

On Memorial Day

Valedictory on One American's Dream



(AI image by Gerardo Mena, Army University Press)

Everyone born has their dreams,
Some are practical and some extreme,
Some eventually are realized,
While others never seem to materialize.

And most are pursued while we are young,
Before we've learned how things are done,
So, when Uncle Sam says he has a deal,
It is easy to think the dream is real.



(AI image by Gerardo Mena, Army University Press)

And at eighteen or nineteen years of age,
The dream is found on a desert range,
With temperatures at one-hundred and one,
And a job that still needs to be done.

Then the dream moves to a mountain slope,
With rifle, carabiners, and climbing rope,
And temps that hover around minus-ten,
While huddled on a ridge with six other men



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And when the dream at last is fulfilled,
The mind sees the faces of those who've been killed,
That you carry back with your duffel bag,
To the USA and the American flag.

Where the dream has now become a nightmare,
And some don't know and some don't care,
About the stress and pain that fill your days,
And how you've been broken in so many ways.



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When comes a day, without warning,
When you wake under cardboard on a frosty morning,
To the blank stares of those walking by,
Who would never think to ask how or why.

So, while bureaucrats argue over what to do,
Your days fade away and your will does too,
Then one day you do not awake,
And whom shall we blame for all the mistakes?

—Gerald J. (Jerry) Troiano
Retired New Jersey Police Officer

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