

**MILITANT
MUSINGS
or**



**INSANITY
DELAYED**

INTRODUCTION

Some who take the time to read *Militant Musings* may be offended by the direct and even harsh language. Others may think the author to be disrespectful and unpatriotic. The poetry is passionate and forceful. Of necessity, it had to be. Let me explain why.

My Army National Guard unit was activated federally in February of 2003. My enlistment obligation ended six days later, but I was not released due to Stop Loss provisions. For more than sixteen months, I was forced to support a war which I have disagreed with from the beginning.

As a result, my time in the desert was difficult. I was angry, depressed, full of hate, and often hopeless. As a former chaplain and helping professional, I find it difficult to seek therapy from others. My writing became my therapy. With no other outlet for my emotions and feelings, I vented through verse.

Whether this saved me or not, I don't know. But it helped to be able to express my innermost being some way when no other option was available. I often reflected on what had happened during the day, wrote about it, and thereby gained strength to cope.

I have arranged the material thematically. There are many compositions of despair as well as glimpses of anticipation and expectation.

As I look back on my experience, I understand that others have suffered, and continue to suffer, a lot more than I did. If any reader gains some solace or peace of mind from *Militant Musings* then I feel my own time in the desert may have served some legitimate purpose.

For me personally, the heart of the problem goes much deeper than national leadership, global security, limited resources like petroleum, or even just war theory in light of neo-religious conflicts. At its root, the problem is one of theodicy and how divine goodness and power can be reconciled with the tremendous waste that seems to be the norm for the promulgation of both democratic and fundamentalist ideologies. In these pages, I have come to no conclusion about this perplexing and persistent problem. No doubt, reasons for disgust and nihilism in our world abound. But as I hint in "A Refreshing Thought" about Paha Sapa, the Black Hills of South Dakota, there are perhaps more reasons for enlightenment and hopefulness.

David W Fletcher

Manchester, Tennessee
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SLAVERY

Another month has passed-
So?
What has been accomplished?
For whom? Why?

No one really knows,
no one seems to care,
The system feeds on itself
relentlessly-
The system
slowly eats
on itself
Until it dies and we die too.

Can we be saved?
Who can save us?
Can even God overcome
the terror of capricious power?

The lust of it all-
senseless,
morbid,
unurbane.

The lust of it all.
Those who are drunk
on the bloodless arteries
of peons
continue relentlessly.

Who can stop them?

Can sanity be saved
from its own insanity?

Only time will tell,
But time is all we've got
Or is it?

Death hovers above
 ready to invade.
The stench,
 the rottenness,
 the perversion of it all.
I loath what they have done.
I hate the last of them.
They are mean,
 they are evil,
 they are cruel,
 they are heartless.

Why do they imprison us
 against our will?
Why?

What have we done
 to deserve this Fate?

The darkness lingers
 the evil approaches
 the torment endures.

No relief lies in sight.

Release slips away
 unguarded . . .
 it silently exits

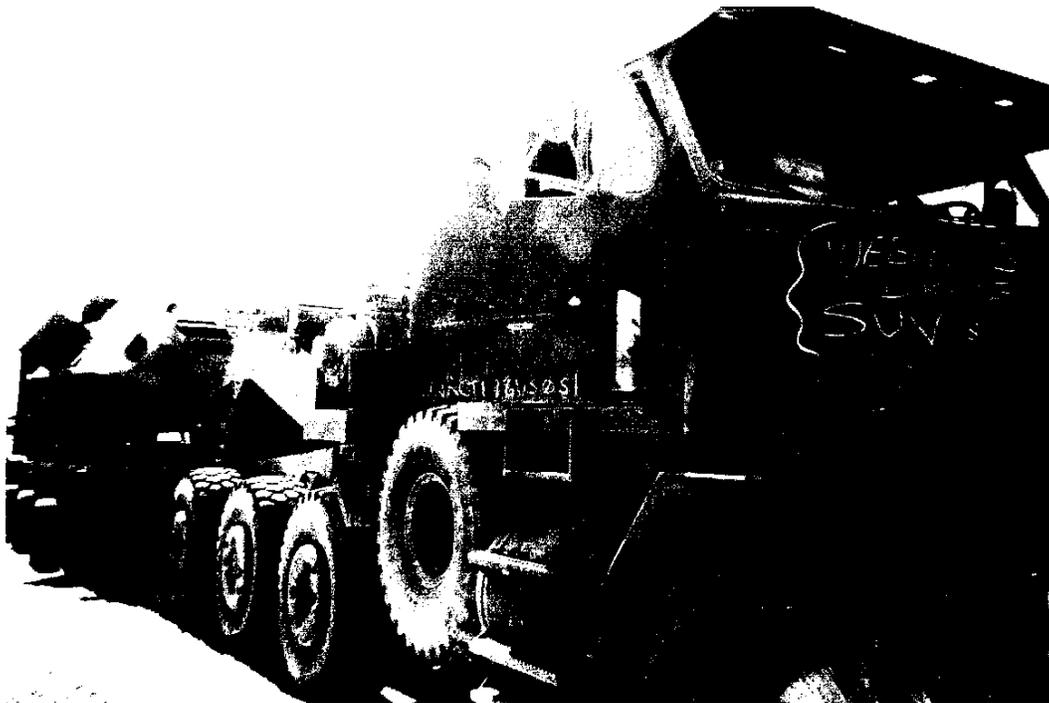
And we must walk
 in slavery
 yet
 another
 day.

THE MILITARY WAY

“Can we go home now?”
The question is scoffed
by those in power.
Apparently, they have no feelings,
no agonizing in pain for them.

On their thrones of power
they execute judgment
without knowledge,
without regard.

The feelings of discomfort
experienced by peons
rarely has been taken to heart
by the scions of command-
this is the military way!



