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Called Up

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Called Up

Mike Vanden Bosch

When I hear the call to war, I sing songs
sad and sacred for the world's green-age boys
we swear to noble sacrifice. No throngs
bid adieu—one by one we cry goodbyes.

And not one soul cheers, for all mothers sob,
lovers fear, cling like rag dolls as if hell
gaped for them, eager to slay, to come lob
a bomb on the boy jingling his toy bell.

“I am not my brother's keeper,” I shout,
and crawl back into my comfort, eyes shut,
heart cold, as lives of innocents bleed out.
“God himself didn't stop the first killer's cut.”

Then Lincoln haunts my night: No way but blood
can free one thousand-dollar slave for good.