

War is Kind
By Stephen Crane

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind,
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them.
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom--
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbles in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

1. To whom is the stanza addressed? Why?
2. What happened to the lover?
Why the image of "throwing wild hands in the sky?"
3. What is implied by the steed running alone?

4. To whom is the second second stanza addressed?
5. Why are the drums personified as "hoarse," and "booming"?
6. Why is "glory unexplained"? To whom is it a mystery?
7. What does the text state is the kingdom of the "battle-god"?

8. To whom is the third stanza addressed?
9. How does the text state the baby's father died?
The trenches are yellow to indicate cowardice.
Why would the trenches be yellow?

10. To whom is the fourth stanza addressed?
11. What line in the stanza puts down the soldiers as innate killers? Why the repetition of this line?
12. Why is the battle flag "swift," and "blazing"?
13. What does the poet mean in line 20?
14. Why does he use the term "excellence of killing" in line 21? How can killing be excellent?

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind!

15. Who does the narrator address in the final stanza?
16. What is the effect of the simile "humble as a button"? Why "humble" and why "a button"?
17. What is a "shroud"? Why is it described as splendid? What is the effect of the alliteration in the second line of the stanza?

Constructed Response: Answer the questions below in paragraph form using textual evidence to explain your answer.

1. Throughout the poem Crane states "war is kind" when he is describing unkind events and situations, why?
2. What is the Crane's purpose (author's purpose) and what is his attitude toward war?