

Thyme and Thyme Again

by Sandy Brue

Madding cries cut through fields of wild thyme.
Clubs clash, flesh is torn from bone. A battle for dominance,
land, wooly mammoths and caves. After darkness, women
gather herbs for stews of healing and to pack wounds.

Civilization flourishes! Then a flash of steel in sunlight, shields
raised and horses' hooves gash through the same perennial
field. Pawns bleed with whims of a King, whose blood-soaked
pennant falls on plants who will be nourished next season by
rotting cloth and calcium.

At home, the Queen burns incense and strews the banquet hall
with thyme, honoring the slaughtered. A young prince was
tested, tasted bitters. A princess watched her knight carry his
shield and her colors, his courage, a silent summons of death.

Years and tears later on the same field, hair plastered with
sweat, blurred vision, dry cracked lips, caps pulled low,
bayonets raised, another column steps in line marching over
thyme. Heavy boots crush and release a fragrance first
recognized in their mother's kitchens.

Later still, the field is scarred by tank tread and tire tracks that
dig up roots of thyme, destroying the plant and choking the air
with sulfur and gun powder. No healer gathers herbs for
disinfectant after battle. Medics with needles still the pain
when blood again bathes the field.

Victory speeches honor the dead, homeland secure. Each time
a battle to end all battles, war to end all wars, crush evil and get
elected. Children born in blood grow used to conflict.