

Seth Eric Evans
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Entrenched

I'm all that's left. They passed me by.
Why did I live to watch my fellows die?
The enemy is gone, they've moved on to someplace new.
But the blood-soaked soil reminds me it was true.

They once called this place "no man's land," Between where each trench lie.
Barbed wire stretched across each side, we came here to die.
The trees are gone, the grass won't grow, just a wasteland to behold.
And the bodies of the fallen, and the wind which blows so cold.

I still remember all that happened, playing over in my mind.
My friends are now a memory, but I've been left behind.
We'd sit within our trench, waiting for that dreaded call -
The whistle blow that would announce it was now our time to fall.

Then we'd rush out by the hundreds, running straight into their guns,
Imagining ourselves as warriors, fighting Atilla and the Huns.
Shots would fire, men would fall, as we hit the sandbag wall.
Then we'd retreat, our task complete, at the second whistle's call.

Back into the trenches carrying the wounded in our arms,
Wishing we weren't here, but back at home and on our farms.
Then drifting 'cross the meadow where once the flowers bloomed,
Came silent death upon the wind, and we knew that we were doomed.

I was near the bottom when the mustard gas appeared.
And though we wore our peach-pit masks, it was much worse than we'd feared.
I watched them as they took a breath and saw their faces twist,
Forced now to remove their masks and vomit from the mist.

Then came another, different gas, more deadly than the first.
A new gas that we'd never seen, by far it was the worst.
I watched with terror as they drew that poison with each breath.
Then spit up blood, I saw their eyes as they kissed the lips of death.

I saw my captain coughing blood and he beckoned I come near.
"Too late for me, I'm too far gone," he rasped into my ear.
"Take this to cover up your face, and don't inhale the g... gaasssss."
I placed the wet rag o'er my mouth, afraid my next breath would be my last.

I crawled up the trench and what I saw shot fear into my soul:
Enemy soldiers marching toward our dark and gloomy knoll.
Instinct then took over and I acted without thought.
The body of a fallen comrade became the cover I had sought.

Those not dead or dying were few and far between.
And it wasn't long before they, too, joined with the gruesome scene.
A soldier from the other side barely passed me by,
And in *his* eyes I saw a *human*, just as scared as I.

But now they're all gone, leaving myself here all alone,
With just my thoughts as company, and memories of times when hearts had shone.
The training camps had filled us up with lies before we'd go.
But now I see the truth they did not want us to know.

We fight a pointless struggle at a price too high to pay.
Soon they'll be none left to carry on another day.
Those other men, these so-called "Huns," are no different than we,
We need as *humans*, only to, open our eyes, our hearts, and *see*.