

#939

Ambulance Unit

Arthur Henry King

For E.H.K.'s epitaph¹

'Say goodbye to all
this bluddled nonsense on earth:
simple rot inside
a coffin's a better life.
I'm now more trouble than I'm

worth to myself and
to others. So I shall choose
myself a quiet
and, I hope, a dignified
exit to another entrance.'

He did, without fuss.
He had maintained for nearly
sixty-three years a
manly and dutiful stance
about his long Somme nightmare:

1. Patricia King's father served in a Quaker-sponsored ambulance corps during World War I. He died at the King home in Orem, Utah, in May 1984.

tumbled guts, split brains,
staring corpses, anxious eyes
still living, screams, gas—
in the shadows of these his
family life, his daily

care for detailed work,
his patient teaching of all
practical matters,
his determination not
to ask why, but to endure . . .

ARTHUR HENRY KING, a native of England, was a much-admired professor of English at Brigham Young University from 1970 until his retirement in 1994. He died in 2000. King wrote more than fifteen hundred poems but published only several dozen. These poems appeared in *Conversion: Poems of the Religious Life 1963–1994*, edited by Fred C. Pinnegar (Orem, Utah: Sharpshooter Press, 2001).