

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind

Stephen Crane

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
5 War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
10 Great is the Battle-God, great, and his Kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie. **A**

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
15 Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
20 Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
25 Do not weep.
War is kind. **B**

A VERBAL IRONY

Reread lines 1–11. In what way do these lines demonstrate verbal irony? Explain.

B UNIVERSAL THEME

Reread stanzas 1, 3, and 5. Identify the **images** of war presented in each stanza. What do these images have in common?

the sonnet-ballad

Gwendolyn Brooks

Oh mother, mother, where is happiness?
They took my lover's tallness off to war,
Left me lamenting. Now I cannot guess
What I can use an empty heart-cup for.
5 He won't be coming back here any more.
Some day the war will end, but, oh, I knew
When he went walking grandly out that door
That my sweet love would have to be untrue.
Would have to be untrue. Would have to court
10 Coquettish death, whose impudent and strange
Possessive arms and beauty (of a sort)
Can make a hard man hesitate—and change.
And he will be the one to stammer, "Yes."
Oh mother, mother, where is happiness? ©

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Explain how death is presented in the poem. What clues does this image give you about theme?



ANALYZE VISUALS

How would you compare the mood of this sculpture with that of the painting on page 445?

Lamentation: Memorial for Ernst Barlach (1940), Käthe Kollwitz. Bronze. © 2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.