Dragging its stained length
the cold hilltop shepherd boy
in soldier's great-coat

Belgium

Through screaming gulls
eleven gory chards plummet
the padre and chalice

Italy

The grasshopper's eye
stares through the Hun's rifle sight
J'accuse! j'accuse!

France

Obon gravestone cleansed
her tear-stitched seminbari
red stains folded in

Japan

Fruit of the Balkans
dug up from under plum trees
wrist-bound and bootless

Srebrenica

Somber Buddhist crowd
in the stifling city square
the monk's burning bush

Vietnam

Blind Imam's chickpeas
Enough for a martyr's belt
if ball bearings!

New York

Half-buried in dank sand
the boy's hot-lead soldier
raised on the third day

Canada

Notes:

The title is taken from a Heraclitus quote from *The Father of us all: War & History* by V.D. Hanson (Bloomsbury Press, 2010).

J'accuse, (Emile Zola on antisemitism).

Senninbar - a Mother's hand-stitched amulet (1000 stiches) for sons, some stitched with good luck red thread.

Obon: Period when graves are cleansed and ancestors' spirits return home to be reunite briefly with family.

Srebrenica: 1990's Balkan countryside massacres.

Blind Cleric - Sentenced (1996) to life for conspiracy to bomb NYC.

Guy Simser began writing with a stylus pen and school desk inkwell. Now his lyric & Japanese form poems are published in eight countries.

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WAR IS THE FATHER OF US ALL

by Guy Simser