Men of No Living Nation

by Aliana

Summary

Can we find correctives in No Man's Land?

Notes

March 2
**B2MeM Challenge: We - Deep Thoughts**
Real Estate - *Economy*
March 8th - The Dead receive their summons - *March 3019, TA*
**Format:** Drabble pair
**Genre:** Drama
**Rating:** Teen
**Warnings:** Disturbing imagery
**Characters:** JRR Tolkien, The Dead

1916

The signalman peers over the edge. In no man’s land, the ground’s gray and pocked as the skin of some invalid. Studded with shells, pierced with barbed wire.

And the bodies, broken and riddled as the earth, but not of it. Some half-in, half-out of craters, arms outstretched, eyes staring. Others face-down in the mud. The ones whose retreat was not swift enough. They are the in-between: neither in one trench nor the other, half-buried but not
interred, in a place to which no owner can lay deed or claim.

John wonders if they are waiting to be called home.

3019

They are the gray ones, the ragged ones, lingering. A collection of bitter riddles: Bound by the earth but no longer in its embrace; whispers without speech; regret without recollection. Men of no living nation, bearing standards of smoke, and breathing, breathless, half-recollected songs of ash. Faces and voices worn to sameness as rocks on a riverbed, Is and You now faded to an eternal We.

We wait.

Then, the summons.

Memories stir, time folds in on itself as a weather-worn pennant. They will go, then, and cross the distance, cross the un-hallowed ground that stands between them and release.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!