

Year 11 – 13 Honourable Mentions

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His voice was there when he woke.
A bed he had known
for seventeen
years.

Everything was the same there: the stench of the stewed meat in his mother's pot, the lace curtains that veiled everyday life, the muddy footprints of his little sister's tiny feet. Except for the black abscess in the sky that dripped infected tears and the taste of fear anticipated on his lips.

Soon, thoughts became memories to be grasped, but ever elusive. Censored voices from the trenches as a boy became a reluctant man.

Ink, a symbol of love; unfinished conversations
A yearning for the ordinary

His mother gripping over every last word from the end of each month. A face unfamiliar to the boys that came home.

His sister, now a woman; forgets the warmth of his hug.

Desolation streams through the radio. Every step forward she makes, then paralysed by the end of a shot gun.

These painful memories, now eternal fragments of her story. Enveloped in a museum, safe in the walls of clear glass.

His mother cries every year.
Her head sinks at the bottom of the cenotaph near the young boy playing with toy soldiers.

Oblivious to the trauma and hollowness, and the significance of the poppies plastered on everyone's shoulder.

The boy doesn't notice her grief or the innocent face raining red after the last snow.

He is a child of a different time. His watch, his holey boots and torn socks, all added to the clear glass walls.

She leaves handprints and stained tears. A love that is irreplaceable.

All of his dreams reduced to a sepia image and a missing home.

That's why they built the cenotaph; a place to hold the grief in perpetuity as a reminder of the fragility of the human condition.

That's why his sister comes and visits every week. A young pilgrim who was only seven when she stood waving with her mother as his shadow left beyond the trees. Only she can keep him alive by speaking his name.

She is now eighty-seven. Her children have borne witness to a mighty soldier, a saviour, their beacon of hope. Too big a price to pay for their freedom?

They all sit and watch his life play in the seats behind the silver screen.

He achieves immortality from the Holocaust.

It is all they can do.

“How to Build a Memorial”