

# An After-War Poem

by Lt. Col. William Adler, U.S. Army

Freshly scrubbed, fed and cleansed of your war—  
for now.

But you suspect,  
that the stink won't go away.

The odors will betray,  
(you) like the lies of privileged men.

"Ambition. Sacrifice. Honor."

"Now", you think,

"things all smell the same."

A change in the breeze  
brings on

burning rubber and oil.

The memories of sweat, urine, and shit.

Those smells of people and rot

The revolting dead-air breath

of coffee, cigarettes,

and vomit.

All compounded with

your

wild,

animal fear.

This is nature's trick—

to mock you for believing the lies.



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