



WAR IS KIND *(selection)*

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.
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
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

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

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Why does the speaker repeat, “War is kind”?
- Why is this poem addressed to a maiden, a babe, and a mother? Why does the speaker tell them, “Do not weep”?
- Why did the author set off two stanzas of the poem? Are the set-off stanzas of the poem addressed to the same people as the other stanzas? if not, who are they addressing?
- Why does the speaker repeat the words, “These men were born to drill and die”?
- Does the speaker use the phrase “a field where a thousand corpses lie” with the same intention in both stanzas?
- Does the speaker believe that “war is kind”? Does he want the reader to believe it?