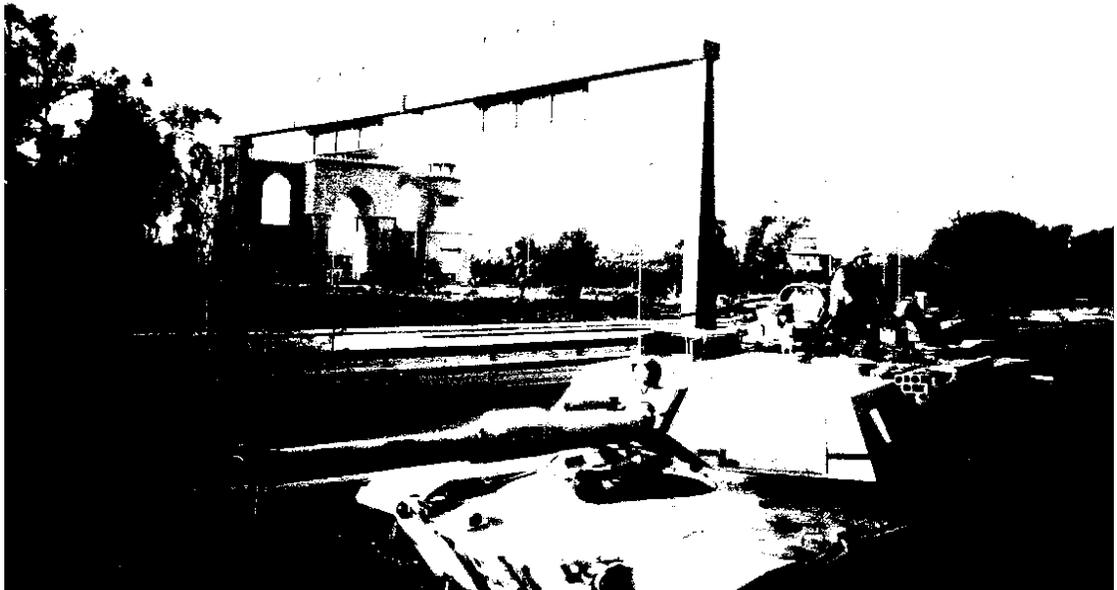
MIGHT IS RIGHT

Might is right, so they say.
You've got an obligation,
 some debt to pay?

What they want, they don't say.
Let me tell you
 how it is today-really.

Business rules politics,
 the whip of war.
They'll crush your balls for you,
 you bloated whore!

Shameless exploitation,
 avarice and greed,
"We only want more . . ."
You don't say-"more . . ."
That's just what we need!



THE MISSION

What's the mission, man,
who knows the real plan?

Another trip up to Iraq
and then drive that truck back.

Rocks and dust along the way
and then there's
the peddler-man
to pay.

But what's the real scoop
for four ninety-five?

What's the crap
that keeps it alive?

The bean count, man,
that's the word.

By ossifer bean count
we abide,
By that alone
we survive.



PRICE OF FREEDOM

Young man far away
 one day'll be
Killer man
 for USMC.

Young man far
 from home and kin
Will die
 whose victory win?

Can't tell who
 can't tell what
This fighting's for
 thick and hot.

Visions of freedom
 settle in dim
American hegemony
 listen! no whim.

Stark reality,
 transit to power.
Noose of freedom tightens
 hour by hour.

Young man far away
 one day'll be
Killer man
 for U.S. Army.

THE CRICKET AND THE ARMY

The cricket in my tent this morning
Made an irritating, chirping noise
While I was trying to sleep.
I wanted to squash it
but I didn't.

Some Iraqis in their country this year
Made some irritating violent responses
While we were trying to occupy.
We wanted to crush them
and we did.



UNHOLY

How can one speak of victory
when someone dies
thousands of miles away
from those who love him the most?

The waste of others
has become our dreariness.
Stark reality abides
in our souls,
but no one who can change things
really listens.

The concluding task
is never concluded
because another takes its place.
The end slips away,
despair sets in,
a silent sadness
envelopes us.

Will we set our eyes again
on the faces of our loved ones,
will we?
There is doubt,
there is confusion,
there is despair.

We are aimless wanderers
in the scorching heat
of a wasteland,
of a desert.

NO REASON

In these hours of loneliness
I feel the most despair,
 there is no reason,
 no reason, no reason.

The emotional pain weighs heavy,
 it presses down,
 it does not lift,
 it drives sorrow
 to the heart of despair.

Such is overwhelming-
 a hovering cloud
 of exceedingly great weight
 that will not
 nor can not
 be lifted away . . .

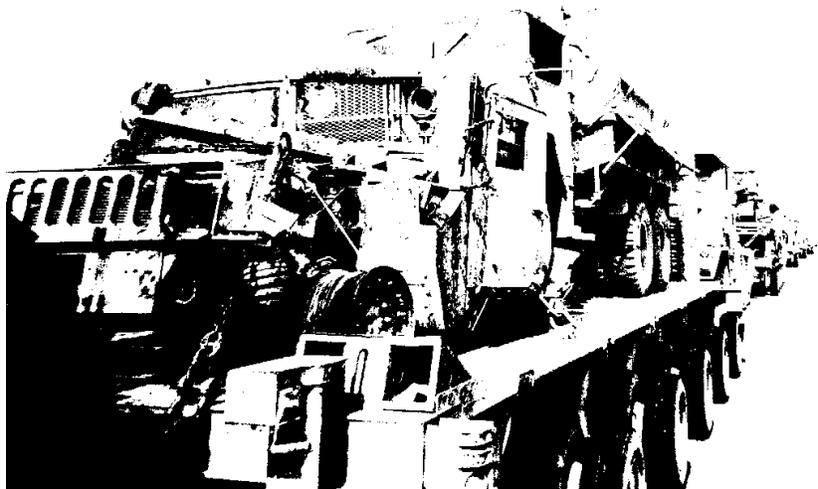
At times
 the weight seems
 unbearable . . .

It haunts
 and torments
 and snatches away . . .
 . . . all joy.

MEANINGLESSNESS

Why are these days unending
 with no relief in sight?
Why is there no hope
 for a tomorrow at home?
Why does the heat torment?
Why do the unknowns torture?
Why are the days meaningless?
Why-there is no why,
I believe,
 because
 absurdity rules by force,
 by fiat,
 by threat.

