

**Pluck**

-Eva Dobell

Crippled for life at seventeen,  
His great eyes seem to question why:  
With both legs smashed it might have been  
Better in that grim trench to die  
Than drag maimed years out helplessly.

A child – so wasted and so white,  
He told a lie to get his way,  
To march, a man with men, and fight  
While other boys are still at play.  
A gallant lie your heart will say.

So broke with pain, he shrinks in dread  
To see the 'dresser' drawing near;  
And winds the clothes about his head  
That none may see his heart-sick fear.  
His shaking, strangled sobs you hear.

But when the dreaded moment's there  
He'll face us all, a soldier yet,  
Watch his bared wounds with unmoved air,  
(Though tell-tale lashes still are wet),  
And smoke his woodbine cigarette.