



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
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POEMS OF LIBERTY

War and Peace in Europe




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Foreword

The number of wars and armed conflicts are declining throughout the world. It might not seem that way, due to the easy access of information and the tendency of the media to share news of conflict more than of peace, but despite perceptions, harmony among people is gaining ground over conflict. At least this was the trend up until now.

War is yet again ravaging Europe. The streets of Ukraine, that once looked vibrant like any other in Europe are now derelict and devastated. Several thousands are dead, and millions are forced to leave their homes. The majority of peoples in Europe, whether they are citizens of the EU or not, want peace. Even in Russia, where the propaganda media stops people from accessing valid information easily, almost a quarter of the population are against the war. People are usually for peace, but strongmen of authoritarian regimes do not often share in the reasonable, moral, and beneficial support for harmony among nations. Unfortunately, the calm of Europe can be shattered by the terrible actions of a few people, like Vladimir Putin, who has been instigating atrocities in Ukraine since 2014, and in other European countries, such as Georgia even before, lying to the people of Russia, stealing from them and oppressing their freedoms.

Strong democracies, that reflect the decisions of citizens, are governed by rule of law, democracy and the goal of prosperity for all. Since democracies strive for growth and prosperity, rule of law and freedom, security and peace, it is not in the interest of their governments to start hostilities. This is particularly true for Post-WWII-Europe: In its western part, the peoples of the European Union have been enjoying the longest period of peace in their countries in history. The member states lived in concord with each other for 70 years, as peace among nations is one of the key priorities of the EU. In alignment with these priorities, the EU-Enlargement, just as the enlargement of NATO towards central and eastern Europe, was a peace-and-freedom-project, for which the bloc was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. The EU, however, is not only interested in peace within its borders but internationally as well, similarly to most countries in Europe and all over the world.

Discussions about the nature, ethics, sense and impact of war are a common focus of arts. Paintings such as Guernica by Pablo Picasso, songs such as Gimme Shelter by the Rolling Stones, or the sculpture of a gun with a knot in its barrel, called Non-violence by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd are all protests against armed conflicts. Poets too contributed countless works to the subject, and that is where our publication comes in.

This edition of Poems of Liberty seeks to explore the complex field of war and peace that we are witnessing in Europe today. It reflects on the arrival of war and the myriad of feelings that people encounter, in Isaac Rosenberg's "On Receiving the First News of War". In "The Charge of the Light Brigade", Alfred Lord Tennyson then discusses the bravery and sacrifice of soldiers, as it is witnessed today in Ukraine. Famous Ukrainian writer Taras Shevchenko's poem "Zapovit", which is provided in the original Ukrainian, as well as an English version, ties into the narrative with his emotional plea for a free Ukraine. In a turn towards hope and resolution of the current war, Emily Dickinson's "Hope is the Thing With Feathers" sends us a message of hope and solidarity, as we can find it in the support that Ukraine and those fleeing the conflict have been encountering across the EU. Finally, Ernest Crosby will offer us one of his powerful satirical poems "War and Hell, XVI [I am a great inventor]", in which he juxtaposes acts of war with those of kindness. Poetry delivers a strong and lively testimony of history, in grasping the ambivalence of human emotions and reflections when it comes to war and peace, freedom and suppression, living though the horrors of war or fighting for just causes. They make us think and feel, and that is what we invite you to discover for yourself.



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On Receiving the First News of War

Isaac Rosenberg

Snow is a strange white word;
No ice or frost
Has asked of bud or bird
For Winter's cost.

Yet ice and frost and snow
From earth to sky
This Summer land doth know;
No man knows why.

In all men's hearts it is:
Some spirit old
Hath turned with malign kiss
Our lives to mould.

Red fangs have torn His face,
God's blood is shed:
He mourns from His lone place
His children dead.

O ancient crimson curse!
Corrode, consume;
Give back this universe
Its pristine bloom.

Isaac Rosenberg (25 November 1890 – 1 April 1918) was an English artist and poet. He served in the military during World War I and his *Poems from the Trenches* became known as some of the most outstanding WWI poetry. Rosenberg's poem *On Receiving the First News of War* comments on the senselessness of war and describes his reaction to the outbreak of WWI, exploring the sense of anxious foreboding of the upcoming horrors through a variety of symbols of life, death, and rebirth.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

