

End of War

The baton had a familiar feel of ice sealed in blasted steel. It had the touch of a leech's bite and drained all heat from the pulsing sunlight.

Its words spoke of dying love and taunted sacrifice. It radiated the awe to heal and forgive the lost and broken men far away in Afghanistan. The baton was like a beacon of light... a shard of defiance and gift of mysterious warmth. Holding it was like holding a candle... no a torch of guidance for the lost who left unspoken words where they dwindled into ash and dust.

In my dreams I met a man in colours of green olives and sandy grit-almost like dust- with a beret and proud insignias on his broad chest. He stood in front of me with soldiers of many eras and times from over many seas. They all stood in formation and saluted me as the commander spoke

"Though you stand alone in this war of yours, remember that victory comes at a price with great rewards to the losers." I saw a conflict resolve in their peaceful souls for they had long departed a day, a decade if not dozens of centuries ago.

"Believe in yourself lad, even if your folks aren't there they will remember you just as we will. Remember us in this burden and stand for us and carry us as we have and will fight, die and wander with you as we will always remember you for carrying such a burden." He shed a silent tear they fell into the dust. "war is meaningless, war brings nothing. Nothing ever good comes out of war except the wounds that are carried with it." He nodded at the object in my left hand.

"Remember to fight on for us. Remember what I told you for we will continue as we always have to do our duty."

His words soothed me and made me realise that he was not just speaking of war but of my conflict within me with many others. This wonderful baton of the four made me see the resolve in my personal war on myself where conflict now became peace and envy became pride. Where I had fear, I had confidence for I was walking among many a patron whispering wishes into the dust to bring the end of war.

By Frederick Cooper