

G R E G G M O S S O N

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## Letter by a French Soldier, 1916, Found at Verdun

I should've scribbled of this a week ago, but now we're here:  
The final road ahead—I'm told "The Sacred Way"—snakes  
down through farmers' fields to the rumble. . . .  
We are encamped at its mouth. Mammoth  
lines of men file in, shoulder to shoulder  
with those filing out. Marie, you'll know  
where I am when you read of Verdun. It was quiet  
in our last spot. Grass sprung  
in front of our trench. German machine-guns raked us  
solely after supper. Well soon, I will be able to say  
I came here, for this battle may end our trench life  
if we can break these men. Now guess:  
I picked up a lamb's wool vest  
on the way, from an old villager,  
and chocolate—which I've stashed—  
all for my necklace—the gold one Father  
gave me. The wool will help me duck  
winter frost in trench bogs  
that's coming. Don't tell him though.

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