

Waiting for a Soldier, 1917

The dull daguerreotype holds her image
As if on weave of linen. Light grazes
Her surface, whose immediate glow amazes
Our memory. She was young before the rage
Of contravening hate in the fiery cage
Of war, when restitution began in phases
On the kaiser's front among mounds and mazes
Of Verdun, the continuity. Hail, gut of sage
And soldier in a wiry violin, excrescent
And warbling gas in its venue, chlorine
Nestling in a lung that sogs in a tureen
Of skull, whose strewn mind, recent
In its occupancy, is green in the rush
Of death like proud flesh, the intaglio.

—Clinton F. Larson