

the hydra-phone by R I Shaw



Call 1 - the men in the mud

- hello
- are you there, can you receive me, will you let me in?
- hello, can I help you?
- It's you.
- I'm sorry but who are you?
- I am speaking to the right person.
- who is this?
- listen.
- listen?
- to our past.
- I think I shall hang up.
- no, no. the war. this phone, the hydraphone, we have to warn everybody about the floods. when the flood came, we waited, so long, so long for you to answer. here underwater.
- underwater? what flood, where?
- you and I were grinding in the mud with bullets flying by, your hands all over on your last night under when your last bomb came by. commanders didn't get it we were only ever lovers away from a special kind of peace.
- I'm sorry have we met, did we hook up, was it a horny one-nighter, should I remember you?
- so many times, you were my secret. we loved like ancients, and fought like dragons in an other's myth, I battled so hard to stay with you my peaceful-warrior-lover-man. we were secret.

- and illegal too, no doubt. I'm so sorry but you have the wrong person, I wasn't even born then.
- it's all the same under here, there is no up, there is no down, there is no time, no enemy nor battle. you lie down as lovers when the fighting stops, your enemy, you are the same, they drew up a field of battles, we lay down forever in a field of dreams.
- look who is this, what do you want?
- we owe you everything.
- what do you mean?
- the war was won but you have won a peace.
- a piece?
- a peace, of acceptance never seen before.
- but I think you won the war.
- for men like us. yet, we owe them too.
- who?
- the greatest war poets, ever lived, all of them were queer.
- oh, I see.
- so, its time to remember them.
- that makes sense
- let's see:



you long for dark eyed lovers, wistful wonderings for men in the mud. you want to make
love to your enemy but there are orders to murder him, instead. these queer old ancient
Cain-killer-ways can't rub out desire. last night he surfaced in your ocean, all muscular and
wet. today, you spreadeagle, pin him. raise your blade:

but no:

long in those eyes.

you know fit fellow from under, from deepest darkest fathom of unlit pride.

– no, not enemy, surely not...

you quietly put the blade away, one kiss, and then another. you lick yourselves in camouflage, make passion with bullets overhead.

next morning news spreads like tentacles through trenches either side:

a tale of a German and an English all odd and curled together, tight passion-welded, mud wrapped inseparable spoons.

naked.

stone dead.

given back for sacred rites to comrades in arms, a note was prised from one strange and stiffened palm:

I am the enemy you killed, my friend. I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed. I parried; but my hands were loath and cold. Let us sleep now... Wild-Fred

hydra's nine heads erect
eighteen eyes that cut you.

hydra,

forever coming at you.

