

DURING THESE WARS

## 1.

Our masks of war are pale and taut  
 and stretch across our face like thought  
 and squeeze our eyes when we sleep at night,  
 press on our lips a little too tight.  
 We take them off from time to time,  
 lift them away with a sense of crime  
 and hope to find that our neighbours too  
 have bared their faces, look quite new  
 with lips that move and eyes that turn  
 and special glances that seem to burn.  
 But all at once we see their mask  
 inside their flesh which makes us ask  
 did we dream those glances, were they true,  
 and was that peace, was it really you?

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## 2.

*Our*  
 When lonely education made her stamp  
 across my head and the streets I knew were damp  
 and dark and lamplights faded, sky and stars  
 became a window set behind the bars  
 of all my thought, and sleep began to cease  
 and aches began that mobilised my peace  
 to rigid war, and the world outside was damned  
 in one dark sin for never having shammed  
 a thought; and fields became a ghostly brain,  
 their green a painted coat to hide the stain  
 my thought would find beneath; and every act  
 was like a moral choice, a sort of tract  
 on how to live; and every sight and sound  
 was a play performed behind a veil that bound  
 this watcher to his chair---an actor who  
 waited in the wings but never got his cue.

## 3.

Growing aware that war is sin  
 I stood and felt it hem me in,  
 it gripped my belly without a cause,  
~~and~~ spread<sup>ing</sup> by grim and abstract laws.  
 And while I tried to stop it grow,  
 chased its legions to and fro,  
 I knew I had no peace or art  
 to exorcise its smallest part.

Love is the only thing that gives,  
 by long rehearsal, sedatives.  
 It takes the hated one-remove  
 from all we think and wish to prove:  
 then legions have no field for war  
 where every space is held in store  
 for something quite beyond the earth  
~~and~~ yet <sup>which</sup> ~~its~~ <sup>gives</sup> light and endless birth.

## 4.

Their bodies are with us <sup>and</sup> ~~(yet~~  
 there's no one here), their kiss<sup>es</sup> ~~interfere~~  
 just where we thought we'd set  
 our pitch on a certain cheek; and fear  
 hisses like gas across our eyes  
 as if they'd breathed; and suddenly night  
 loses the meaning of her stars and dies  
 and troops move again, in silent flight.

We can't go on with these <sup>ghosts</sup> in our ranks,  
 the vanguard's divided, our columns are bent,  
 we've got no leaders, only ghouls and cranks,  
 the front's uncertain, our bullets are spent,

we're out in the mist for ever now,  
 it's no-man's-land, our patrols are lost,  
 boots let water, the wind makes us bow,  
 we're struggling for nothing at untold cost,  
 the enemy's gone but hasn't said where,  
 the guns are ready but the cordite's damp,  
 the rations are hard and there's death in the air,  
 take us away from this terrible camp,  
 it's inside and out, it's dumb and it's loud,  
 it's walking and still, alive yet a ghost,  
 take us out of this misty shroud,  
 we're like dead guards with out a post!

## 5.

The hills are still there and the crack of <sup>the</sup> wind,  
 the climb up the <sup>climb</sup> path, the <sup>bodies</sup> ~~body~~ pinned  
 to the earth, the scrape of the sound of the guns,  
 the word of order like a holy script, the runs  
 across green space, the boy that tripped on a wire  
 and never got up, the howl of a dog in the fire  
 of a house on the hill and the digging of my nails  
 in the earth to try to burrow away from the flails  
 of the wind of the shells, and the <sup>groaning</sup> ~~women~~ alone  
 in their house <sup>until</sup> ~~till~~ I came, and the yellow stone  
 that turned to a man who lay there still and the death  
 of its nightly rounds that made <sup>its</sup> ~~their~~ choice, and the breath  
 that suddenly left the child I was with, and the scream  
 we had to believe must come from a dream,  
 they're all still there with their silent stare,  
 draining the sunlight, bleeding the air.

9.