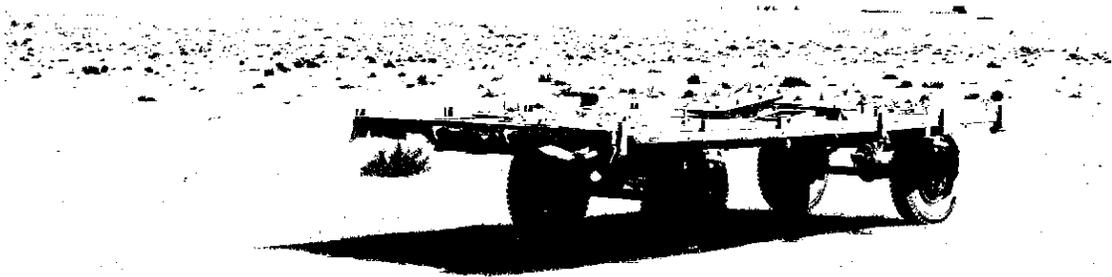
Fear guides the thoughts,
 no relief is in sight,
 fear dominates and chokes out
 more rational thoughts.



THE ABSURD

At the quick
 goes away sick
Not so fast
 time cannot last

On one short note
 can it be wrote
No, I think not,
 come home big dot.



A FALSE IDEOLOGY

How much longer?

Can't tell

nobody says
it's out there
but . . . is it?

I can't see it, how can I know?

How? Why? When? What?

All questions, no answers,
no answers.

But . . . will change come, or

is sameness continual
with no termination,
no termination,
any termination.

Change?

Maybe, but maybe not.

Change for the worse.

That's what to expect-
change for the worse.

It can't get better,

We can't have relief,

We can't have family.

We are prisoners,
slaves to a false ideology.

WHY BE SO PESSIMISTIC?

What do you think, this moment,
oh, far away, so far away?

Can you cry beneath the storm?
Can you say words yet unspoken?

Wash the river clean,
can nature be so mean?

Ocean turns to desert,
why does God bring hurt?

Saliva salts the sea,
I spit-the polluted waters

Turn back upon themselves
in fury, their purity fails

and the wastelands increase,
the fertile lands decrease.

Humanity is forgotten
and cannot be reclaimed.

We languish, we languish,
and we perish.

But why be so pessimistic,
why cave in to futility?

Is it so desperate now?
Can redemptive acts somehow,
somehow . . . somewhere . . .
brighten the darkened way,
disclose the unknown,
and show . . .
some glistening ending?

I WANT TO DIE UNSHAVEN

Each day of the year
It's up before dawn
From sunup to sundown
It seems too long.

Regulations to comply
We're all alike
Hair cropped off short
Those sideburns tight.

Every day I shave
These whiskers off
Same DCU threads
I put on and doff.

One day I hope
I'll never see
A BDU cap
Or beret on me.

I want to pass
This phase of my life
Breathe free again
And kiss my wife.

No blade cut cross
My skin so fair
No scissors snip
My coarse, grey hair.

Yes, free again,
One day you'll see,
Unshaved, unkempt
That's what I'll be-
I want to die unshaven.

CRAPPY

I died
While I was taking a crap
In Iraq today
And
I didn't even have
One of those
Stinky, filthy out-houses
To crap in-
The epitome of insult.

But, I guess,
My death
Was
Not in vain.
George knows best,
You know,
He tells it
Like it is
In his mind
And
I sure was glad to see him bring us
The turkey
Just a few days ago
So, I died happy.

Just please,
Tell my Mom and Dad
That they should be proud
Of the good job
We're doing
Over here
For democracy
For liberty
For peace
To help the American-Iraqi
People
In the war
Against
Terror.

We're all much better off now
That we've come over here
To take over
What the Baathists turned over
Just over
Less than ten months ago.

So, even tho' I died
While taking a crap
In Iraq
Today,
I figure
That
The crap
Which I died
Taking
In Iraq
Today
Greatly benefitted mankind.

GO ON

Time will tell
as history runs its course.

The cycle of life and death
and living and dying
must continue.

Weary tho' it be,
it must continue.

And continue it will,
it will continue,
it will, will it?

And go on . . .
time go on
go on . . .
time go on
'til all begone . . .
go on . . .



AYE-RAQ

The world knows your exploits
but nothing of your splendor.

Until the Great War
no one knew your name.

O heart of civilisation,
origin of patriarchs and prophets,

Sons and daughters of many peoples
assembled through time,

Peoples great, peoples small,
mingled together all,

Some say:
Cursed be your land.

I say:
Rest on God's favor,
bring this land to fame.

The world knows your exploits
but nothing of your splendor.



BUSHWHACKED

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SECUR-IT-Y

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of . . .
homeland security.

Life, security, and
the pursuit of . . .

Pursuit?
What do you want?
What do you pursue?

My country . . .
is this land really mine?

Then, why do they tax it
max it
wax it?

Axe it, don't be lax-it!



THE PLEDGE?

Do I, should I,
pledge allegiance to a flag?

A symbol of aggression and
exploitation in the world?

Is it a republic?
A representative democracy?

Who rules this nation?
Who holds the reigns of power?
Who can invade
another nation
on fabricated notions
of righteous indignation?

A notion of lies
to invade the nations!

THE PLEDGE!

I pledge allegiance
to the fag(got),
the “President”
of the unholy grates
of America

And to the regime
of supreme court lackeys
and elite corporate heads
by which he stands

One party line . . .
under Divine Right
indeterminate
with levity
and just an ass-all!

That’s Homeland Security.

THE QUIRK

Dilly dally, oil man,
 NG, draft voided,
CINC, court appointed,
 rises for war, man!

SH says no,
 no WMD among Iraqi.
What? . . . Me!
 Too bad, Saddam, woe-oh-oh.

Dilly dally, dally do,
 send them troops-not a few.
Win a war-that'll do,
 send some more-not a few.

