

Number 99

A cry against the waste of war by Sonia Ramos Rossi

No more Christmases for you. The black hand of war has pulled you away from us, with a bullet.

No more pints in the pub with your mates or hours watching TV with your little sister. All finished now.

No more kisses from your girlfriend, the lovemaking is all over. She won't feel your touch again, nor hear your whispered words of endearment. She'll never carry your babies, you'll never see them, they won't exist. What might have been, all gone. Grandchildren too. Nothing but ghosts to trouble your mother.

No more joking with your dad over the Christmas turkey, you've had your last one, pulled your last cracker too, heard your last bang, but not the one that killed you.

Did you enjoy walking in the Scottish hills? Did you go climbing in the Cairngorm Mountains or hiking on the Isle of Arran, in Pitlochry or down the shore-side paths of Loch Lomond, along the Greenock cut or in the Trossachs? Perhaps you did. You never will again.

Or perhaps you preferred the streets of Aberdeen, the life of a big city? Did you enjoy the sparkling granite buildings, the pretty girls and the night life in the old town? The pipers and the pageant? You won't see that again either.

No more football on the telly, or on the terraces at Pittodrie, shouting for the Dons. You'll never know who won the league, not so important now. Game over.

Not another tot of whisky will pass your lips. That warming golden drop has been and gone for you. No more little sips that lingered on your tongue. Nope, all finished now, like a bottle smashed, its precious contents pouring fast away into the sand to disappear. A lingering odour of single malt remains, to remind us of what has been lost.

Allan Douglas, born 1984, Aberdeen, Scotland, died January 2006, Maysan, Iraq, aged 22. RIP. He was the 99th British soldier to die in Iraq.

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