

The Men and Women of November



Late on that November night,
Speckled stars aloft, and bright,
The lone candle flame, it fluttered,
And the sleeping dog, she muttered.

The pines and maples were deeply dark,
Their silhouettes so muted yet stark,
And the age-old river they called the Grand,
Washing the bedrock of time, it ran.

A poppy alone, down in the river,
Loosed from a collar that night in a shiver,
Off to the lake and then to the sea,
Tracing the path of all that be.

Quietly on that late autumn night,
Came soft faint inklings of first light,
Rising over sleeping town and land,
Night now gone, the bugle call at hand.

In the valley and down the hill,
Was the cenotaph, weeping still,
Fading memories of youth and war,
Long gone stories, long gone lore.

Solemnly dark against the sky,
A band of light, like red blood dye,
With morning quiet still, as if to see,
Forgotten memories of those that be.

Near the fountain in the square,
Stood the cannon's cold barrel stare,
Pointing east up the long Main Street,
Gunmetal black, wet with rain and sleet.

Over bridge and hill the silence filled,
Deeds and names echoing the killed,
Their spirits live, though lives do not,
Sacred town soil marking their spot.

And high up the sky, on both sides,
Spires rise heavenward, two twin brides,
Soon the town square is alive and filled,
For this was the eleventh, forever stilled.

Almost gone now were the leaves,
With the harvest and the sheaves,
The names were read one by one,
Then the silence, then the gun.

They left the tomb and went up the hill,
Walking slowly despite the chill,
Each to a one tried to remember,
The men and women of November.

By David Menary

