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  
one more  
gently upon the ground.

--Matt Butzow