

War

War...
It defines us,
It makes us,
It breaks us...

Trampling through the bog at dawn,
Cicadas and crickets mock us,
They add music to the splashing mud,
That covers our grime-ridden faces.

The acrid stench of gunpowder and sweat burns our nostrils,
Guns bruising our sides.
Dread weakens our knees and sours our stomachs,
As we approach our likely death.

A constant reminder floating in the back of our heads,
Lack of supplies,
Ten bullets per man, sparse food, and bug-infested water.
Three meals a day and a cot for the enemy that's waiting to kill us.

Sleep marching silently,
Mind blank.
Ears ring with every step,
I drag myself onward, toward the inevitable.

BOOM!
A single cannonball splinters the elms.
The splinters lodge in my arm I am awake now.
Searing pain takes away the ringing in my ears, I move forward ignoring the pain.

BOOM!
Another cannonball and
CRACK!
Pieces of trees and mud assume flight.

BOOM!

Over and over guns fire.
Instinctually we assume cover,
While they bombard us from the North.

I try to swallow my heart,
My stomach is a top.
My eyes blur with smoke and dust,
Time stops. Minutes feel like hours.

Gunfire increases with our attempted advance,
An aerial wall of lead,
Scouring for flesh.
Seems like a thousand bullets to every one we fire.

BOOM!

Pools of blood.
My friends and comrades lay dead at my feet.
Both flanks fall. We are all that is left.

All hope of success is ephemeral,
We swing, forward and back.
Three months fighting for the same ten acres.
POINTLESS.

Ribbons of solace weave through our ranks.
The blue and gold brigade add to our strength.
They thirst for a chance to get their hands on the enemy,
I just want to go home, they can have 'em.

The puzzle assembles,
Their lines buckling with the strain.
The seaside calls the enemy's name.
Finally within reach of the enemy, we lose all control.

Everyone is in dismay of what they see,
A boy waving a sweat-laden handkerchief.
Finally it's over, thank God its over,
Now onto the next ten acres.