

# The Reunion

Authored by Rachel Firth for the 306<sup>th</sup> BW

Autumn leaves, rustling together to the appointed place, the old warriors come.

Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve. Where they meet is not so important anymore... they meet,  
that's enough for now.

Greetings echo across a lobby. Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close.  
Embraces, that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept lovingly.

But deep within these Indian summer days they have reached a greater understanding of life and love.

The shells holding their soul dare weaker now, but heart and minds grow vigorous remembering.

On a table someone spreads old photographs; a test of recollection. And friendly laughter echoes at shock of hair  
gone gray or white, or merely gone.

The rugged, slender bodies lost forever. Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.  
Some are now sustained by one of "medicines miracles."

The women, all those who waited, all those love them, have watched the changes take place.  
Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.

Talk runs to war and planes and foreign lands.  
Stories are told and told again, reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.  
Mending one more time the banner of their youth.

They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as propellers whine and whirl, and plane comes to life.

These birds with fractured wings can see beyond them to the clouds, and they are in the air again, chasing the wind,  
feeling the exhilaration of flight, close to the heavens; the wild and blue yonder of their anthem.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit, move silently among them.  
Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.

Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent another year. The room grows quiet foretime.

Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns. The talk may run to other wars and other men, and of  
futility. So, this is how it goes. The past is so much the present.

In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches, and the prayers,  
one cannot help but hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.

Finally, it is time to leave, much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday,  
but the past cannot be held too long for it is fragile.

They say, Farewell...see you next year,  
"God willing," breaking silent prayer for another...