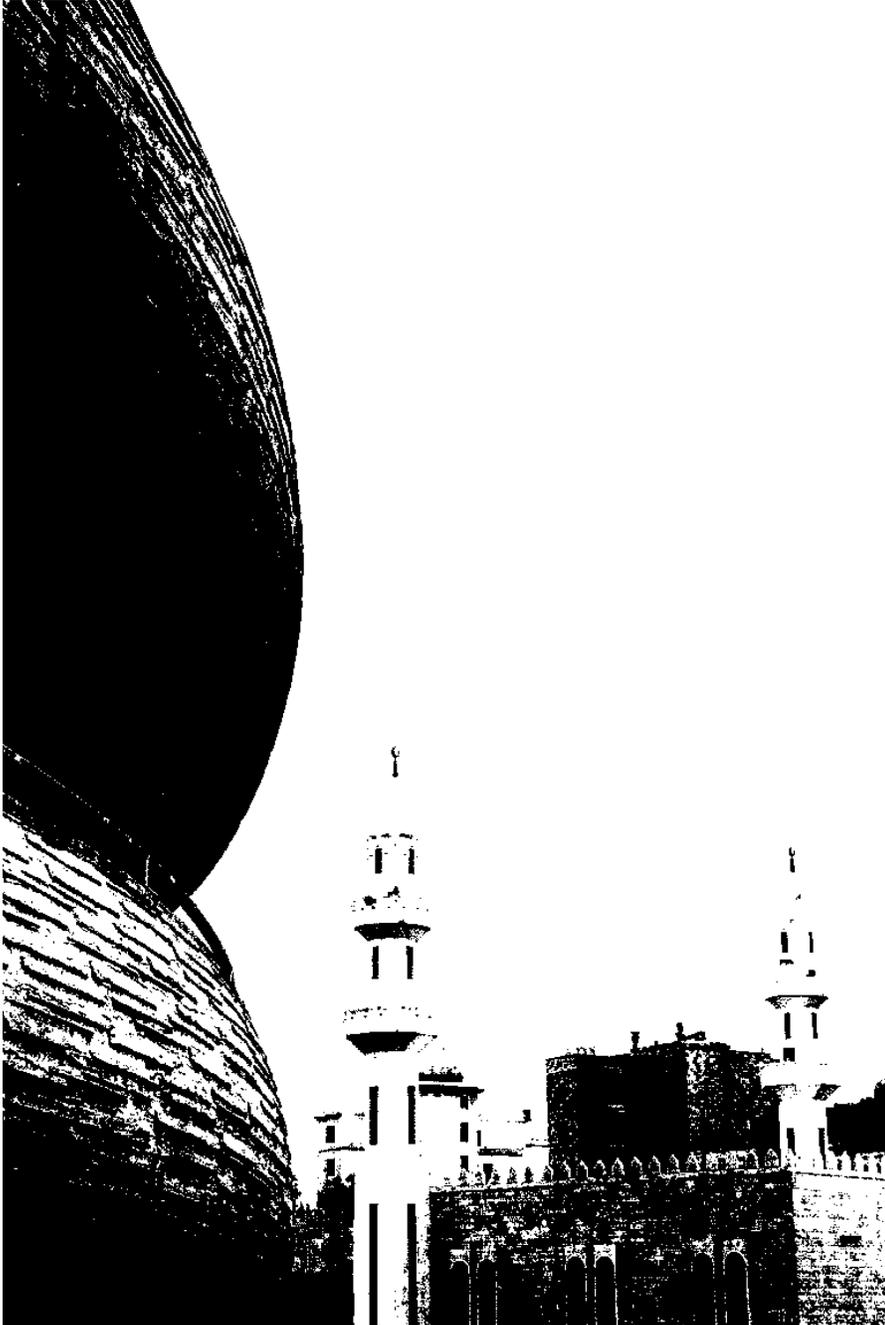
Jack off the economy,
 debt rises, warmongers thrive.
Hey, rich man's hive,
 tax break emergency.

Ha, ha, the decade repeat,
 Bechtel / Halliburton man . . .
Got a plan, got a plan,
 oh, so sweet, how sweet!

Dilly dally, oil man,
 NG, draft voided,
CINC, court appointed,
 rises for war, man.

INTERLUDE

Mingle together
 pardon our bliss,
Draw me in closer
 with your tender kiss.



BUSHWHACKED

Twee deedle dee
 deedle dum
Let's whack Saddam for Dad
 just for fun.

Twee deedle dee
 bumble bah.
Got bushwhacked again
 in my craw.

Got it once in '91,
 oh, wasn't that
 a shitload of fun?
Took it again in '003,
 whacked up twice
 by Bush family!

Revenge for oil,
 that's the game.
For Halliburton, Bechtel too,
 it's all the same.



The rulers of the earth,
they don't care
if people suffer, if people die,
but, beware . . .

Judgment's coming
fast and sure,
wrath and fury
on the haughty and impure.

Bushwhacked takes its turn,
comes around,
stomps the mighty
into the ground.

Oh, bushwhacked will turn
its course around
and stomp the mighty
into the ground!

VENGEANCE

Vengeance on the house,
in the house.

My country 'tis the plea,
some bitter matrimony
with the blood
of the Baath house,
of the Shiite rising.



DIRECTOR OF SLOG

I read in *Vanity Fair* last night
that the Commander-in-Chief
had twenty-two days
of vacation time
last August over there.

I remember that
we were sweltering
day after day
in the slog of Iraq and Kuwait
with no vacation time
last August over here.

Strange . . . isn't it.

I suppose the CINC mouthpiece was right-
he was AWOL, but not in Baghdad.
Seems like he's been gone
a long, long time,
Maybe he'll just go away
for a long, long time.

And do us all some good.



THE BAG

The Prez - the bag
is a wag
he's a wag
in a snag
let him sag.

Watch him wag
see his hag
see him hag
will he bag?

He's a bag!

DEMISE

“Good riddance,” said the man,
“Ha! I’ve got it all in hand.”
But, you know,
What goes round comes round,
So it’s said.
(The man’s better off dead.)

The man of sin,
The son of perdition,
Will fall in 2004
In undisclosed condition.

In undisclosed condition
The man of perdition
The man of perdition
In undisclosed condition . . . will fall.

