

*The Keepsake*

*A soldier, gleaning  
among the enemy dead,  
pockets a silk flag.*

*For fifty years this  
keepsake will lie footlockered,  
furled and forgotten.*

*We've seen pilots stand  
as one, drain a last dram of sake,  
wave goodbye*

*brows bound in white silk  
ink-stroked with names, prayers, and  
soaked  
with a scarlet sun.*

*Here, spread on tables,  
silken prayers we cannot read  
flutter as we pass.*

*What is silk? Ask the  
worm that spins his winding sheet  
while he dreams of wings.*

*--Mary Buckner Brubaker*