

# Cold Nights in Gamberi

Maj. Dan Dillenback, U.S. Army

Beretta, Beretta

Wet air oozes, never flowing.  
Grip the slide and grunt it back.  
The clang, like spartan shields.

Heartbeat is still steady,  
Eyes numb, retreating to bony caves.  
Arm, extended, turns inward  
The elbow cracks and bends.

Heart is getting faster now.  
Sharp heat shivering against the cage.  
Eyes now closed.  
Ears ringing against the echoing clang.

Chin, chest, temple, tongue  
Where to put the beretta.  
Eyes clamped, ears scream,  
The heart knows it's alive.

The cold ring, temple it is.  
Fingers twitch ... keep it off the trigger!  
Brain aflame with images of family.  
Waiting for my return when the phone rings.

I gasp and fill my lungs.  
When did I stop breathing?  
Not today, Beretta.  
Never lying on the table.

Eyes, open, lungs heave.  
Heart cools, brain darkens.  
Ears fade, fingers still.  
Crawl back to the foggy numb.