

# THE WAIL OF THE WALRUS

BY A BRIGADE MACHINE GUNNER

Sure lads, you're always welcome, I'll always treat you well.  
I'm too old now to shoulder arms but a story I will tell.  
I don't care if I do have one; it sure looks good to me.  
Yes, it's Jake and no mistake but give me the S.R.D.  
Well, as I sat in my cabin one afternoon in May,  
The year was twenty hundred, sublime had been the day,  
And as the sun was sinking in the golden glorious west  
I was dozing, musing, thinking of the past when this request  
Was shyly put before me: "Won't you come and see the sight?"  
So I turned my old and wrinkled dial to see what mad new  
plight

The rising generation had for my footsteps sore;  
But there before me stood a lass, a maiden, nothing more.  
You've been a youth yourself lad, you've known the joy of love.  
But have you ever seen a damsel whose home was heaven  
above?

My God! such eyes as hers, Bo, a smile the world to win:  
A mass of golden wavy curls, a stranger, too, to sin:  
As from a dream she woke me: "Come, Dad," she kindly said,  
"Come take a walk with me today. Come on, we'll paint things  
red."

"Well I reckon, Kid, I got to go and paint things red some day,  
So I might as well go 'long w' you. Go slow, I'm old and grey."  
So I reached my right claw for my stick, 't'ad faded out o' sight,  
Stiff joints had gone and youth returned, say child, my heart  
felt light.

I was a young man once again, a lad in khaki clad.  
"We'll go this way," the maiden said, "across the fields, eh  
Dad?"

Did I follow on and on? Will a fish swim in the sea?  
Say, Bo, I'd follow her through hell and that for eternity.  
At last we came to a golden wall and then to a pearly gate.  
With a golden key she opened it and there as sure as fate  
Was the whole wide world before me. I stood with tear-  
dimmed eyes,

And she let me gaze, that sweet one did.—Shut up, you don't  
realize

How sacred the memory is of things clad in heavenly light.  
No, I ain't losing my temper. No, I'll drink no more tonight—  
"Now, whom do you wish to see, Dad?" kindly the damsel  
asked.

"I don't know, sweetheart, I cannot say I was thinking of the  
past."

"Now, Dad, don't be reminiscent, there is no past in here.  
Come over a little closer. Don't you hear the music, dear?  
Ah yes, that's better now," she said, "I thought there was  
something wrong.

We'll almost shut the gate up tight—make life one grand sweet  
song.

I know a place that you want to see and boys you want to know.  
Just over that hill lies Flanders and France and the Somme.  
Let's go."

Hand in hand as the lovers go, hand in hand went we.  
Say, you think you're a wise guy, youngster, but by the powers  
that be—

That's good! I'm thankful to you, lads, I'm glad you threw  
him out.

No good to himself or no one else; can do nothing but brawl  
and shout.

Yes, pour me another small one. Whoa, lad, that's twice too  
much.

Well, since it's there, I'll take it all, 'twill give me the talking  
touch.

Well now, as I was saying, me and my angel love  
Started up over the hillside, serene were the heavens above.  
There, when we got to the crest of it, was Villiers au Bois.  
But the year was nineteen sixteen, 'twas fall and the weather  
raw.

Hand in hand down the street we walked, down to the mayor's  
place,

Into the cookhouse to see the cook. Man, we're an awful race!

Rodgers was cooking mulligan, mulligan mixed with rice,  
And he and Sandbag over the dixies crumbing their shirts for  
lice,

Angel-eyes looked at me and smiled and gave a tug at my coat.  
"Come," she said, "and we'll walk along. They really get my  
goat."

Round we strolled to the other side, the air smelled of mig-  
nonette.

Wilson saw me, jumped up and said, "Say, gimme a cigarette."  
Duffy sat on his cobbler's stool, pegging away like sin,  
"Get out o' me light," he hollered, "or Oil dinge that dome o'  
yours in."

Mrs. Connor's gift to the Empire sat back and pulled a long  
face,

And like Postum, he'd had "a reason," for say, talk of disgrace.  
That Jare-devil Dick was a punk one, fell away below the mark  
"Could do better than that meself," he said, "and write it in  
the dark."

Patton sat on the other side and as he sat he ploughed  
The whole of the land of Saskatchewan. Oh man, but that lad  
was proud

Of the old homestead he batched on, far across the western main.  
Talked of cattle, he talked of mules, and he smiled at the ripen-  
ing grain.

There was Von Kluck in the corner, quiet and staid and forlorn,  
Minding no business but his own, poor cow with his crumpled  
horn.

Then to our ears came the rattle of hoofs on the road outside.  
Into the yard drove Q.M. Flood, precise as the flowing tide,  
Into the yard with a holler, "We're down to brass tacks," said  
he.

Bully and biscuits was all he had, 'cept a case of S.R.D.  
"Let's meander along the road," my sweet spectre said to me.  
"Meanders" the word," I answered. "It's a pleasure to follow  
thee

Up through Carency town we walked, past Hospital Corner too.  
There in the mud was Paddy Walsh and Peter. Say, if you  
knew

The friendship that stood between them, the love of a man for  
the dumb.

"Get up you lousy son of a gun," were the general terms, then  
some,

Through Alley One Hundred Thirty, Kent Walk a farther  
step on.

Yes, give me another mouthful. That's good! That's good,  
boy!! Tres bon!

No doubt you have all had nightmares, the mad kind, the kind  
that bores.

Such is the song of the Walrus, imitations of lions' roars.  
Up on the parapet, bold and brave. Breast to the cowardly  
Hun.

Fearing naught for aught. "Don't you hear me," he said,  
"mount the gun."

"Awful," my Angel-mate said to me, "Dreadful; let's make a  
move."

"Yes, show me McNulty, Smith, McKeown, Hughes and the  
looneys, my love."

I turned to look towards my spectre, my friend of the other  
world.

Vanished from earth! She had left me, sighing, with wings  
unfurled.

Yes, lads, I was back in this shack, back to the world and regret.  
And the only thing that scared her was mount gun drill on the  
parapet.

I've sat and mused in the sunshine. I've wished her to come  
again;

But my prayers have yet been unanswered. I sigh and I wait  
in vain.

What, lads, say you must be going? Yes, I don't care if I do.  
No, sure as God is above me, that spectre story is true.