

HUGH MARTIN

---

*Sonnet, M-16A2 Assault Rifle*

Some days I clean the rifle so it shines,  
A steel slice of darkness in grease-stained hands.  
Some days, I hate to take it outside, dust  
Blowing after, eating the morning brown.  
Some days, after the warm silhouettes bow  
Across the green field of the firing range,  
I sit against sandbags, sweat in sunlight,  
And hold that grip, the muzzle's edge resting  
Across the top of my thigh. And some days,  
When I've cleaned it for hours, I want only  
To take it home for the dim emptiness  
Above the mantel, because it'd be wrong  
To shoot again, to smear and smudge with whorls,  
To blemish a thing that makes the night blush.