Indelible: (*In Loving Memory).*

We did not have to go; remained to knit

and sew, hold jumble sales, find socks

and blankets for our brave men at the front.

How we tossed and turned at night,

we onlywhispered to close friends,

heads bent below the Union Jack,

pretending it wasour endeavour.

What we gave was waiting.

Watched from windows, hoped

there was no one at the gate.

Grew used to saying: ‘He was the bravest

and the best’. Laid hands on arms. Re -read

the cheerful lying letters received onthe

embroidered postcards, they sent on leave.

It wasn’t until later at the comings home,

the Hospital down the lane:

the men who couldn’t show their faces,

eyes in well, holes for a nose, cheeks

showing muscles red like meat, two or three

lost limbs. Some so haunted, they could

not sleep, were taken screaming tothe asylum.

We tried to comfort, bend, lift,and listen.

Indelible, we could not wash and bandage it.

They did not want the pity.

So in loving memory,light a candle for

those country men; *Fuller, Fielding, Negus,*

*Pepper, Farnham, East, Flack, Harrup, Dash*

*and Chamberlain. Those pals.*

And for us, please don’t mention loyalty and angels,

Refuse the raffle to guess the name of dolls.

No patriotic songs will restore the facesof

brothers, fathers, sons, whose children only

know them now, as poppies.

Clare Crossman