

Poem of a Soldier

You praise the man I was, and curse the man I am.
Depending on which God you love, who I will be
may be damned.

Yet still I'll sell my soul for you, I'll save us all
from our worst selves,
I know no other love than this, I fear no other hell

I am what I am, 'cause I was made to be.
I raise the mountains, bring them down, and push
the seven seas.
I reap the grapes of wrath, I am the hand that feeds,
I am the brimstone falling from the angel wings

I damn the damned, and bless the weak.
For the lame walk, and for the mute speak.
The poor and oppressed find their rest in me,
I break the chains and bring forth the free

The destroyer of worlds, I am become of death.
I am enveloping nights, approaching bayonets.
I am the darkest valley where the sword is whet,
the shadow of death is my silhouette

I was forged in a fire lit long ago.
Born of a crucible not my own.
Yet by this birthright in man am I mold,
I am strength multiplied by a thousand fold

I am the photos of loved ones, now nothing but
memories.

I am folded flags, torn, tattered and history.
Yet it is I who held high these in Pyrrhic victory,
I am the Idea that we've died for, for all of eternity

I am the scorching heat, I am the bitter cold.
I am the broken sleep that shakes your soul.
I am the naive youth, and the fearful old,
I am the hell you pray you'll never know

I am a soldier, and no one asked me to be.
I raised my right hand and said "God, send me!"
I am the man that the boy I was wanted to be,
The incarnate nightmare of my enemies' dreams

I am the comforting safety we've known at home.
I am the cogs of wars we hope we won't.
Pray you never need me, yet when you do,
I am also the fear which caused you to

I am the cherubim, and original sin.
I rule the fallen world, and the broken men.
From the depths of the waters to the roaring winds,
I am new beginnings and imminent ends

—2nd Lt. George Bruner, U.S. Army