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During these wars  
 there may be a pause  
 when our martial laws  
 seem about to collapse  
 and ~~draining~~ <sup>Eros</sup> saps  
 or gently traps  
 the impatient heart  
 and makes it start  
 at the touch of his dart.  
 There may be release  
 from red-capped police  
 and parleys for peace,  
 and something soft  
 like a dove in a loft  
 may appear to waft  
 in front of our eyes  
 that are taut and wise  
 with murder, lies.  
 And we'll come to believe  
 that here's a <sup>lie</sup> reprieve  
 in which we'll grieve  
 our losses less  
 and even bless  
 our guns and mess.  
 But darts of love  
 make wounds and shove  
 the mated <sup>love</sup> dove  
 from off her perch  
 and guns then lurch  
 and newly search  
 the ground for holes  
 where screaming souls  
 await the tolls



of a country bell  
 that used to tell  
 no tale of hell  
 but now beats out  
 its tones of doubt  
 like a victim's shout.

War makes its mark

on field and park,  
 is clear and stark -  
~~our future is dark.~~

10.

Many alarms were heard last night  
 and gentle hearts were ~~now~~ stretched <sup>out</sup> tight  
 and voices called that were never heard  
 and men were seen who hadn't stirred.  
 Pillows were pushed and blankets torn,  
 unknown babies were suddenly born,  
 girls kissed lovers twice their age  
 locked in the sleep of their parents' rage;  
 mothers called out to children gone  
 who'd long since ceased to see the sun,  
 and boys touched friends who'd never been  
 alive or dead and were best unseen.  
 Untroubled night went on as before,  
 turning as surely as a dockyard whore,  
 letting her men come up and release  
 their urgent claims for a settled peace.  
 But peace wasn't right for the thousand rooms  
 where dreams revolved and lonely wombs  
 gave birth to soldiers, factions, fights,  
 and <sup>yelled</sup> screamed for terror at the ghastly sights.

But then this morning the world was still there,  
 cool and collected <sup>customer</sup>  
 -certain in her unbroken stare,

1  
 with

as if what we dreamed was our necessary lot,  
and each ~~will~~<sup>wild</sup> burn in his separate cot.

## 11.

Our tactical movements are ~~so~~ clear and smooth,  
our lines so straight, our trenches<sup>so</sup> drained  
~~that nothing hot, - alarmed, uncouth~~  
so dry that nothing hot, uncouth  
can happen now, no trooper brained  
by the butt-end of a gun in the dead  
of night or shot in the leg and left  
to lie for perhaps eternity. Our bed  
is clean, not crawling now. In the cleft  
of rock a sterile water runs, not blood.  
At the tree where bullets stung we hang  
no flags; our marching feet avoid the mud,  
we know no drill or ever sang.  
We're soldiers-born who learned to fight  
at home, in silence, even peace;  
our faces, muscles war, our ranks are tight,  
our bodies, limbs are out on lease.

## 12.

A war is in the streets; there  
stand its marshals in blue suits  
and harmless civil hats; its stare  
is in those eyes; no barracks, brutes  
are needed here, its purposes  
are universal now; its haunts  
are rooms and passages, its calluses<sup>chalices?</sup>  
are broken bones and eyes; the taunts  
and checks of discipline, the fear  
at night, are now our civil hesitations,

... was only war  
- a disaster on the struggle  
the bloodied in WW2, &  
was where they met - and shared  
- enhanced - their sense of  
being right.

(I think) comes in the  
- varying Europe ???  
CASUALTIES  
IN INVASION OF EUROPE  
the Allied landing?

Wm  
4002818712

The Italian Campaign

118 Between Sep 1943 and  
April 1945 60,000 allied  
soldiers and 50,000 German  
soldiers died, No campaign  
- western Europe cost so  
heavy lives and wounds  
suffered by ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> infantry &

Churchill was all for  
a Mediterranean campaign  
where the British fleet could  
convey <sup>to various ports</sup>  
~~troops~~ troops by means of  
amphibious landings. <sup>In this way he intended all the Mediterranean</sup>  
Americans were wanted as  
- invasion of France as soon as  
possible, as early as 1944.  
Roosevelt wanted the Italian

Churchill wished to dominate  
the Mediterranean with British  
fleet.

Both Churchill & Hitler  
were depressives. Churchill  
used to call his tomb "the  
black dog". ~~that was as~~

~~leave prepared for~~ when we seldom  
realize what happens in its  
being put and parcel of, even  
the active cause, its opposite -  
a state of affairs certain decision,  
The two leaders had their good  
that which fails in each other.  
Their immediate decisions are -  
Came - the form of ~~action~~ were -  
playing cards, decisions -  
in the 'black dog' ~~was that~~ Churchill  
should in French ~~was that~~ decisions,  
as to the outcome of these conflicts →  
The Italian conflict →