



The Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial is home to the graves of more than 9,380 deceased military members, most of whom lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations in June 1944. (Photo by Mass Communication Spc. 1st Class Sarah Villegas, U.S. Navy)

# White Shadows

White shadows, rows of crosses, David's stars,  
Marble markers from another of history's scars.  
Sleeping soldiers, only one score years of life seen,  
Each a legend under this blanket of manicured green.

White shadows, scroll of heroes, ordered memory  
Of freedom's honored dead felled by hell's armory,  
Of D-Day's June 6, '44 fury, of landing beaches' blood,  
Of waves of brave warriors rising like a flood.

White shadows, statues of dignity, we fix attention,  
Stooped by solemnity, full of respect and admiration.  
We softly weep and wonder why they had to die.  
We stare, breathe deeply, and painfully sigh.

White shadows, shepherd staffs, angels tend to you.  
Their caring spirit surrounds like a sweet misty dew.  
American, French, allied comrades rest in this place  
Having advanced to this cemetery of peaceful grace.

White shadows, eerie ghosts, "grim reaper's" witness.  
Broken world! Light from silhouettes in the darkness!  
The supreme sacrifice is what impresses so well.  
Faith surely leaps from the clarion ring of liberty's bell.

White shadows, as if each on a steeple, souls released  
To glory above where war and wounds have ceased.  
Music and song mark the day with rapt ceremony,  
As flowers and flags celebrate God's vaulted victory.

O Normandy! White shadows, stars and crosses.  
We are the gainers from these lasting losses.

—Tom Despard