

THE WOUND IN TIME

It is the wound in Time. The century's tides,
chanting their bitter psalms, cannot heal it.
Not the war to end all wars; death's birthing place;
the earth nursing its ticking metal eggs, hatching
new carnage. But how could you know, brave
as belief as you boarded the boats, singing?
The end of God in the poisonous, shrapneled air.
Poetry gargling its own blood. We sense it was love
you gave your world for; the town squares silent,
awaiting their cenotaphs. What happened next?
War. And after that? War. And now? War. War.
History might as well be water, chastising this shore;
for we learn nothing from your endless sacrifice.
Your faces drowning in the pages of the sea.

Carol Ann Duffy, 2018