Once upon a time
(Wish I had a dime . . .
Brother, can you spare a dime?)
Once upon a time,
With wife and kids
I could dine.

But now, things have changed,
Loose ends all got tangled
Too long they dangled,
Me and mine-poor-got strangled.

In undisclosed condition
The man of perdition
The man of perdition
In undisclosed condition . . . will fall.

So, hapless, we all continue,
Hey-what's on the menu?
Rotten eggs, moldy cheese,
Basics of life-we don't have-
 cause the rich, us, they squeeze.

In undisclosed condition
The man of perdition will fall,
The man of perdition will fall
In undisclosed condition.

Friend, it's the 21st century
Age of technology and all,
Speed of light gadgets, Herculean might,
At button's touch, we call.

But the man of sin
He couldn't, he wouldn't
Lift one little finger
To lighten our burden so meager.
He fattens the belly
Of friends, patsies smelly.

That man of perdition,
The man of perdition,
In undisclosed condition,
That man of perdition . . . will fall!

THE SAD DAMN STORY

Saddam, Saddam,
 Saddam and Gomorrah
Saddam, Saddam,
 Saddam and Gomorrah
What do you want
 a whore for-Gomorrah,
 Saddam and Gomorrah.

Jeb's brother's education
Came from evil miscreation
What to do for recreation
Saddam and Gomorrah.

Anti-Baathists throw a party
Who's the wrothist-dilly, dottie
Come and go now, tinker, tottie
Saddam and Gomorrah, hottie!

Saddam, Saddam,
 Saddam and Gomorrah
Saddam, Saddam,
 Saddam and Gomorrah
What do you want
 a whore for-Gomorrah,
 Saddam and Gomorrah.

Got to split to old Samawah
Got to leave before tomorrow
Got to get out, going fast
Gomorrah's coming, Saddam's past.

De-saddamize the text
Gomorrah-ize the next
'Ol Dick and George, there's Donnie, too
Bye bye now, you sex foo-foo.

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Saddamize, Saddamize,
Saddamize Gomorrah,
Saddamize U.S.
with Samarra's sorrow,
Saddamize U.S. with Samarra's sorrow.



THE BIGWIG MAN

Some men were born fools
But others had to work hard
 to live up to that ignoble appellation.
So it was with the bigwig man.

Yes, the bigwig man
He's such a fine man
Oh, the bigwig man
He'll do what he can (to screw you).

Ya'll know that fool's
 an upgrade designation
Rather, he's a f. idiot-
 some medical classification.

That's the bigwig man
He's just a fine man
Oh the bigwig man
He'll do what he can (to screw you).

The one you can't fight
From him-no flight
You must do what's "right"
Soon, it's gonna be night.

For the bigwig man
Oh the bigwig man.

'Fore him, states' rights deteriorate
Feds on you to extrapolate
Lots and lots of judges gonna irritate
Got to exit now, exit now, can't wait.

For the bigwig man
To work out his plan
Oh the bigwig man
He'll do what he can (to screw you).

JUST SHOT

The day the Anthrax shot was shot
Didn't last very long
Since the wily judge pronounced otherwise
With his banal song.

Such an amazing coincidence
Up pops this federal rule
Right after his court injunction
You think he's a government tool?

Of course he is, don't you get it?
The judge, he's just a stooge
A reed that bends this way then that
For it, his face got rouge.

POLITICS

He's a godly man, says 'ole Rep. Hall
I've known him since a boy,
He's got a grip, got a mate, got a bat, got a ball
He's got a god-fearing, daddy-sucking toy.

Eighty years strong and moving back to paydirt
True convert from jackass to bigass
All to save his 80-year-old political shirt
And keep his Texas lawn filled with nice, green grass.

Now that's the way with politics
That's the way it is
You lie a little, lie a lot,
 change affiliation, smoke some pot,
That's the way it is-plop, plop, fizz, fizz.

Wise ex-general decided fast
Jumped in the race before it blew past
Lobbied against that bigass party
Threw in his lot as a jackass smartie.

Now that's the way with politics
That's the way it is
You lie a little, lie a lot,
 change affiliation, smoke some pot,
That's the way it is-plop, plop, fizz, fizz.

Don't think I'll ever be independent
Nor ever could I smoke that pot
Words I've said and where I've went
They just ain't politically hot.

Now that's the way with politics
That's the way it is
You lie a little, lie a lot,
 change affiliation, smoke some pot,
That's the way it is-plop, plop, fizz, fizz.

HOPEFULLY TROUBLED

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I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT SLAVERY

I remember when I went to Cuba
As a chaplain in the Air Force,
I visited Camp Xray
Where the bad boys stay
But, I didn't talk to any
To steal secrets away.
I talked to SP's
Who said: Take us away,
We don't want to play
Cops for the Air Force anymore,
Too long have we been away
From family and home.

Ironic, I thought,
As I sat in my hooch
Watching C-Span one day,
I looked and I saw
In Harlem, New York City
At the Abyssinian Baptist Church
The Fidel Castro making parley
Who had to say:
Bless all you Abyssinian Baptists
And don't give sway
To America's commercialized humanitarian way.
Ironic, I thought
To be sitting in a hooch in Cuba
And watching Fidel in the U.S.A.

I remember leaving Cuba,
That communist land,
After three months there
I flew back to the U.S.A.
To Florida first,
Then on to Dakotaland.
But a snow storm en route
Made the plane turn about
From Chicago to St. Paul

And, all in all,
A good thing, I thought,
“Tis closer to home,
I’ll deplane and be on my way
Sooner there I’ll be
That gave me thoughts of glee
But to my dismay
On that United Air plane
I had to stay,
High security, said the lass,
I wanted to kick her in the ass.
“What do you mean?”
To my dismay
On that plane
I had to stay.
Funny to me,
While in Cuba,
I was free!
In the good ‘ole U.S.A.
I had no freedom
To make my own way!