Alfred Lord Tennyson (6 August 1809 – 6 October 1892) is one of the most well-loved Victorian poets and was the Poet Laureate throughout most of Queen Victoria's reign. He was awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal at Cambridge for one of his first works, "Timbuktu". His poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" is a dramatic tribute to the British cavalry that fell due to an ill-advised charge during the Crimean War in 1854. In celebrating the act of bravery and sacrifice, it suggests that heroism is a mix of bravery and duty, as it includes the willingness to obey orders at all costs. Tennyson was a supporter of the Liberal Party, promoted universal suffrage and societal progress through steady reform, rather than revolution. A number of phrases from Tennyson's work have become commonplace in the English language, including "Nature, red in tooth and claw" ("In Memoriam A.H.H."), "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all", "Theirs not to reason why, / Theirs but to do and die", "My strength is as the strength of ten, / Because my heart is pure", "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield", "Knowledge comes, but Wisdom lingers", and "The old order changeth, yielding place to new". He is also the ninth most frequently quoted writer in The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

Zapovit

Taras Shevchenko

Як умру, то поховайте
Мене на могилі,
Серед степу широкого,
На Україні милій,
Щоб лани широкополі,
І Дніпро, і кручі
Було видно, було чути,
Як реве ревучий.

Як понесе з України
У синєє море
Кров ворожу... отоді я
І лани, і гори —
Все покину і полину
До самого Бога
Молитися... а до того
Я не знаю Бога.

Поховайте та вставайте,
Кайдани порвіте
І вражою злою кров'ю
Волю окропіте.

І мене в сім'ї великій,
В сім'ї вольній, новій,
Не забудьте пом'янути
Незлим тихим словом.

Testament

When I am dead, bury me
In my beloved Ukraine,
My tomb upon a grave mound high
Amid the spreading plain,
So that the fields, the boundless steppes,
The Dnieper's plunging shore
My eyes could see, my ears could hear
The mighty river roar.

When from Ukraine the Dnieper bears
Into the deep blue sea
The blood of foes ... then will I leave
These hills and fertile fields—
I'll leave them all and fly away
To the abode of God,
And then I'll pray But until that day
I know nothing of God.

Oh bury me, then rise ye up
And break your heavy chains
And water with the tyrants' blood
The freedom you have gained.
And in the great new family,
The family of the free,
With softly spoken, kindly word
Remember also me.

Taras Shevchenko (9 March 1814 – 10 March 1861) also known as Kobzar Taras or just Kobzar (which refers to a bard in Ukrainian culture) was a Ukrainian writer, poet, artist, ethnographer, and political figure. His literary work is regarded as the foundation of modern Ukrainian literature and to some extent also as the foundation of the modern Ukrainian language. His poem *Zapovit* is widely known in Ukraine and has attracted more than 60 musical interpretations. He wrote the poem as his "last will and testament" in 1845, when he was seriously ill with pneumonia. After his death, Shevchenko was initially buried in St. Petersburg. However, fulfilling his wish to be buried in "my beloved Ukraine", his friends arranged for the transfer of his remains to Chernecha Hora (Monk's Hill, now Taras Hill). Apart from his literary work, he is well known for his paintings and illustrations. Shevchenko was a champion of Ukrainian independence and was politically convicted in 1847 for promoting it in his poems, as well as ridiculing members of the Russian Imperial House. His work has greatly influenced Ukrainian national consciousness, intellectual, literary, and national life.

Hope is the Thing With Feathers

Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Emily Dickinson (10 December 1830 – 15 May 1886) was an American poet. While she was extremely prolific as a poet, it was not until after her death that her work was published and she was recognised as one of the most important figures in American poetry. Her work largely revolves around themes of death and immortality, as well as society, nature, aesthetics, and spirituality. With this poem, Dickinson seeks to remind readers of the power that lies in hope, how it helps us overcome difficulty, and how little it requires of each of us.

War and Hell, XVI [I am a great inventor]

Ernest Crosby

I am a great inventor, did you but know it.
I have new weapons and explosives and devices to
substitute for your obsolete tactics and tools.
Mine are the battle-ships of righteousness and integrity—
The armor-plates of a quiet conscience and self-respect—
The impregnable conning-tower of divine manhood—
The Long Toms of persuasion—
The machine guns of influence and example—
The dum-dum bullets of pity and remorse—
The impervious cordon of sympathy—
The concentration camps of brotherhood—
The submarine craft of forgiveness—
The torpedo-boat-destroyer of love—
And behind them all the dynamite of truth!
I do not patent my inventions.
Take them. They are free to all the world.

Ernest Crosby (4 November 1856 – 3 January 1907) was an American reformer and author. From 1889 to 1894 he served as judge on the Court of the First Instance in Alexandria, Egypt. Crosby was a close friend of writer Leo Tolstoy and exponent of his theories and ideas on universal peace. He employed a variety of methods to oppose expansionism and the war and published the renown anti-imperialist novel *Captain Jinks, Hero*. His satiric style, which can also be seen in his poem *War and Hell*, is distinctive and powerful, as it juxtaposes weapons of war with acts of kindness.



Marta Okrasko – Embracing Europe

Excerpt from the *Animating Covid-19* publication by FNF Europe
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