

## ***Soldiers.***

Ten little soldiers lined up one by one  
On the battleground margins.  
Red spills neat, too real  
Hearts lie abandoned.  
(broken, forced apart)

(voices raise, orders barked—)  
(silence looms.)  
(clocks tick.)

Somewhere, someplace, someone watches—

Swords glint silver sharp,  
Soldiers raise saluts.  
March on, soldiers,  
Dare not to lose.

Five big soldiers march steady along the crease,  
History's folds ripping lives with ink.

Thumbs position for protocol's sake,  
Pinky fingers trembling at the edge of obedience.

The metronome sounds one-by-one,  
Soldiers stand ready to burn.

One tiny soldier stands at the end of the battle,  
The blood means that they've won.  
The soldier looks around,  
And the countdown ticks to the next battle's hum.

Yes, the blood declares a victor,  
While silence bows for none.  
The metronome still ticks  
And still nothing has been won.

One century later,  
The ground is still untouched.  
A new generation of soldiers come to rip it all up.  
Sink their boots in the mud  
And they use rifles now, too,  
Bullets fly where wounds bloomed,

And they trip on their million-dollar boots.

Another century later,  
And no more soldiers are in the fray.  
They burn behind screens of aluminum and one-sided glass,  
They drop dollar bills like entertainment awaits  
Tongues lay flat, voices unheard,

On the big screen, on the phone,  
War never leaves the world alone.

It mutates and she grows,  
She rises above soldiers bold.  
Men still fight and women still cheer,  
Soldiers still die hoping the end is near.

The battleground is untouched,  
But the red will never leave.  
The margins burn brighter,  
There is no reprieve.  
(None dare to speak.)