**Rocca San Giovanni**

It is quiet here now, the valley is silent.
Only the birds and the stream have their noise,
The twittering, bubbling sweet sounds of nature.
Apart from this – silence which nothing destroys.

The smell is a faint one of morning and pine trees,
Of bracken and water, of woodland and stream,
The sight is of rushes, of mill house and lime trees.
The feel is of peacefulness sweet as a dream.

But at one time this valley, this valley of heaven,
Became a most torturous valley of hell.
For the fighting was bitter, the Hun held on grimly,
Regardless of losses, and many men fell.

For the British came north and the silence was shattered,
By rifle – machine gun – trench mortar – grenade.
The Messerschmitt diving bought sickening terror,
The valley vibrated with Death’s serenade.

But the British advanced and the valley was taken,
The fighting moved northward as Gerry moved back,
And the only remains to give proof of the fighting,
Are freshly dug graves at the side of the track.

Again it is peaceful, the valley is silent,
Only the birds and the stream have their noise,
The twittering, bubbling sounds of nature.
Apart from this – silence which nothing destroys.

*George Fraser Gallie, November, 1943.*

**Threnody of the Nations**

We have hated and fought,

We have murdered and fled,

But the peace that we sought

Is alone with the dead.

We have offered ourselves

On the altar of greed;

We have poisoned our sons

With our venomous creed.

We have bombed and destroyed;

We have raped and diseased,

Till the earth has grown dark

With our war-obsequies.

We have sung our wild song

In the ghouls' jubilee,

And, O Love, once again

We have crucified Thee.

*Leon Adams*

*Lennoxville, Quebec, May 16, 1940.*

**Tea at Olivier's**

We shall have tea at Olivier's and eat

patisserie francaise

served by a waitress

in blue dress,

white apron, and

white cap.

We shall sip hot tea

and chat about

the battle of Britain,

the latest German move,

our men,

our lovers,

and our hopes.

We shall drink tea

while bombs tear out the hearts

of twisted men;

we shall eat

patisserie francaise

while they are tasting

Death.

*Leon Adams*

*Sherbrooke, Quebec, 29 November 1940.*

**"Wish me luck...”**

She waits

In the late twilight,

Shivering in the wind

That scoops up

Over the lip

Of the chalk cliff.

She waits,

Listening to the

Throb of the

Wimpy’s engines

As the squadron nears

Her look-out post.

She waits

For a glimpse of a

Gauntleted hand

Waving at her eye level,

The hand that caressed

Now ready to trigger the tail guns.

She waits,

Keeping watch

Ears straining to catch

The returning flight,

Waiting to count the returned

And the missing.

She waits

Past the dawn...

Waits for the missing...

Waits...

And waits...

And waits.

*Clare Stewart*

*20 October, 2002*

**The Click of the Garden Gate**

I hear the click of the garden gate

But it is not he

He comes no more either early or late

To his dinner or tea

He is far away in an Air Force Camp

Learning to fight

(I wonder if his blankets are damp

And if he sleeps well at night)

Not twenty years when went away

Just a boy

He may never again come back to stay

To delight and annoy

Will what he has gained balance what he has lost?

He will change

Will his growth to manhood improve him most?

Or make him change?

I open the casement into his room

So tidy and neat

And the sun shines in and chases the gloom

And the wind blows sweet

Ready for him when, early or late

He comes back home to the sea

I hear the click of the garden gate

But it is not he.

(Perhaps it is Rene coming to tea!)

*May Hill, December 1940*

**Hitler was a Killer**

Hitler was a Killer, who killed our British men

Upon the Beaches of Dunkirk, he killed so Many Men

Upon the mighty Battlefield he never showed a tear

He sent them off to prison camps which filled them full of fear

He whipped the Jew he gassed the Jew until so many were dead

He fought to be the Führer but his path was hell instead.

*Steve Petch at the age of 11*

**Death of a Hero**

Clothes soaked with blood, and blood on his boots

As he breaths he gurgles blood

He lays in the shadow cast by a wall of stone

A million miles from home

Eyes wide with fright. His brothers by his side.

He quietly prays as he slowly dies

As blood drains from his body, colour leaves his face

His blood waters the flowers in this God forsaken place

They hold him so he doesn’t die alone.

They hold him until they have to bag him and send him home.

Tears leave streaks down a dirty face

Sorrow and emptiness now takes his place

With the utmost care they zip up the big black bag

and wrap his body in an American flag.

A hero is going home.

*Steve Carlsen*

**Home-Coming**

A great bird lands and

Gathers strength after its flight.

Her oviduct contracts,

Discharging precious cargo,

Covered in a bright membrane.

It is carried shoulder-high

By adopted brothers.

This offspring,

Once nurtured in a mother’s womb,

Now enveloped in wood.

Safe from life’s buffeting,

It is sterile.

Nothing will erupt from its shell.

Instead, it focuses a nation’s awe,

The nidus of a family’sgrief*.*

*Richard Y. Ball*