A few years passed,
In the Air Force, I wanted to stay.
But they said, “You can’t.”
A Superior Performer, you were, yesterday,
But, unpromotable, you are, today.
So, I went on my way.
And, I found myself in Tennessee
Back near lots of family.
One day, I thought,
From the military
I’ve been too long away,
Soldier, again, I might like to play.
So, the National Guard
Recruited me
And made me a sergeant
In the Army.

All was just fine
'Til I decided to leave.
They said: "You can't,
'Til you be all you can be."
The man said we had to go
To the desert together.
It's an army of one
That enlistment termination
Really doesn't matter.

Odd to me
How I get caught in these traps-
The Air Force said go
When I wanted to stay
But the Army said no
To my expired obligation.
This country of freedom
This land of the brave,
In a lot of my experience
Is the land of the slave.

HATING ONE'S OWN SOUL OF THE DEPLOYED

I've been so annoyed
Since I got deployed
To Kuwait one day
For a while to stay.

I finished my enlistment
But my ass they still sent
Illegally I think
Put me over the brink.

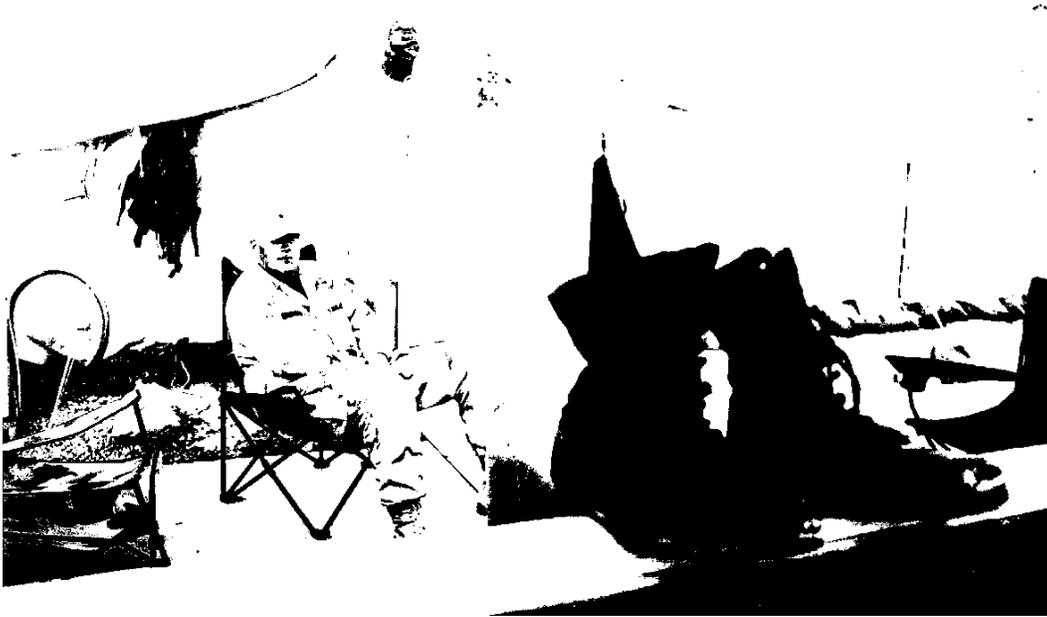
Almost, but I survived
Somehow I stayed alive.

Hate ruled my heart
By night and day
From this ungodly place
I loathed, to get away.

These "leaders" too, all I hate
From their presence-departed-
I can't wait
To get back home
In the sand
No longer roam
Faces of imbeciles
No more to see
It's been so long,
Woe is me!

This army of one
Is not much fun
They think they've won
That son-of-a-bitch son
And his band of renown
Methinks, just a clown
Can't tell it straight without lies
Perhaps we're surrounded by his spies.

But little do we know
'Bout when we'll get to go
I still wait and hate today
This place-these people-
 who've made me stay.



FEELINGS OF DISGUST

I am surrounded by a bunch of idiots and fools.

There is very little professionalism in this unit.

Favoritism, partisanship, mismanagement and
lack of discipline run rampant.

Many are crass, rude, crude, even nasty
in habit, speech, and demeanor.

It is difficult, if not impossible to maintain
a sense of direction and a positive attitude
in such an environment.



NO HOPE

Where there is no hope,
death rules.

We've crossed the threshold-
the abyss known as
the valley of the shadow of death.

The heat penetrates
and saps all energies,
lifelessness takes hold,
the body loses its power.

What does the future hold?
More of the same:
mindless days, end on end,
without an end,
ceaseless, futile, and void.

THE PROCESS OF DEATH

I feel like my body is dying-
aging faster
than I can count the days.

Time rolls back upon itself
and does not recede.

The misery of death comes slowly.
It sets its course
like a long, drawn sunset.
But steadily it runs its path.

It will not turn back,
It cannot turn back,
It must proceed-

And, with that procession
comes . . .
the haunting realization
that nothing
absolutely nothing
can thwart
the specter of death.

No longer am I in charge.
My fate is sealed.
I must resign
to this impassible foe.

I am defeated,
I am done.

The battle has been set
and the victim is sure.

False gods,
faulty plans,
built on flawed reasonings.

The Saviors are they,
or so they think,
like ravenous wolves
they devour their prey-
innocent, unwitting ones.

In the clutches
of their trap,
they bite
with jaws of demons,
and breach

The Infathomable Gap
between stupidity and insanity!



RAGE

The torrents of the soul
that cut to the heart
like a searing knife,

The boiling of the blood
beyond eruption,
uncontrolled,
unbridled,
unrestrained anger,

In lust,
do I hope to kill,
the iniquity of the past
notwithstanding.

My soul aches for relief-
the venting of rage,
ah, what a glorious thought!



HATE SUBSIDES MOMENTARILY

To know . . .
that you'll never
have to listen
to that stupid voice again,
that you'll never
have to look
at the idiot's face again,

To know
that you'll never
have to interact
with the person
you despise,

That-
is a blissful thought,
a relaxing moment
that brings
some
temporary
relief.

GET AWAY?

It was good today
To get away from Arlington
To see Arifjan
In the HMMWV mirror.
I went from the desert
To the desert.

