



NCO

Poetry

Ingram Poetry Collection

By Master Sgt. Joshua R. Ingram

Sergeants Major Course

“Widowmakers”

A sea of glowing green eyes snap open and dance in the obsidian night
It is time to punish the wicked warmongers who invaded our home. It is time for them to pay
One by one, we swoop into the stomach of our steel steed and prepare to ride into the skies

The whirl of the beast's blades begins to quicken pace with each rotation
Vibrations begin to shake the exoskeleton of its body and it exhilarates the symbionts within
As the creature lifted off, we could feel the gravitational pull in the pit of our stomachs

Moments pass ... at times it seems like forever, but in reality, only minutes have gone by
The hovering hulk stands still and its doors open, jolting the craft as wind blows in
Ebony ropes roll from its belly, like intestines dangling down. We grab hold and descend

Go, Go, Go! A swarm of soldiers teem across the rooftops and crack open doors
Flashes of light materialize and vanish, followed by short screams and longer smiles
The evildoers are punished methodically until all are captured or dispatched with ease

Across the horizon, the darkness breaks and the daylight reveals the mayhem
The righteous figures emerge from the smoke and ash like a phoenix being reborn
They make their way back to their dwelling once again, waiting to punish those who would sin

Ashes Rain from Arcadia

Blazing sun scorched the desert below, sweltering heat rose from the asphalt as charred flesh, sulfur, and the metallic aroma of blood permeated the air. Destruction and chaos enveloped the unsuspecting victims of the Explosively Formed Projectile. The solder slug slung through the door. Flames rescinded from whence they came and the shockwave of the blast shattered the glass. The interior panel of the driver's door blossomed open like a lethal flower. Horrifying screams bellowed from the depths of the steel hulk. Frantic and alone, the "Infidel" inside held his brother's corpse and pleaded pointlessly to a deaf god. Justice and vengeance blurred in that moment, dislike turned to hate, but knowing the difference became harder with each passing moment. Lethargically, the door creaked open to reveal the nightmare within. The macabre scene was painted with scarlet hues. Frigid embrace of numbness set in, not in the flesh, but within the soul. Its wicked tendrils slithered and slowly oozed into the deepest, hidden chasms of my ebony core. My spirit left my body as the puddles of crimson turned into rivers gushing out, forming a waterfall of suffering. Quiet ... there were no words to say. No solace, no encouragement, no way to make it go away. I realized how fragile life could be. I awoke, my eyes truly opened for the first time. The silly pursuits that I chased, altered in an instant, as I gazed upon my friend. Time passed slowly, sometimes it did not move at all. Observing an untimely death of someone so young, impacted me more than I ever thought possible. To view a mutilated, mangled man torn from existence will twist your insides into knots. What kind of world is this? As I scanned the area, I saw shifty eyes and shady looks. Instantly, xenophobic tendencies possessed every person on the scene. I yearned for my wrath to be quelled by the elation of revenge. Why were they zombified based on proximity? War is ugly; it is insane, it ravages your heart and your brain.

This poem may disturb some. It's in memoriam to the late Sgt. Mathis Ellerbe and all who struggle with suicidal ideations.

Double Deuce

Desert sands were left behind yet a war wages on, as they yell internally, their voice never utters a sound. Invisible wounds fester beneath a serene surface as negative nostalgia plunges them to a final turning point.

Gut-wrenching pain torments thought and thrashes soul.
It should have been me! I could have done more!
Numbly, they trudge through daily motions of what we say is life but find no fulfillment from their feats.

I'd be better off dead. No one would notice if I were gone.
Deep cuts lead to dangerous risks. The anguish becomes an escape. For a moment, they can feel something once again. Silently they sit, consumed by the darkness and self-loathing.

Little by little, lashes are not enough. Escalate the harm on the body and mind. Time to progress to the next level. The wrists spill out, pill bottles fall, triggers are squeezed and loved ones call. There is no answer, to the phone or for their act.

You'll miss me when I'm gone! How very true is that ...

Sorrow at Ship's Mast

I sit in somber silence, as the wails of my fellow travelers surround me
The crew rows on, sporadically saturated by mists from woeful waves
As I gaze beyond the bow, I focus on the object floating in the foreground
An empty wooden vessel hovers on an emerald sea filled with emerging ivory stones

At the helm, the captain speaks to the crew in an attempt to direct them on this journey
Muffled by deafening silence, his words fall like a wounded bird spiraling to its death
While I fade into the mental abyss, the blast of seven cannons shatters the quiet three times
Foreign fellows dress the hollow crate, waiting to ferry it away to its final place

I barely blink, as they bring me a shroud from the colors that dressed the case
The crimson, alabaster, and azure dance vibrantly, as if alive, but what cost caused them to be?
In my solitude I tarry, reflecting on how many of my ancestors filled the halls of Valhalla
How many dedicated their lives in service to others? How many paid the price in blood?

The voyage comes to a close and it is time to erect another pallid pillar
Fill the ocean more and more, it began decades ago and continues with the father I adore
This sea is insatiable, always searching for the next victim to fill its infinite floor
Here is the excursion's end, the place to rest. Close your eyes, put your hands on your chest

Through the Looking Glass

Run
I sprint away from the darkness within
Around each bend, the beast lurks in the shade
I gaze into the glazed sheet to begin
Confronted by the stranger I have made

Avoid
I stare at the heinous husk before me
Turning from the putrid man I once was
I fight not to turn from the dark and flee
Sickened by the shady shell life can cause

Grapple
I steel my sullied soul and stand my ground
Facing the fiendish façade in the glass
I lock eyes with the nasty leech I've found
Clinched in an endless clash to clear the pass

Execute
I release my might to usurp the beast
Unleashing fury that cannot be fought
I watch the dust settle, hoping it's ceased
Amazed by the results of the onslaught

*In the end, the hardest foe I will see
Is the dark stranger who stares back at me ■*

Master Sgt. Joshua R. Ingram is a student at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. He has served in various leadership assignments and positions over the last 17 years, ranging from forward observer to first sergeant. He holds a bachelor's degree in Applied Workplace Leadership from Northern Michigan University and a Master of Science degree in Management from Excelsior University.



<https://www.armypress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NCOJournal>

<https://twitter.com/NCOJournal>

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NCO Journal, the U.S. Army, or the Department of Defense.

