

# War Nurses and Lost Fathers - For Memorial Day

*by* Myra King

*You tell them anything  
they want to hear,*

my mother, a nurse, says,  
when I have  
come of age  
to know such things

*I have been mother  
to a hundred soldiers  
holding their hands  
barely knowing  
their names*

I strut my childhood  
invincibility  
tough as tanks  
from my father's regiment  
coffins of steel,  
they and I,  
closed in

release comes  
only in  
fragments, from  
someone's

words,  
unpinned

*your father would have  
felt nothing,  
not like those poor souls  
I nursed alone  
while shells bloomed overhead  
leaving their roses in the ground*

and the papa,  
I have never known,  
will grow  
in mind until  
our ages merge  
and the last candle is  
blown out,  
on wishes unmade.

