***John Dayton***

        A Poem Worth Reading

He was getting old and paunchy

And his hair was falling fast,

And he sat around the Legion,

Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in

And the deeds that he had done,

In his exploits with his buddies;

They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors

His tales became a joke,

All his  buddies listened quietly

For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,

For ol' Joe has passed away,

And the world's a little poorer

For a Soldier died today.

He won't be mourned by many,

Just his children and his wife.

For he lived an ordinary,

Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,

Going quietly on his way;

And the world won't note his  passing,

'Tho a Soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth,

Their bodies lie in state,

While thousands note their passing,

And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories

From the time that they were young

But the passing of a Soldier

Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution

To the welfare of our land,

Some jerk who breaks his  promise

And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow

Who in times of war and strife,

Goes off to serve his country

And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend

And the style in which he lives,

Are often disproportionate,

To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Soldier,

Who offered up his all,

Is paid off with a medal

And perhaps a pension,  small.

It is not the politicians

With their compromise and ploys,

Who won for us the freedom

That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger,

With your enemies at hand,

Would you really want some cop-out,

With his ever waffling stand?

Or would you want a Soldier--

His home, his country, his kin,

Just a common Soldier,

Who would fight until the  end.

He was just a  common Soldier,

And his ranks are growing thin,

But his presence should remind us

We may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict,

We find the Soldier's part

Is to clean up all the troubles

That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor

While he's here to hear the praise,

Then at  least let's give him homage

At the ending of his  days.

Perhaps  just a simple headline

In the paper that might say:

"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,

A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."