

Mademoiselle

“A couple who were found having sex in a Canadian military cemetery in France have been charged with public indecency” (News article)

Before we left the troop-ships, we were talking
About the land we were about to free,
The wine we'd drink, the grateful easy French girls
That General Byng was taking us to see.
“The Girl I Left Behind Me” was our quick-march,
But through the seasick days, the nights of dread,
We kept our spirits up with penny poker
And visions of the girls who lay ahead.

*Mademoiselle from Armentiers
Hasn't been fucked for forty years!*

Country boys, expert with a squirrel rifle
But unaccustomed to the target role,
We marched along to battle, virgin soldiers,
Homesick, uncertain, frightened, sore of sole,
Toward the trenches, trying to ignore
The fearful noise, the yet more fearful hush,
And reassured ourselves that we were men
With songs we hoped would make our mothers blush.

*Mademoiselle from Saint Lazaire
Doesn't believe in underwear!*

We passed the war-tired village women speaking
The unfamiliar language of the land,
That even “Frenchy” Mombourquette from Moncton
Was sometimes at a loss to understand.
No frou-frou skirts, but patched and sober dresses.
As we marched through with rifle and with pack,
They passed us bread, and rough red wine, and sausage,
Waved to us guardedly; and we waved back.

(con't)

*Mademoiselle from Perpignan
Takes her bath from a talcum can!*

Well, some got home; and those of us who didn't
Lie buried underneath the Thelus grass,
Disturbed sometimes by some French Romeo's knees
And (ah!) his eager sweetheart's pretty ass.
They say that the gendarmes have got to stop it,
And that it's an embarrassment to France,
Oh, balls! Good luck to you, kids, you and I know
I would have been there first if I'd the chance.

*And I wish I'd met the Mademoiselle
Before I met the Kaiser's shell.*

(Hinky-dinky, parlez-vous?)

Robert Dawson