I saw mud and HETs
And mud and Strykers
And mud and other Army vehicles
And mud.
It was just good to get away.

But, at day's end,
I had to come back-
Back to the cot in the tent
Back to the TOC tables
Back to the hypo hype
Back to . . .
Who knows what.



WHAT

No rent
No take
Got raked
All spent

Facilitation
Consecration
Concentration
Emasculation

Able now
Any how
Really wow
Dandy sow

Mad moo
What about you?
Can you do?
Just a few
 more days
 to be filled with praise
 and to tell
 the old, old story
 then when twilight falls
They'll grab my balls
And that'll be the end—

MYLES OF NOTHING

Across the dreary desert
So far I cannot see
Miles of sandy nothing
Await my HET and me.

'Twas three days after Christmas
From Baghdad we did leave
Fog thick and heavy hovered round
And dampened every sleeve.

We looked for escorts
There were none
We took off driving
Just for fun.

Our convoy leader, he led so fine
We started last
But soon we passed
Ten eighty-third and one-two-nine.

We even passed
Third A-C-R
Who came too late, didn't coordinate,
And drove that far, from Al Asad.

Oh, pissed were they
You might well say
But that's too bad
Didn't make us sad.

At Al Asad where we all thought
We'd reached our glorious destination
Third ACR said, "Wait one minute,
This ain't your damn HET termination!"

“For you, yes you,” big dogs did shout,
“We parked a bunch of stuff way out
On western reaches of Iraq
So way out there you’ll not get back.”

(Until next year, that is.)

So back into our trucks we climbed
To roll some more for auld lang syne.
For Uncle Sam and haji too
For daddy-kins, Georgie, and his little boo-boo.

There were Pickett and Puckett
And Bicknell and Blockett
McClatcher and Galloway, too.

Turner and Tyus
The De-beaux and Davis
Even Adcock and Ashley, woo hoo.

Partin and Partain
Thompson and Robertson
Askew and Oberkirsch, Klark who?

The wrench men, the Holman,
The Call man, the Sha-han,
For all of them
This route was brand new.

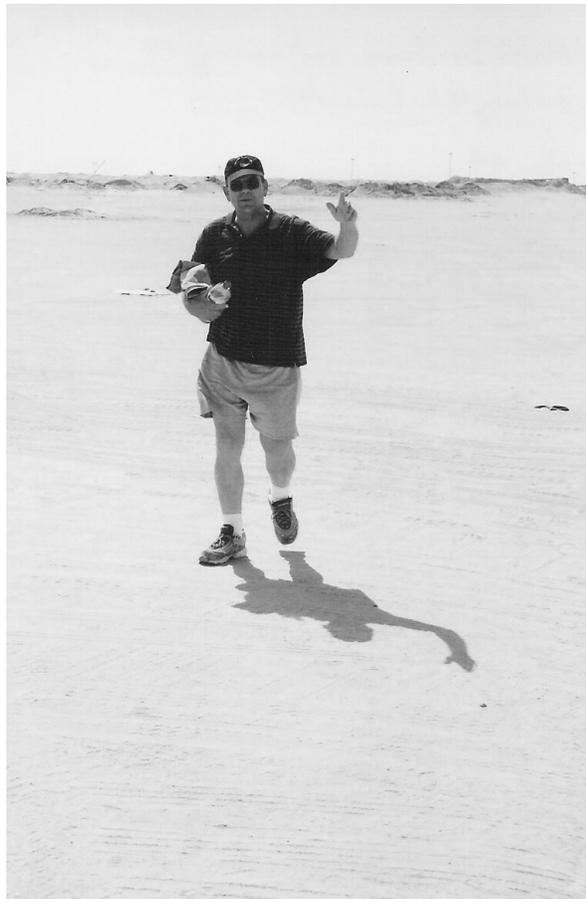
By light of moon they rolled and rumbled
Parallel to where the Euphrates tumbled
They made their way to Al Qa’im
A place of which they’d never dreamed.

This side of the Syria
Yet feigned they deliria
For this crazy ordeal they went through.

The sand they'd grown tired of
'Cross nought but brown miles of
Yes, big trucks all day and night roamed.

Ah! the convoy commander
Gave a striking rejoinder:
"Miles of nothing on Myles' birthday," he moaned.

Across the dreary desert
So far, so far away
Miles and miles of nothing
On farmer Myles' birthday.



DFAC CHICKEN

A DFAC, DFAC chicken
 came a runnin' after me
In my nightmare, in my vision
 it's so scary what I see.

It's the DFAC, DFAC chicken
 rotten chicken, can it be
My mind is just a clickin'
 'bout a night in I-ra-qi.

I came up to the border
 but they wouldn't let me cross
I drove all day to Baghdad
 from Summayyil, at a loss.

To find a place to stay
 for one night, I panicked hard
They let me into BIAP
 which the Army marred and scarred.

No cot had I, no pillow
 only hardwood for my bed
My stomach growled with hunger
 as I lay awake and read.

The mess tent closed three hours ago,
 they served no midnight chow
I tossed and turned 'til light of dawn
 I made it, don't know how.

But on that night in Baghdad,
 yes, a horrid fright I saw
A big, green ugly chicken
 with a viper in its jaw.

Riding on a camel's back
the monster charged so hard
From Kuwaiti races, it's no doubt
that putrid bird was barred.

So scared was I
the bird gave chase
I'd rather have gone
to outer space.

But there I was
not near the sea
Close to the Kurds
beside Turkey.

Out of the DFAC
that chicken flapped
It clawed, it cawed,
it bit, it snapped.

From Zahko down to Safwan
on the Tigris to the Gulf
That chicken chased all night and day
for it, 'twas not enough.

Thru streets of old Karbala
past ships of Basra, too
That bird with green and slimy breasts
did in my dreams pursue.

Until it caught and swallowed me
while pecking out my eyes
The Shiites all stood round and watched
as another American dies.

And then, I woke in sweat,
I found
Beside me lying
on the ground.

A brown pack
 labeled chickadee
It too was numbered
 . . . five, six, two, three.

A fine entree, I thought,
 how sweet
An Army classic-
 meal ready to eat.

I realized I
 had slept too late
Missed meal at DFAC
 so that's my fate.

Yes, now I think I'd rather,
 it's quite amazing, can't you see,
Eat rubber DFAC chicken
 than plastic MRE.

THE BALLAD OF THE MAD COW THAT WASN'T

Was it
Or wasn't it
A mad moo
That I did chew?

Tobacco rose
Sniffed by nose
Drained my hose
So, how it goes?

Can't explain it
Gone insane, it
Might be resolvable
Just barely solvable.

Dry from Canada
Slipped 'cross the border, ha!
Didn't imagine you'd catch
From the prairies you'll snatch.

Was it
Or wasn't it
A mad moo
That you'll chew?

THE MENTAL HEALTH LESSON

Why am I here
Talking to a shrink
Don't like to think
'Bout things that make me pink.

Oh, embarrassed
You might say
Just the way
Everything
Has been done.

Didn't imagine
Just having some fun
Would make
Life come undone.

Caught like a rat
In a big cheese trap
That's the squeeze
Where's your cheese?

Talking too fast
Ain't doing no rap
Doc goes snap
What wily cast—

Animals and fags
Cause lethargic snags
Anyway it turns
Lessons hard you'll learn.

So don't syncopate
Rather agitate
Against the grain you'll grate
While you live your fate.

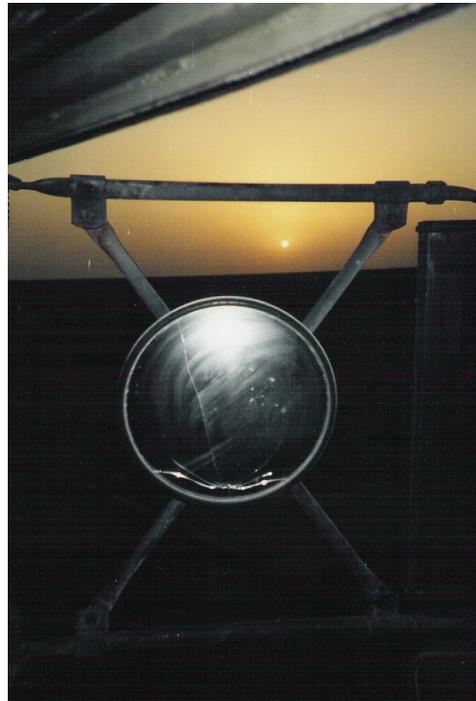
PSYCHOLOGICALLY RAPED

That's what happened
when I went
and talked with
behavioral science people
yesterday.

They've got my body,
They want my soul, you say?

I hate this Army,
I hate the lot of them,
will hate 'til my dying day.

They can rape my psyche,
They can rape me mentally,
but can't take my passion away!



THE EXISTENTIAL DIVIDE

I no longer hate
that which I do not know.

I have blotted all this-
the last twelve months-
out of my memory.

It is erased,
it is forgotten,
it does not exist.

The existential divide
has been crossed.

To me
there is no recall
of things past,
nor can there be.

I hurt no more,
I have purged every spot
from my memory.

What do you say your name is?
Who are you?
Some faint *dejavu*
starts to creep back in.

I pause . . .
I go blank,
I do not,
I will not,
I cannot recall.

Existentially,
I am purged
of every
evil
moment.

Healing cannot be far away.

I breathe more easily now!

The better times
I do recall . . .

These are the memories
that make me
existentially whole.

A REFRESHING THOUGHT

I long for Paha Sapa,
the Bear Butte,
the revered holy land
from the distant past.

Prayer cloths everywhere
I see
all colors, shapes, and sizes,
to the ancestral gods,
yielding to the spirit wind,
bowing before the rising sun.

No better way
to celebrate
a day of birth
than to sit
atop
this sacred mount,
relish the moment,
and gaze across
the endless . . . open spaces.

I sit in awe
of the simplicity
and the haunting beauty
of earth touching sky.

The two become one
in a moment of silence.

Silence . . .
I wait . . .
Silence still . . . stillness,
My heart beats slowly,
my breath is calm.

A refreshing thought that
breaks the
seemingly endless weariness.

My body is relaxed,
my soul is refreshed,
my spirit is renewed.

I feel at home
and at peace
with myself
and the world.



27 FLOWERS

My wife probably had
warm fuzzy thoughts
about me
when she got
the 27 flowers
I sent her
for our anniversary.

At that same time,
I could have been
dead
in a latrine
and she wouldn't have known.

But, thank God,
I wasn't
And, she did have
some warm fuzzies.
So, maybe there's
hope
after all.



27 YEARS

We've come 27 years
 since 7 January 77
Maybe, baby, we'll come
 27 more.

Oddly, again, we're apart
My fault-this war-says she
 just to keep us separated
 on our anniversary.

Maybe that's true:
"I started this war,
I'll take the blame,
 (or the credit-it's all the same)
No problem."
 From that perspective
 something I directed
 to avoid consummation
 of matrimony obligation.

But here's how my day has gone:

Well, yesterday's without electricity
Today's void of none
Shocking is the revelation
Computer world, a conflagration
 (with all this Internet gone).

Things got sparked and words did fly
Almost took a spitwad in the eye
But ducked, yet crackled just the same
When supply came in, 'ole Watts-his-name.

Sent TD right to the shitter
Made him wince and blush with glitter
All for a tag on the seat of the pants
All for a gag, for a glaze, for a glance.

Lost communication, thought I'd check it out
Stung so hard, couldn't even shout
Just made my day a chilling spine
I'll be glad it's over and then unwind.

Can't help cogitating on what she'd said with glee
About war and marriage and her and me
It's been 27 years now since 7 January
And I'm too far from home and oh so weary.

We've come 27 years
 since 7 January 77
Maybe, baby, we'll come
 27 more.



Photos

All photos unless noted otherwise were taken in either 2003 or 2004 with inexpensive Kodak disposable cameras and were processed by the Post Exchange at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

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¹Heavy Equipment Transport, 1175th TRANS CO, Deployed, Camp Arlington, Kuwait