

The Nameless Hero

The river's eerie laughter fills this dreary, overgrown clearing. The skeletal bones of an old tree rattle in the mournful wind. Here, under the tangle of the brambles, lies a nameless soldier, a long forgotten hero. This ghostly place invokes so many feelings it would take a lifetime to wade through them all. The hollow wind compels the blades of grass to do a mournful dance over the crude burial sight. And with them questions and thoughts stir inside of me.

If he could talk, what would he say? What stories did he hold close to his heart? Did this nameless and faceless soldier get to enjoy one last sunrise or did he breathe his last surrounded by a seemingly impenetrable, lonely darkness? Did he look towards the heavens with near vacant eyes praying that someone would hear his final cry and save his weary soul? So many questions, so few answers.

Who did he leave behind when he got heartlessly ripped from this world? Did a widow wail his name as her knees crumpled under the pressure of grief? Did his mother hold tight to his aging photo as she felt him slip away. Did his father, his hero, let the flood gate of tears flow knowing that laughter will forever carry a sour note without his little boy's smile to shine against the darkness closing in. Did his sweet newborn cry holding her little hands out for a father who could never answer her call again? Do loved ones still think of him in the middle of the night when they need a smile or do they simply push memories of him deeper down, unwilling to reopen the painful tear in their heart? Maybe all memories of him got buried with his relations and now his name has vanished from both mind and heart. So many things to learn, so little time to learn them.

Tell me, have we let their stories die, have we started letting their loved ones cry alone? Have we let the darkness reign? Have we started turning a blind eye to injustice? Have we started to *forget*?

Lest we forget. A simple phrase we are compelled to remember every year. The mantra engraved on every monument and printed on every poster. But how can we try not to forget something we never even felt driven to remember in the first place? How can we stand alongside him for the same freedoms when we don't even know his name? How can we connect with a story that we feel is so far removed from our own?

I may never know the answers to the whirlwind of questions racing around my sorrowful being as I stand in this bleak clearing. I may never even know what to call this hero. Maybe the river holds his tears. Maybe the wind carries his laughter. Perhaps even the dying tree holds his memories in its very rings. But alas, time has a way of altering things. With each passing year even the memories of this very place change and fade. I fear that with each tick of the clock he may grow to become more and more of what his very country once stood against. He may become *forgotten*.