



Wounded. In the Head.

My grandfather was
an Ernest.
My grandma said
they wouldn't let him home;
he stayed in hospital one whole
un-whole
year after the War was done.
Wound. In his head.

No blood
no bruise
no eyes gone
not deaf;
just wounded in his head.
Not deaf to shells
still breaking in his head.
Not blind to lights
still flashing in his head.

But bloody in his head,
bruised and wounded.
In his head.

They kept him long-long time in hospital.
At this far distance God knows why.
No-one, now, who we can ask why.
So many secrets kept the old quiet folk.
So many wounds in, oh, so many heads.

Was he too dangerous to be let go?
Or risky to himself?
Or risky in his truth?

When his French trench collapsed,
and he was buried in the mud and blood
and, (finally), dug out,
at first, they didn't see that wound.
But soon they saw it:



that wound that ached his days,
throbbed his nights,
kept him screaming, buried.

My grandma said,
when her Ernest came home
he was not out of his tomb;
lovely, but without joy, ever again.
And many wives of many other Ernests
might say the same.

And many wives of all
the Fredricks and Friedrichs
the Johns and Johanns,
the Henrys and Heinrichs,
who came home safe.
But with that wound.
In the head.

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