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Dear Father Peter,

I squat within a horrendous trench sometime between day and night, somewhere near life – yet closer to death. Bombs detonate in the distance as my fellow soldier howl their concluding words; I crouch below, a pen in my right hand and my left fingering the cross you places within my pocket. I reminisce the Sundays I spent in your pew; my ears grasping every word you shared, every scripture you emphasized. Now, after fighting in Europe for less than a year, I have become a faithless man; questioning the very existence of our Lord.

Father, I cannot perceive how you stand at the alter, preaching the superiority of God when the world is burning in chaos. Young men, complete with potential, senselessly slaughtering one another. Woman stranded performing two roles. Children wandering with tear streaked faces. The world is at war with itself!

It is unclear what we are battling for; that segment of land is not worth the sacrifices that have been made, there must be more to gain. It seems we are fighting ourselves; fighting to remain alive, fighting our morals, fighting to guard the essence of who we used to be.

It truly is autumn Father. Our lives, once green with promise, have withered to a burnt blood red. As trees cry leaves in Canada, we weep as humanity crumbles to the ground here.

I envied my mate as he collapsed to the ground the other day; though I question if a place after death exists, no where is better than here.

Father, I riffled through a bible of one of my comrade's, desperately searching for a renewal of belief; what I discovered were empty words. The quote that haunted my dissolving faith was found in 1 Peter 1:21: "who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

These men are dead. They will never rise. They will never give glory. I cannot have faith, since to have faith I would need to see a hint of righteousness, there is none to be found: not in the deafening of the bombs, or the power of our bullets, or the plundering of our knives. My religious devotion that drifted within me across the sea has faltered, draining away with every blood drop shed by my comrades.

It is more tolerant to kill now than in the beginning. We soldiers are ghosts of what we once were. There appears to be a glint of gratitude that flickers through our foe's eyes as they gasp their final breaths. Our generals

convince us that our enemies are faceless, cold-hearted killers, yet when we confront in battle they are our mirror image.

Father, most men ask "what are we dying for?" I inquire "what are we living for?" Why are we in this world for a mere moment, and quarrelling in this minute amount of time? This war is changing the world and lives, yet this change is not progressing the goodness it was intended to. Though heaven may not exist, this hell certainly does. Please, Father, assist me to find faith somewhere in this bleak world of ours.

Robert E McCutcheon