

# “And They Played”

*written by Sheila, Jon, Patricia, Anne & Joanna  
from Coxhill Manor Nursing Home*

‘Bombs,’ she said clearly,  
‘Oh yes,’ they all agreed.  
‘The ARP, knocking on your door,’  
An unimaginable childhood for me...  
But for them, this was the earliest memory,

Chamberlain spoke on the radio,  
A speech they’d never forget,  
Britain had declared war on Nazi Germany,  
What is to happen next?

Their little souls knew not what to expect,  
For a few months they lived in the ‘Phony War,’  
Before that awful sound of the sirens  
happened more and more.

‘The rations,’ she said,  
And they reminisced, ‘it wasn’t the worst part by far,’  
The blackouts scared them stiff,  
‘Did it become less scary in time?’ I ask, ‘I cannot fathom the terror,’  
They got used to the fear,  
Proving again, the children were more resilient than ever...  
They evolved to the new world they lived in,  
The uncertain hand they were dealt,  
Absolute devastation became an emotion they grew accustomed to see,  
‘But did you get to be kids?’  
‘Ha!’ She laughed, ‘Oh did we!’

Respectfully I listen, I can’t believe my ears,  
That not only as children they were faced with so much fear,  
But they laughed when they told me in the shelter how they’d play,  
Sleep in there, or the underground,  
And go to school the next day.

‘Life went on,’ they explained,  
‘Though imagination wasn’t shared the way it is today,’  
‘A stiff upper lip,’ she said,  
They all concurred with a laugh,  
‘But we still played as children do,’  
Surprising their parents through and through.  
‘A brick,’ she recalls fondly, ‘That’s how my father described me,’  
A generation of adults stood in ‘awe’ of their children’s bravery.

I feel emotional, & proud as I sit here, but I don’t shed a tear,  
They did it, they won their own war, they were children through the fear...  
A joy I can’t describe that flooded over me to hear them say, they played...  
The bombs, the blackout, the war...  
And they played...