

I am not a war poet
Calum Kerr

I am not a war poet
crouching in a trench, listening
for the bang and the blast, and
the distant rattle of guns
their sounds already part of the past
their bullets already lodged in their targets;
waiting for the shouts and groans
and screams.
I am not a war poet.

I am not a war poet
surveying the huts and holes,
the waterless showers and full graves,
the ghosts of skeletons shuffling by,
and body piled on body;
wandering through the buildings,
abandoned and echoing with death
and screams.
I am not a war poet.

I am not a war poet
embedded at the front,
waiting for the roadside bomb,
the car bomb and the suicide bomb;
watching the young in their uniforms,
shredded once more;
surrounded by pain and terror
and screams.
I am not a war poet.

I am not a war poet
in a bus or train,
on the street or at the beach,
in a lift ascending the tallest of buildings,
trying to live an ordinary life
in an ordinary world.
Watching, listening, waiting,
for screams,
I am now a war poet.