

The Undaunted

He tried to travel No Man's Land, that's guarded well with guns,
He tried to race the road of death, where never a coward runs.
Now he's asking of his doctor, and he's panting hard for breath,
How soon he will be ready for another bout with death.

You'd think if you had wakened in a shell hole's slime and mud
That was partly dirty water, but was mostly human blood,
And you had to lie and suffer till the bullets ceased to hum
And the night time dropped its cover, so the stretcher boys could come-
You'd think if you had suffered from a fever and its thirst,
And could hear the 'rapids' spitting and the high explosives burst,
And had lived to tell that story- you could face our fellow men
In the little peaceful village, though you never fought again.

You'd think that once you'd fallen in the shrapnel's deadly rain,
Once you'd shed your blood for honor, you had borne your share of pain;
Once you'd traveled No Man's country, you'd be satisfied to quit
And be invalided homeward, and could say you'd done your bit.
But he's lying, patched and bandaged, very white and very weak,
And he's trying to be cheerful, though it's agony to speak;
He is pleading with the doctor, though he's panting hard for breath,
To return him to the trenches for another bout with death.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)