

11/11/18

Written for the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, 11/11/2018

Armistice Day
The end of “The war to end war.”
’Twas more than a lifetime ago.

Kellogg-Briand
The treaty prohibiting war —
But only in theory (so far).

United States
Chief sponsor of Kellogg-Briand;
Now greatest purveyor of war.

Veterans’ Day
The new name for Armistice Day.
It turned out that war had but paused.

We demand peace.
The best way to honor our vets
Is: Stop making more of them.

— Perry Hutchison

Second Thoughts

On 10/1/2015, a heavily armed student at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, opened fire in a classroom, killing nine and wounding nine others.

That evening, President Obama lamented, “Somehow, this has become normal.”

This nation, born of popular revolt
against repeated and most grievous harms,
hath ever after worshipped – to a fault –
the right of every citizen to arms.

Meanwhile the musket of those bygone days,
which fired three rounds a minute – in skilled hands,
hath given way to rifles that can blaze
a hundred times as fast – with few demands.

And now, each decade, more of us do fall
before the people’s Remingtons and Glocks
than e’er were lost to sword and blast and ball
in any war our nation ever fought.

It’s ’come routine; the carnage rages on –
the toll, year after year, about the same –
each victim, and each shooter, but a pawn:
the trade in guns and ammo is the game.

— Perry Hutchison

*Perry Hutchison is a member of
Multnomah Monthly Meeting in Portland,
OR (NPYM).*