

## A Young Civil War Soldier's Tale

"Lay still now, soldier", the Union General said,  
As he knelt down beside the boy's bloody, wounded head.  
The lad, no more than fifteen, if a day,  
Wore the blight of a cannon, and being in its way.

The General swallowed hard to fight back the pressing tears,  
Before he gazed upon his soldier, now less his limbs and gear.  
"S-Sir, is it b-bad?" the soldier asked, in a voice filled with fear.  
"Not at all," the General lied, knowing the boy had not a prayer.

"You'll soon be headin' home," he continued in a whisper.  
"Back to your mammy and your pappy, and your favorite dog, Kipper."  
The young soldier forced a smile and then closed his swollen eyes,  
"Why Sir, I think I see them! Looks like ma baked me two pies."

The General shuddered knowing, the lads' folks died years ago,  
And the dog named Kipper-- killed in an avalanche of snow.  
He only knew these things, since he had taken the boy in,  
As this dying soldiers' father had been his only next of kin.

"This bloodshed has to stop" the General groaned, shaking his head,  
"Did our boys grow up together just to shoot each other dead?"  
"Must be something I can do!" he yelled, rising to his feet,  
Only to be silenced by a bullet as it grazed across his cheek.

The soldier took a last breath, his head fell back-- eyes open wide.  
The General removed his own sword and laid it by the boy's side.  
"Go now, son," he whispered, "back to those you love,"  
"And give them my regards; in fact give your pa a shove."

Suddenly, in the distance, he heard another soldier's cry,  
"Sir! The South has just surrendered as stated by a Union spy!"  
The General stood up slowly and brushed off his dusty knees,  
Wiped away a single tear, returning to his artillery.