

## Architect

With a few lines on paper  
you structure a war  
memorial and explain  
the strain of translating  
abstractions: Freedom,  
Democracy, the difficulty  
of integrating high concept  
with vernacular landscape.

We turn to your screen for  
a virtual walk-thru. From  
two dimensions, we create three.  
In the fourth lie

The Great War, Good War,  
Forgotten War, Cold War, Vietnam War,  
First Iraq War, Second Iraq War  
and all the little genocides  
permitted in between.

You point to a void at the center  
where a strong golden light  
will one day break through.  
You say it's the beam of Liberty.

Lobbyists will gather in the lobby  
Airmen will tell bold tales of bombings  
Seamen will display models  
of their battleships and carriers.  
Infantry men will enshrine their boots and guns.

The Proxy War, the Lost War, the Oil War,  
The war for the sake of war. Ongoing war.  
Every war a civil war.  
You say major battles  
can be simulated in safety.  
And we will not remember  
those who fought against us  
or at our nation's side.

Old men seek the balm  
of recognition; we oblige.

Shauna Singh Baldwin