

## THE SOLDIER AND THE POLITICAN

*by William A. Cook*

Experience speaks with a humble voice,  
For it bears witness to our arrogance and folly;  
It knows what we dare not say,  
“We live in fear and anxiety.”

Listen, then, my friends, to the Soldier's words of caution,  
For he seeks union with our neighbors,  
    Alliances with strangers,  
    Negotiations with our enemies,  
Before we enlist the dogs of war.

He sees the soldiers strewn on the killing fields;  
He hears the wailing cry of mothers watching their children die;  
He touches, oh so softly, the bleeding body bent beneath the armament.  
He smells the stench of burning flesh that rises where he walks;  
He weeps inside, a silent witness to our primordial fear.  
He knows, once war erupts, the whirlwind follows  
    Driving all before it without reason or purpose,  
    Even as it evokes myths that give it reason and purpose.

But he speaks to one who never saw war,  
    Never saw the fly suck the soldier's eye;  
    Never heard the searing cry carve the air;  
    Never cradled a soldier's head before he died;  
    Never listened to the rasp of fear rise in the throat  
        As the specter of death hovered near;  
Never walked in the village square where the missile struck  
    To see the havoc there --  
    The children weeping in the street  
    The mothers kneeling in the dust,  
    Innocent victims of lies, deceit, and distrust.

Arrogance is the stepchild of privilege and stupidity,  
It feeds upon itself, creating a mirage of superiority  
That, like a drug, intoxicates those infected  
    To see themselves like gods,  
    All powerful, all knowing,  
Determiners of human fate,  
    Of who to love and who to hate,  
    Of what is good and what is evil,  
    Of who will live and who will die.

Such men do not need their neighbors;  
They live in myth and rule by myth  
    Forcing their subjects to obey through fear,  
The oil that makes smooth their path  
    To domination of the world.

Such men find fortification in fables,  
    Purpose in parables,  
    Meaning in mayhem,  
    Truth in lies,  
And damn as demons those who dissent.

One truth above all truths,  
    One god above all gods,  
        One power above all powers!  
Such is their cry, and it carries across the seas  
    And the trees, and the sand,  
A cry in the wilderness of time,  
    The cry of Alexander and Caesar,  
    Of Napoleon and Hitler,  
And all the little men who would subjugate  
    The spirit of those who walk upon the earth.

© Copyright William A. Cook. All rights reserved.