

Scars



Ah, how I remember.
How could I forget?
The cold, gray November,
Passing Fall's lament.
The straggling, stubborn leaves,
Holding on in desperate heaves.
The season that grows the mold –
Of depression.
That time when to hold on
Means cling.
Cling to your memories
Of Summer.
Of Spring.
Pray for the cycle, to cycle sooner.
This was the season of my birth.
The irony of Thanksgiving
Giving me my first scar.

I try to remember my birth
As often as possible.
It is my most prized scar.
The scar upon which
All other scars are.
It sets me apart
From all other scarred peoples.

Ah, how I remember.
How could I forget?
The searing heat;

The haze hiding my feet.
Or was it snow,
As the slicing winds blow?
I don't remember the time –
Half as well as my birth!
Yet this particular scar
Has invaluable worth.
The day I discovered brotherhood.

With a twist of a knife,
The idea was defined.
What's mine is mine, and
What's yours is mine –
Unless it is you.
You can have that,
But only that,
And I may still borrow that –
Sometimes.
The scar of Brotherhood.
The scar of childhood.

Ah, how I remember.
How could I forget?
The steely, hollow grinding
Of the gears.
The firing, the forging
Of human engineers.
Oh, the discipline of the machine,
Fouling the mind once clean,

The fruit of good and evil,
Bearing the seed of the obscene.
The scar paid for,
 In more ways than one –
The scar of education.
Anesthetized with little suspicion,
Incised by cruel intentions.

All my instructors have one face,
 A black market surgeon
 With decorated bludgeon.
At the end of the operation –
 Young minds effaced.

As the architects design the scar,
And surveyors plot the marks,
We pour the foundation,
And corrupt the next generation.

Ah, how I remember.
 How could I forget?
Autumn's changing palate;
The brilliance explodes.
The last gasp of life,
 In theatric throes.
Impending Winter's hate.

So, the exquisite scars of religion,
As if God Himself were the artist.
Every time I hear a sermon –
I brace with squinted eyes,
 And clinched fist.

Some scars become
 Inoculation...some.
Some don't understand
 Scars of church, cross,
 Bible, lamp stand.

These scars we bear with pride.
 A sign of fraternity?
 I scar you and you me.
 When we gossip, chatter, chide.
All the while it is not God, but
 Us who make the cuts.

Ah, how I remember.

How could I forget?
C'est passion du Coeur.
The innocent budding
 Of loving.
C'est Printemps de l'amour.

The echoes of this scar are
 Incisive and cause more scars.
You never learn a lesson from
 True love's scar.
Always ready for more.

Ah, how I remember.
 How could I forget?
Its mooring taunt, fastened,
 Meant to last.
Its bearing true, perfect North,
 Steadfast.

The jagged scar of friendship.
 Friends that jump ship;
 Loyalty that seems to slip.
I am on my ump-teenth
 Circle of friends. May this be the end.
I cannot bear another jagged scar.
The cosmetic cost
 Of friendship lost.

Ah, how I remember.
 How could I forget?
All nature resounds with
 The sound of the song of
 Family.

That cacophony of genes.
The pain, the distortion,
 The zigzag seams.
The deepest, most dangerous by far
 Are family scars.
However, we must remember our part,
And the knife we wield,
And the scars we leave
 On crest and shield.

Ah, how I remember.
 How could I forget?
Strewn across the forest floor,

A mighty oak, no more
Than a distant memory.
The branches that held the hammock, the
swing,
The tree house, the laundry string,
Stolen by time's treachery.

Lamentable scars of death,
Infected by things not present.
The words, the deeds, the thoughts,
Hugs, kisses, letters never sent.
The coldness of death robs our repent.
So, everyone experiences death.
Even those that retain their breath.
More people have died in my life,
Than I have buried.
Maybe I should bury them
Just how they died,
Inside.

Ah, how I remember.
How could I forget?
Like the petals of a rose.
So many, so perfect,
So beautifully as it grows.
The purpose it shows.
So are my self-inflicted scars.
How many times have I cut?
Myself?
What some call pruning, but
My slicing, severing, searching is not
For something else to grow.
Sometimes it's just practice,
Or uncaring.
Maybe boredom, waiting for the next show –
The tragic comedy of self-inflicted
scarring.

Ah, how I remember.
How could I forget?
The monotony of time –
Fading, marching, waiting
Illuminating, hiding, reconciling,
Wounding and healing.

The heaps and stacks of life's scars.
No fresh flesh,
No frontier unviolated.
The chaos, the mess.
No real recollection of
Where they originated.

They are just scars.
They are just there.
There for all to see.
There for all to stare.

They are who I am.
They are not who I am not.
They are so attractive.
Masterpieces of blood clots.

As I admire my scars,
I admire yours as well.
Your perseverance,
Your resilience.
I admire the story
Your scars tell.

Yes, these are our scars.
Yet, they are so much more!

—Sgt. Trent Schmidt
Logar Province, Afghanistan,
Combat Outpost Charkh, 173rd Airborne, 2011