

A Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, then
the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Private, huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my
child. "What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your
sleeve, you should be at home on a cold
Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts..
To the window that danced with a warm fire's
light. Then he sighed and he said "Its really all
right, I'm out here by choice. I'm here every
night." "It's my duty to stand at the front of the
line, that separates you from the darkest of
times.

No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before
me. My Gramps died at Vimy on a day in
December," Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas
'Gram always remembers."

My dad stood his watch in the streets of Arnhem
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But his wife sends me pictures, he's sure got a
nice smile. Then he bent and he carefully pulled
from his bag, the red, and the white... the
Canadian flag.

I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.
I can stand at my post through the rain and the
sleet; I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life for my sister of brother..
Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a
feast? It seems all too little for all that you've
done, for being away from your wife daughters or
sons."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home while we're
gone, to stand your own watch, no matter how
long. For when we come home, either standing
or dead, to know you remember we fought and
we bled. Is payment enough, and with that we
will trust, that we mattered to you as you
mattered to us."

PLEASE, would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can?
Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our Canadian Service men and women
for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what
we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves
for us.