

2014

If I should die, safe in a Bournemouth bed,
let it not be still thinking that such war
was sportsmanship, or that the dead
could just get up and play on as before.
O football was played famously for sure
when boys (no matter what the papers said)
knew well by then that 'war to end all war'
meant death, their death: futility that led
to pity only, just to go on again
manning the guns and felling fellow men
like walking trees through fields in lawless dreams
freefalling into nightmares, which in peacetime
ruptured still - in families - yours and mine:
a loved one woken by inhuman screams.

James Manlow

Poet Laureate for Bournemouth

a poem to commemorate the centenary of the First World War

Feel free to re-post, print, photocopy this poem / share & use it
jamesmanlow.com