you'll be seein' your son.

You'll be proud, Ma, they gave me a medal.  
It's all shiny and makes me real proud.  
Tell the family don't fuss when I get there,  
You know how I hate a big crowd.

There's a lot of us came here, ya' know,  
And lots of us ain't comin' home.  
But, I'll see you on Tuesday, if all goes well.  
Tell Suzy which funeral home.





## Just to Show

I just heard today that it's money makes America go.  
He was speaking to a microphone my tax dollars bought.  
He was sharp.  
He was neat.  
He was clean.  
And he harped on how much we need finance reform,  
So finance can run his machine.

I thought of the big granite building,  
His necktie, his tie clasp, and pin.  
And the builders' squares and compasses,  
And the special place he was standing in.

And I wondered,  
"Who's he?"  
Has he ever seen a cornfield?  
Has he ever milked a cow?  
Has he ever swung a hammer?  
And, what is he saying now?

"Finance is the bedrock of democracy."  
It came across something like that,  
As if money were all worth counting,  
And the rest of us slaves  
To the state that we're in.



I thought of the workers who laid all that rock  
For the dome high above him that day,  
And the walls that hemmed him in.  
And I wondered if he ever worked a day in his life  
For a sawbuck, a C-note, or fin.  
I wondered if he'd ever been down on his luck  
In a pinch,  
In a bind,  
In a pen.

And I thought of the miners down deep in the ground.  
What would those fellows think about him.

I just heard it today,  
I did hear it, you know.  
My ears don't deceive me that often.  
This politician said  
That money runs the show,  
And his hard line was not gonna soften.

He wanted reform,  
No more post-30's minds  
Keeping money from making more money.  
Oh, no!  
Let the financiers run the show.  
Make believe they surely know  
All that anyone needs to know.  
And, don't ever say, "No."



Just be stupid, he told me.  
Don't think.  
Don't ask questions.  
Just go with the flow.  
Let us run things.  
You'll like it.  
Let money run the show.

Well, just to show I know the show,  
Consider this, I offer,  
Where would Warbucks get his dough  
If it weren't for the warriors  
And men who swing big hammers  
And carry saws in wooden boxes?

Where would money be  
But for the working man who makes it  
With his hammers and nails  
And saws in wooden boxes  
And rifles and grenades  
And a willing heart?



## Can Justice Lose Her head?

Can Justice lose her head  
And keep on posing in the dread  
Of force against whose edict  
None can stand opposed?

Can Justice lose her head  
And founder in a frozen North Atlantic storm  
When all the world was certain she was safe  
In Southampton?

Can Justice lose her head  
And know not what she was  
Before she lost it?  
While children weep for fathers,  
And women weep alone.

Can Justice lose her head,  
Lose sight of what she is required to be,  
As if any of us have the slightest chance  
Of holding fast to this here planet?

Can such things happen?  
Nay, friends,  
'Tis justice with the little "j" we fear  
And for whose wild extremities  
We keep our souls  
In good repair.





## **Today, Friend. Today!**

In the children's eyes  
Shines the hope of tomorrows  
And dreams of today.

In children's laughter  
Sings the song of all ages  
And joy for this day.

In a small child's wish  
Lives the rapture of hope  
And our purpose for today.

In a little child's, "Thank you."  
Lie all blessings worth labor  
And our comfort for this day.

In a tiny baby's smile  
All wonder of life is known  
And peace for this day.

In a frightened child's terror  
The demand for human love  
Cries loudly today.



In the children's world  
Truth begs us fight for peace  
Today, friend, today.

So, let us work with words and ink,  
Be done with war and the crimson pink.  
And use our selfish heads to think!

Peace demands wisdom not war.



## Intrepid Wings

Intrepid wings fly on.  
Fly on against the hateful night.  
Fly farther toward the void unknown,  
And mark your way  
    With gladness shared,  
    With glorying in song.  
Shed joy where sorrow  
    Weeps alone.  
And by your voice,  
    And by your voyage,  
    Take us all along,  
Until your flight is finished, flown ...

And then against the rule of death itself,  
Fly on  
And be.

Fly on intrepid wings.  
Fly on.  
Fly on and set us free!



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## **The Time Will Come**

The time will come, that's what they say,  
When Earth will sing in Peace,  
When children laugh, and mothers smile,  
And this old age of war will cease.

They tell us death can stop ideas,  
That killing makes men think.  
It makes them dead, at least that's sure,  
And saves a ton of ink.

But, billions still believe in God  
Not like we do, you see?  
Our way of life they fear and hate,  
And death will never make them agree.

