War

A hint of gold atop a page
Gold flecks caught the light and shone
A name imprinted in royal filigree
Underneath, a line in soft gold tone

Ashen sentences were strung across
Some solitary strands, sparse, lonesome
Yet each a deluge, a tempest, a tide
Could arrest the march of time, for some

On this beautiful page, the golden pen
Could etch a story, poetry or shrine
To love or peace or joy for ever
But not this time, not this time

Encrusted with tears, the grass that morning
Wept a million dewdrops of sunlit pearls
As a final scroll on the golden line
Declared the flags of war unfurled

Innocent lives condemned that day
With a flourish, by a golden pen
It shattered homes and tranquil worlds
Killed or maimed a thousand men

Perhaps that name underlined in gold
Was thoughtful and was justified
Perhaps it sent in true defense
A thousand men to sacrifice
A brave defense, a battle perhaps
Shielding innocent blameless lives
With no recourse except this one
This one perhaps the righteous one

But today the hand was one of those
Merciless, blinded, consumed by greed
Dismiss the moths they drive to war
To feed their dire and burning need

Those beautiful pages stained in gold
Ethereally so with their royal scrolls
Fine lines and filigree of precious inks
Tell tidal tales of their rises and falls

How power, complete, absolute, corrupts
Blackens like dust of charcoal mines
Show how, in places large and small
Fools holding knives often sever bloodlines

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Of the braves who fought in battlefields
Some lost their lives, and some returned
To orphaned, widowed, tearful crowds
Their bodies, minds and souls now burned

The battle changed the lives of all
The loves and lives of those who remained
The stories and memories of those who left
Each a universe lost, for a morsel gained

Of what was protected, nothing remained
Tides don’t return to a waterfall
No golden scrolls reverse the acts
That blind and deafen, maim and maul

The reason, perhaps a valid one
Was no excuse for what was done
No man decrees what lives must be lived
Or snuffed away, from the day, what sun

We wonder, had the golden page
Been a treaty of peace, a message or plea
Would’ve all been saved, and peace returned
Through channels of diplomacy?

Would a decree, more thoughtfully writ
Have shielded, saved a thousand lives?
Would war have ensued, had the golden pen
Been wielded by the wisest scribes?

Were a thoughtful muse to hold the pen
Would the battle then have been foregone?
Had her name been that of the wisest one
Would they have returned, who hadn’t gone?

So the pen, that pen, that mighty pen
Has shown over time, its strength on scroll
With one stroke a sword has killed one man
With one word the pen has killed them all

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The forces of war are ill-defined
Imperious hubris and lowly deeds
Conceit of knaves, disdain of life
Each seed, a tree of evil seeds

Where one has won, another has lost
It matters not how they played the game
Why a war was fought, for its aftermath
Time and again, has been the same

Its a baton passed, of nauseous revenge
Of anger, insults, that burn for long
It rights no wrongs, this act of war
By doing more wrong to assuage a wrong

In such golden summits, that pen, a wand
Instrumented erudition and sacred lore
When waved, could feed the desires of some
But never could quell their hunger for more

Such was that name, on that sheet of gold
Scrolled proudly in inks of slaughter-blood
Centuries past, this name then gold
Is evoked in contempt, its worth now mud

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