

## The Curse

The morning dew invites thoughts of stand-to  
because dawn is when the enemy attacks.

The draws and creek beds become  
dead spaces and kill zones.

My mind furiously sketches range cards,  
templating claymore mines and grenade launchers.

My riflemen can cover the grassy fingers  
of earth sprawling from the ridge-line.

The woods will prove the toughest fight,  
but by then we'll have won.

Wait...who am I fighting?

Am I doomed to a life of battle arrangements  
in contrast to the beauty of the ground before me?  
Open fields evoke Cemetery Ridge. Beautiful gentle  
steeds transform into platforms for cuirassiers.

Hilltops become strongpoints, heavy forest provides  
concealment, and all while the babbling brook  
see canteens gurgling their fill upstream.

My mind converts miles into meters, and does machine gun math,  
and I don't have my basic load...

I stand in the midst of peaceful mountains majesty;

I am not at war.

But my mind won't let it be so.

—Maj. Marshall McGurk