By the Bivouac’s Fitful Flame

Walt Whitman

By the bivouac’s fitful flame,
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow;—but first I note,
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields’ and woods’ dim outline,
The darkness, lit by spots of kindled fire—the silence;
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving;
The shrubs and trees, (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily watching me;)
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous thoughts,
Of life and death—of home and the past and loved, and of those that are far away;
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground,
By the bivouac’s fitful flame.