

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.

