The Greatest Generation

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it was on the walls of this pristine prison
that they shone upon me:
pictures of planes, uniformed men now gone insane
medals burnished, catching my gaze
lights neon bright and buzzing loud
the floor gleaming white like fresh-frozen ice
and just as cold
around me milled and sat great men now old
uniformed women with crushed pills in porridge
big band songs to lighten greying youth
clashing naively with the vacant stares
and running shoes on my feet
a shuffling man falling forwards by my side
others in robes and white or bald atop the crown
gathered around the television, one diapered with no gown
one shouting words row on row
the others seething for him to go
begging me, white coat down to my knees
would I help them please
but the doors to leave this place are locked
and their faces speak of time like grandfather clocks
will you tell me who I am, young man
why am I here, he asks
cataract milky eyes, spotted shaking hand tugs at my side
once an eagle in the sky, gunning enemies by and by
who am I?
as I leave him to this barren trench
in the air lingers a mustard stench
through empty corridors and locked down doors:
the wandering victims of forgotten wars

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