**The Hero**

Siegfried Sassoon

“Jack fell as he’d have wished,” the Mother said,

And folded up the letter that she’d read.

“The Colonel writes so nicely.” Something broke

In the tired voice that quavered to a choke.

She half looked up. “We mothers are so proud

Of our dead soldiers.” Then her face was bowed.

Quietly the Brother Officer went out.

He’d told the poor old dear some gallant lies

That she would nourish all her days, no doubt.

For while he coughed and mumbled, her weak eyes

Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,

Because he’d been so brave, her glorious boy.

He thought how “Jack,” cold-footed, useless swine,

Had panicked down the trench that night the mine

Went up at Wicked Corner, how he’d tried

To get sent home, and how, at last he died,

Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care

Except that lonely woman with white hair.

1916