

# Blood and Steel

Stella Lou Johnson

“I will have the man from the field,” cried Industry—  
And a peaceful nation answered,  
“No, leave the farmer.  
He must feed his country!”  
“Then give me the artist and musician—  
They are soft, but I will make them strong.”  
And a happy people sang their disapproval.  
“No!  
“The artist must show us the beauty of a sunset;  
The musician must write our national hymns  
That we may sing our love of this land.”

And so he smoldered, hungrily,  
Until a day that drove the carefree people to his door.  
Somberly, they gazed upon the smoke-grey skies.  
Frightened, they looked into his fire-red eyes:  
“We are soft, and you can make us strong.  
We must fight to save our galleries, our concert halls—  
We must be strong to save the farms!”

Roaring, the giant of giants,  
Industry, opened wide his furnaces—  
Placed his mask on women welders  
And guns in the hands of men.  
Sweating he poured forth tons of shipping,  
Cannons, tanks, bombs!  
The farm boy hurtled through the sky in flaming death;  
The artist died upon a stretch of desert sand;  
The musician felt the sting of salt upon his bleeding chest  
As he sang his last valiant song—  
But Industry did not sigh:  
These were not his dead—  
His blood was steel.