Inscription on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Richard N. Mason*
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Sci. So.

My body was trained to stand erect.
My feet were shown the way correct.
Maneuvers were taught and I learned with skill,
Hundreds of bloody ways to kill.

But my conscience said no.
I wore a uniform polished and neat.
Complete from cap to boots on my feet.
I handled a gun and learned how to shoot,
In short how to murder, to rape and to loot.

I was sent into battle with hate in my heart.
I shot and I killed, well taught from the start.
I followed orders like any good sheep.
My higher ideals I could not keep,
For my conscience said no.

I lie eternal in the grave “unknown,”
Death my companion, death alone.
Glory has faded like a morning star
Leaving an ugly unhealing scar,
My conscience.