

THE SILVER DONKEY

BY SONYA HARTNETT

“The Front” Chapter 10

Freeze Frames

"In the trenches they would leave behind letters. These letters read, Take care, dearest, we'll meet again some day..." (p101)



"In the misty drifting light of dawn the signal was given and Lieutenant Shepard's platoon took its place behind the others and set off." (p103)



The earth was slippery and slick. Men gripped one another's arms to keep from falling. (P103)



"They came upon the enemy unexpectedly... the earth erupted as shells crashed down, dirt flung through the air like sea spray" (p104).



"His legs buckled with the shock, his chin struck the ground. He dropped into a shallow pocket in the muck and stayed there" (p104)



"'Lieutenant, Lieutenant,' Ernie was trembling, fluttering his hands... The Lieutenant could not let this boy fade into the mud, his final words unheard. (p107)



“ ‘Pocket, pocket.’ The Lieutenant saw a titan turn, having heard the voice. The Lieutenant clamped a hand on Ernie’s mouth, but the giant had heard.” (P110)



The giant was there suddenly, on the edge of the gutter. The Lieutenant relaxed into the mud. He kept his eyes open. He prayed he looked like a lifeless shadow on the ground. 'In my pocket!' said Ernie".

(p111)

The giant's bayonet flashed down. The lieutenant did not blink.



He lay motionless for what seemed like hours. With shaking hands the Lieutenant unfastened Ernie's pocket. He envisioned ghosts and souls spilling free. Instead, inside the pocket was a photograph... He tucked it into Ernie's hand." (p112)



Then he began to walk home...He might yet have stopped, but he didn't, he kept walking. Amid the shooting and shouting and detonating shells, no one noticed he'd gone.
(p113)



The silver donkey gazed peacefully at him through the soft light of the flame. And the soldier sat down and sobbed then, so happy he was going home. (P114)

