



## Armistice

Yes, there was dancing, and the living poured from offices, shops and factories, and the cheers were more deafening than shells, but there at the Front, a white frost persisted, as the day they had waited for came, stunned, drained away. For now, what could life be but having foiled death? Without action, what could they do but remember?

Peace came in sleep, broken, or burned  
in small flames of guttering thankfulness.

And if they could speak to you now,  
they might tell you the hundred years it took  
to lay down their defences, surrender the peace  
they had found in protecting another, in sharing  
their food, fear, grief with open arms  
and the courage it took to return, alone,  
to a world they knew once, but never again.

They might say, each one a new voice, as they pass  
in their millions, joined by all those who since  
have fought on, and keep coming, coming:

Find courage. First, walk alone. Lay down your anger,  
your fear; let the small flame of thankfulness burn;  
lay down your defences, open your arms.

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