

## The Song of the Dead Soldier.

For seven years at school I named  
Our kings, their wars—if these were won—  
A boy trained simple as we come  
I read of an island in the sun  
Where the Queen of Love was born.

At seventeen the postman brought  
Into the room — my place of birth —  
Some correspondence from the Crown,  
Demanding that with guns I earn  
The modern shilling I was worth.

Lucky for me that I could read,  
Lucky for the Captain said,  
You'll see the world for free, my son,  
You're posted to an island, John, '  
Where the Queen of Love was born.

In twenty weeks my back was straight,  
My eye could draw a wicked bead,  
Stabbed human sandbags on the run,  
And nine white bellied porpoise led  
Our ship of shillings through the sun.

Landing behind the fife and clad  
In war suits worth ten well taxed pounds,  
The costliest I ever had,  
The place was gold and white and blue.  
Did love's Queen spot our drum and flag ?

And three by three through our curfew,  
Mother, we marched in black and tan,  
Singing for fright, but the Captain cheered,  
So I drank my eyes out of my head,  
And wet her shilling with my fears.

When morning came, the Captain told,  
This island shaped like an Ass' skin,  
Must be kept calm, must be patrolled.  
In outposts lie the heart and soul  
Of Empire, Love, and Law, and Rule.

I did not know to serve meant kill.  
I did not see the Captain fall,  
As my life went out through a bullet hole,  
Mother, I cried, your womb is done,  
Did they spend your English shilling well."

And then I saw a hag whose eyes,  
Were big as medals, grey as lead,  
I called my rifle but it lay dead,  
The Captain roared, but my eyes were dud,  
The hag kissed warm, we met in blood.  
English shilling — Queen of Love.

Envoi

Tom, Dick, and Harry living still,  
Is it for your good my life has gone."  
Is your house next for the press-gang's call."  
Must your union jack breed carrion?  
O stone those crows for my life is gone.

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE.