

# **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.

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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

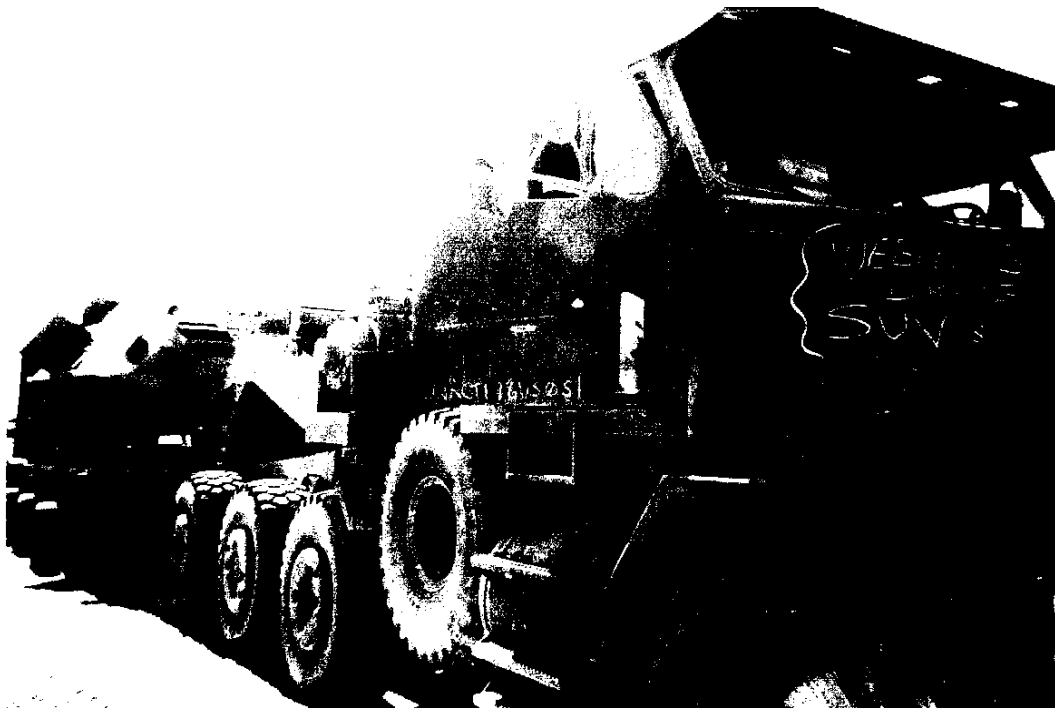
And we must walk  
    in slavery  
    yet  
    another  
    day.

## 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!



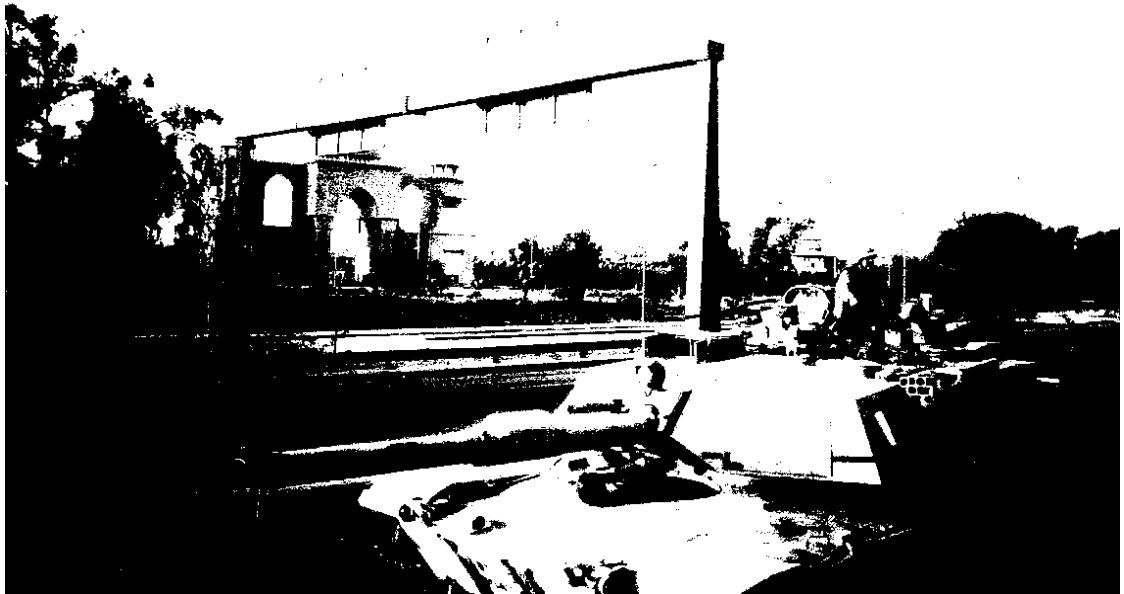
## MIGHT IS RIGHT

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.

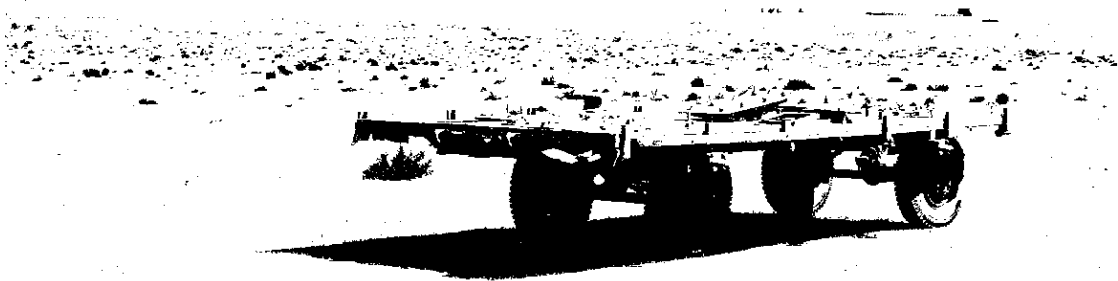
Fear guides the thoughts,  
    no relief is in sight,  
    fear dominates and chokes out  
    more rational thoughts.



## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

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 appellative.  
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.



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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.

## ENDURE

Endure,  
    the need to endure  
    is everlasting.

It seems seconds are minutes,  
    minutes are hours,  
    hours are days,  
    days are weeks,  
    weeks are months,  
    and so forth . . .

At times,  
    I don't think I'll make it;  
    it's that psychologically      demanding,  
  upsetting,  
  unsettling.

My body is failing,  
and my mind is unclear.  
I lack vision and direction,  
except chance circumstance.  
All is vanity and absurd-  
    read "stupid"-

Human souls tortured  
For no good reason  
    for no legitimate cause  
    for evil affairs  
        for the ideas of evil masters  
        who give no thought  
            to the logical outcome  
            of their actions.

False gods,  
faulty plans,  
built on flawed reasonings.

The Savors 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.

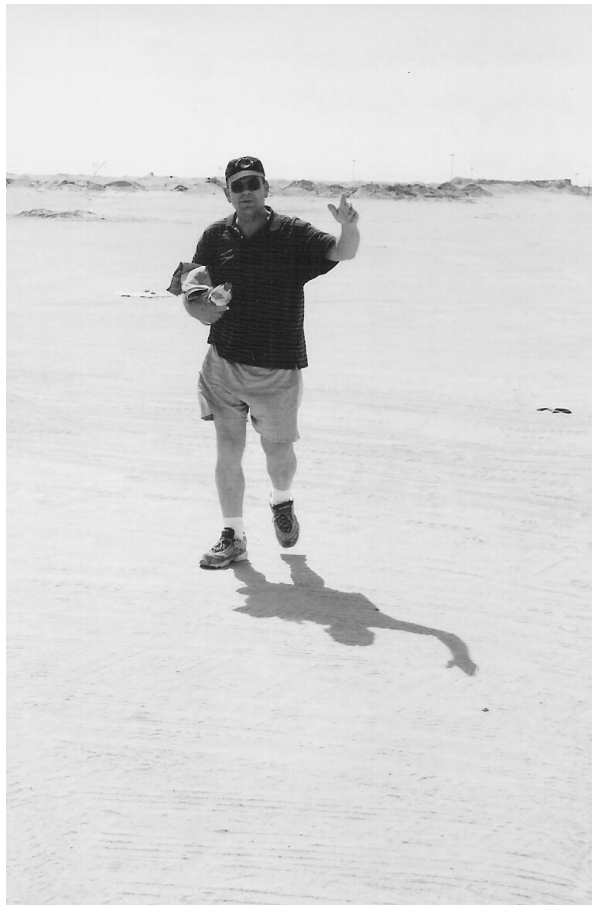
By light of moon they rolled and rumbled  
Parallel to where the Euphrates tumbled  
They made their way to Al Qa’im  
A place of which they’d never dreamed.

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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Page 8	“Iraqi Drive-By,” Somewhere South of Baghdad
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<sup>1</sup>Heavy Equipment Transport, 1175<sup>th</sup> TRANS CO, Deployed, Camp Arlington, Kuwait