It's all been tried ten thousand times,  
Stamp out ideas with war.  
It works with nations overthrown,  
But now there's something more.





Ideas without borders is what we face and fear,  
Religion abused and insane,  
A belief that God's will is to kill for a cause,  
And by killing God's glory obtain.

“When romance is driven out of their souls,”  
As Dickens wrote in his Hard Times review,  
“Reality will take a wolfish turn,  
And make an end of you.”

Only words can change ideas.  
Not gunpowder, bombs, or knives.

Ink must be spilled.  
More ink ... not blood.

Think ink!

More ink!

Save lives!



## Did You See?

Did you see your enemy down below,  
Standing next to that red-haired boy?  
Did you throw the switch so the bombs would let go  
From the drone you were told to deploy?

There was no way to grab them back up.  
They fell just as straight as you steered.  
A flash of hot flames and a mountain of smoke,  
And the village below disappeared.

Lucky you on a ship floating miles away,  
With your hand on a stick you call joy.  
Just a video game from where you sat.  
Just forever for that little boy.

Just a moment in time that ticked away lives  
On the counting board of somebody's toy.  
Just a day in the life of a world still afraid  
Of ideas no bomb can destroy.

The children are children, no matter their creed.  
Loved by moms and their dads, just like here.  
Perhaps if we tried to know how they think,  
There'd be far less for our leaders to fear.

A silent aluminum bird, unheard above in the sky,  
Drops a bomb on their town, and their little ones die.  
Do you think you'd feel different, young man far away,  
If that red-headed boy was your own little guy?



## To America's Strength

To all brave souls beneath the deep  
And those who in the earth now sleep.  
To soldiers, sailors, every one  
To whom our God will say, "Well done!"  
We owe our liberty and our lives,  
And pray God speed you home.

*On the Cenotaph Monument honoring the 6,700  
American Merchant Marine Volunteers  
who lost their lives in World War II.*

*Placed 22 May 1995 on the 50th anniversary of  
The Maritime Service Training Center,  
Bayboro Harbor, St.Petersburg, Florida*



## God's Love in Each Other

As wiser men wrote, "There is nothing to fear,  
But the fear that drives reason to hiding."  
With a single heart we can hear them say,  
"Stop the wars. Live in peace with love abiding."

Differences threaten no man who has heart  
And wisdom to know we're all odd in our way.  
"As a man believes, so he is," we are told,  
And only convictions can turn him astray.

If I believe red, while you believe blue,  
Can I convince you of error by force of my will?  
If truly, truly you believe something now,  
Then tomorrow you'll surely believe the same still.

I know God is Truth, Reality that IS,  
Many names, different doctrines, mystic tales  
Told by arrogance claiming to know more than we  
Why flying birds have feathers and swimming fish have scales.

The Sikhs see God in everything. The Hindus do the same.  
The Muslims' God is everywhere, just as the Jews proclaim.  
We all love tiny children, home's comfort and a winning smile.  
There's this and so much more we all agree to see the same!

If God is all that ever is, no matter what we each believe,  
The giver of light, of love, and life,  
Then peace may soon be ours as we see  
God's love in each other, forever done with strife.





## The Temple Within

The porch of Solomon's Temple  
Was upheld by pillars two.  
Boaz for strength and the courage  
To fight for eternity's truth.  
Jachin, God's will and wisdom  
To make things just as they are.  
Together a symbol forever to guide  
The path of this world's troubled youth.

Those columns are taught behind tylers' doors,  
To men who yearn to unite  
To an order of which they're completely unsure  
With a pledge that they make in the night.  
And, though Solomon was a truly wise man,  
Of that we have all been told,  
But a wiser came later to die on a Cross,  
A new symbol of peace to replace the old.

For He who is Life can never die,  
Nor break the Law that He is,  
Nor change the Truth that's always true,  
Nor abandon those who are His.  
And you who are mangled by death for a cause,  
Who charge in great numbers to die all alone,  
'Tis Love Who calls you out to die,  
And Love will take you home.



## **Epilogue**

My thanks to all who made this little book possible, the inspiration, images, publishers, and you who will share it with others.

Words win wars, not destruction or death.

After battles leave sorrow in their wake, it is always by words that hostilities cease so peace can resume.

Words make and keep the peace ... not death and destruction.

It is ink and not blood that ends all wars.

So, why not use ink to prevent them?

If you want peace, take up your pen.

Words alone dissolve differences.

Words alone bring hope.

Join our War of Words and fight for peace.

[www.WordWar.com](http://www.WordWar.com)

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