Thoughts Upon Visiting a War Memorial

Screaming blasts of light stab the mind
Of the young killer.
His elders tempted him with promises
Of Victory and Honor.
But now, he crawls through blood, searching
For pieces of this shattered promise.
He does not live to kill...
He kills to live.
Fragments of memories and corpses float about
Him with the stagnant smoke of Death.
"Why?" he asks.
He doesn't know what he is questioning--
He only knows that there is a mindless void
Between logic and proportion.
The shadow of dusk mists about the unknown soldier,
No moon, no stars, no light.
Even the Fires of Hell are black.
Seventy years later his brave spirit echoes within
The walls of a silent, somber chamber.

--Matthew Taylor

Dead

once red
six roses stand stiff with hanging heads
over the table top
as if blood had dried on their very petals
they are dark and brittle.

none of them look at the others anymore
they all turn away
leaning out over the vase
and if they could
they would fall from the table
to rest
once more
gently upon the ground.

--Matt Butzow