

Ballad of a Hero

By Kate Tempest (2014) The 24th and final stanza has apparently been added later

Your Daddy is a soldier son,
Your Daddy's gone to War,
His steady hands they hold his gun,
His aim is keen and sure.

Your Daddy's in the desert now,
The darkness and the dust,
He's fighting for his country, yes,
He's doing it for us.

Your Daddy's coming home soon though,
Not long now till he's back,
We'll dress you in your smartest shirt
And meet him down the track.

He'll put you on his shoulders and
You'll sing and clap and laugh,
I'll wrap my arms around his waist,
And hold him close at last.

Your Dad ain't left the house again,
Your Dad ain't brushed his teeth,
Your Dad keeps getting angry son,
At nights he doesn't sleep.

He's having his bad dreams again,
He seems worn out and weak,
I've tried to be there for him, but
We barely even speak.

He can't think what to say to me,
He don't know how to tell it,
Won medals for his bravery,
But just wants to forget it.

He's drinking more than ever son
Before, he never cried. But now,
I wake at night and feel
Him shaking by my side.

He spoke to me at last my son!
He turned to me in tears,
I held him close and kissed his face
And asked him what he feared.

He said it's getting darker,
It hasn't disappeared,
And I can see it sharper
Now the sand and smoke have cleared.

There was this kid he'd got to know,
Young boy. Just turned eighteen,
Bright and kind, his name was Joe,
He kept his rifle clean.

Joe's girlfriend was expecting,
Joe loved to joke and laugh,
Joe marched in front of your old man,
As they patrolled a path.

Everything was quiet until
They heard the dreaded blast,
The man that marched in front of Joe
Was completely blown apart.

Some shrapnel hit Joe in the face,
Gouged out both eyes at once,
The last thing those eyes ever saw
Was the man in front.

Limbs and flesh and bone and blood,
Torn up and thrown around,
And after that – just blackness.
The taste, the stink, the sound.

I tell you this my son because
I know what you'll be like,
As soon as you've grown old enough
You'll want to go and fight

In whatever battle needs you,
You'll pledge your blood and bone,
Not in the name of good or evil –
But in the name of home.

Your Dad believes in fighting.
He fights for you and I,
But the men that send the armies in
Will never hear him cry.

I don't support this war my son,
I don't believe it's right,
But I do support the soldiers who
Go off to war to fight.

Troops just like your Daddy son,
Soldiers through and through,
Who wear their uniforms with pride,
And do what they're told to do.

When you're grown, my sweet, my love,
Please don't go fighting in wars,
But fight the men that start them
Or fight a cause that's yours.

It seems so full of honour, yes,
So valiant, so bold,
But the men that send the armies in
Send them in for gold,

Or they send them in for oil,
And they tell us it's for Britain
But the men come home like Daddy,
And spend their days just drinking.

Trying to get perspective on
The thoughts they can't stop thinking
while their sons stare at their Daddy's chest,
and watch the medals twinkling.