

# Two Poems

## Holly Day

### War Stories

Whenever I tried to ask him about the war, he'd shrug and change the subject  
tell me he had a great idea for a book about time traveling or  
the origin of God, said that was the book we should write together,  
the war wasn't really very interesting, probably no war's that interesting  
it'd just be a book about noise. I was never brave enough to ask him  
about the medals my mom had rescued from the trash when she was younger  
kept in secret this whole time,  
a mix of brass German SS medallions and the U.S. Air Force  
a loose collection in an old cardboard jewelry box  
full of questions no one ever asked.

After he died, my mom finally worked up the nerve  
to ask her aunt for all of the old war journals he'd stored in the basement  
after the war, he'd told her she could have them when he was gone.  
My mom and dad drove all the way out to Kansas to pick them up after the funeral  
only to find mold had completely rotted the pages of the journals,  
turned my grandfather's snaky handwriting green and illegible  
a half-dozen leather-bound journals  
sealed shut with brachiating lichen and rust.

## The Call

The word goes out that it's okay to write about war again  
and that, in fact, it's expected, with the people in charge asking:  
Why haven't the poets been writing about this?  
Isn't this what they're here for?

Dutifully, the poets pick up their pens to scribble verses  
about bombs and destruction and civil unrest  
apathy and starvation and the death of small children  
until all of the pages are filled with pictures of the dead  
until all of the pages are filled with the stories of the dead

pages and pages that will never be read.

Holly Day's writing has recently appeared in *Analog SF*, *Grain*, and *Third Wednesday*.