

Praying for the Scars to Come

(On the death of my brother killed
In a car accident after surviving a combat tour
In Afghanistan)
This wound won't heal, or so it seems.
It boils, festers, as sadness teems,
From my heart's open, gaping gash,
A flow of sadness seems to forever last.
Oh come, I pray, the scars, please come!
For it is within that I am undone!
Without, you see the stoic me...
Yet, internal bleeding of the mind runs free.
Rewinding life, running back the past.
Turning it all over, searching every last
Second, minute, day and week
For succor in my actions is that I seek.
No scars or scarring leaves open wounds.
No blood or clotting, but to the tombs
Of death and dying this wound leads.
This I pray, "God, scars I need!"
You wrote of scars you could not forget,
From your past and how you met
The challenges of life from birth to death,
From first love to last heaving breath.
You wrote of scars by others or self-inflicted,
Making you - you - and we're all afflicted.
I have the scars of which you speak.
Scars of your passing is what I seek!
Needing seeds to start the scars to grow.
What seeds there are, the hell I know?
Knowing anguished pain is more the matter,
Knowing Hell can be no sadder.
So I sit besotted, muttering to myself,
What scars matter to my health?
I pray for scars. or even callous,
To stem the flow of sadness, self-hate, self-malice.
You see scars are so different from a callous,
From scars we learn from ancient Pallas.
Scars remain a lifetime tender,
As ballasts to life, life's lessons they render
Callous builds with frictious rubbing
Portending a past of violent drubbing
Callous allows feeling to fade...
Goodness to fade...
Dreams to fade...
You fading from dreams cannot be weighed!

Callousness in any form must be stayed!
Must be flayed from any thought and mention,
As your life's death is my death, your ascension.
My death will be slow, from inside out.
As hopeful imagination fades in slow drought.
I've read your "Final Dream Prophesying Death."
Allow the same, to tell your spirit of my ensuing last breath.
Your death was sudden, mine will not be.
Your death was violent loosing, your spirit let free.
Your death leaves sadness, mine leaves relief.
Your death leaves all eternal asking, "Why!," in disbelief.
My death will come in a slow, slow, slow, grinding halt.
My death will leave a life in default,
Of expectations and commitments to many left unmet,
Of promises broken, others' lives upended, upset.
All this I see in the direction I am going,
As wounds from your death leave my heart overflowing,
As drunkenness fades and grief slowly starts to stem,
"Left wanting!", unfulfilled, my life, my judgment 'in rem.'
So, the question remains, scars or callous will heal?
As callousness grows, it's for the scars I appeal!
Seeds of true healing may nurture scars to grow,
Watered from Christ's chalice, the answer, I know.
But it is up to I to drink from His overflowing cup,
Rather than from my cup of bile, from His I must sup.
As super-ego and id internally debate the matter,
Life passes by in empty-headed, idle-like chatter.
If the scars ever grow, ever build, ever arrive,
Then and only then will I believe I'll survive,
Till then the callous with razor I vigilantly flay,
Patiently awaiting the scars for which I pray.

—Maj. Todd Schmidt
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