

Twelve River RIPPLES

Members' Poems



A Special Military Operation

The crimes committed are against the law.
First, the shocking invasion of Ukraine.
Oh no, he told us, this is not a war.

Quite traumatised by horrors that they saw,
fraught refugees escape on foot, by train.
The crimes committed are against the law.

Bodies pile up in basements on the floor,
some shot or starved, unburied. Quite insane.
Oh no, he told us, this is not a war.

Young mothers give birth early, midst the gore,
whilst others weep for husbands, sons, now slain.
The crimes committed are against the law

and Ukraine resists. Can it anymore?
Help is needed to take away this pain.
Oh no, he told us, this is not a war,

just a special operation, he swore.
A necessary tidy-up. Again.
No crime is committed against the law.
Never, he told us. This is not a war.

Angela Pickering

Members' Poems cont.

The Shawl

The shawl had taken months to knit,
Started with her seed of knowing,
Rows increasing with the swell of her belly,
From an indefinable flicker
to jabs that made her catch her breath.

Hands swollen with pregnancy,
she fumbled over intricate loops and curls,
Sometimes she dropped a stitch
and had to unravel rows then start again.
Sometimes she sang lullabies as her needles clicked
to soothe both her and her unborn child,

And when he was born she wrapped his
first raw cry within the shawl's soft folds,
cocooned him with her love,
Watched his matchstick fingers clasp
at stitches; a life raft in a world unknown.

Now she knits for him again,
her soldier son gone to war.
Camouflage nets she weaves all day
until her arms ache and her fingers are raw,
And she sings songs of anger and defiance
as the bombs fall and the bullets whizz

The net grows as she stifles fear
that the stitches will not hold,
And prays that the cover she weaves
may never become a shroud
to wrap her poor child in.

Jacqueline Woods

Members' Poems cont.

In the irrepressible weave of love

hangs the stench of hate,
stands the debris,
of blackened skeletons
of the Mariupol apartment blocks
and the Azovstal steelworks,
lie the seeds of dormant hope
feeding on the thousands of strands
of human particles of dust, rust,
sediment, and blood,
racking in the breath of death,
and bide their time.
One day these seeds will root,
propel growth,
calyxes stretching up inside
to reach heavenwards,
pushing themselves through the rubble
in which the multitudes lie cheering on,
till the light of sun-up is reached.
They will then open
in a dazzling array
of rainbow colours,
and life will take its place –
to be known as Mariupol.

Jacques Groen

For a Ripple of Laughter

This is not a Baguette

Why do you have that stale baguette
nailed to your kitchen door?
Could it be a reminder, now that you're rich,
of the days when you were poor,
and lived on stale bread and cheap red wine
and dreamed of earning more?

I'm sorry to have to tell you
that it's not an old baguette
it's a piece of rounded driftwood
that no-one ever ate.

Let's say it's a sort of homage
to that joker Rene Magritte
who painted a pipe that wasn't a pipe
and shoes that were actually feet.

Simon Haines