

Warrior Songs



Ethan McGuire

Levi,

As a high-school graduation gift I have organized some of the poems I have written into a small booklet collection. I know you are not big on poetry (what kind of real man would be?!), but seeing that you enjoyed one of my war poems already, I thought I would put more of my poems on the same subject together. Besides, such a gift seems appropriate, as you plan to enter the military soon. The result here is *Warrior Songs: A Booklet Collection of 15 War Poems*. I hope you enjoy it.

Sincerely,

Ethan McGuire

P.S.: I made this because I didn't want to spend any money on a gift. Ha! Ha! Just kidding!

Warrior Songs

A Poetry Chapbook by Ethan McGuire

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"Of Wars and Warriors"

An introduction

Of wars and of warriors I sing.
Through my verse I hope praise to bring
To mighty deeds, acts of the courageous;
And of the God who saved them I sing!

I sing as a wondering minstrel, light on his feet;
As a battle-cry drummer, drumming the beat;
Like a proud cock to a farmer, lying abed;
Like a man to his lover, they soon to be wed;

As a warrior soft-sings to himself;
As the delightful voice of the fanciful elf;
Like a modern-day singer, of the truth-singing few;
Even like poetry that once used "forsooth."

Of wars and of warriors I sing.
Through verse I hope their praise to bring
To mighty deeds, acts of the courageous;
And of the God who led them I sing!

"Warrior Songs"

A preface

These are songs of warriors.
Far away from home,
Far from any comfort,
Here they are doomed to roam.

Their families yearn ever for them:
No comfort does it bring,
No solace for these warriors,
Sent here by their king.

Now the warrior bows down,
Down on bended knee,
Asking of his one God
The end of battle he might see.

When the warrior returns
He is given welcome,
But the country bears not
The weight of best friends fallen.

These are warrior songs.
These are verses apropos the brave.

"Sir George of the Dragon"

Could it be possible that dinosaurs lived up into the late Ancient Times, or even the early Middle Ages? Here is my poem version of a popular dragon tale, written in the style of medieval minstrel songs.

Sir George was brave and kind,
And often nobles with him dined;
But George wished people in need to help.

One day when looking at the land,
George feared that something had gone wrong.
And so George left his prosp'rous band,
And sat out whilst he sang a song.

George journeyed many days and nights,
And traveled thro' many plain and wood,
And met him many maids and knights
Who bade him share in their feast food.

One day fair lady George did meet,
And noted he that she did cry.
Said George, "My dear, this is not meet!"
The lady answered with a sigh.

"A dragon shall come very soon,
"For he wants me for to devour.
"He said that he would come at noon,
"And he'll arrive this very hour!"

George answered her with brave mien
And said, "This beast I will o'rtake.
"If you should lead me to his den,
"This dragon, you, he shall not take."

The lady, sobbing, led him on,
Though she thought he could not win.
She thought their lives were ver'ly done...
And then they heard a monstrous din.

The brute emerged from blackened hole
And charged the seated knight real quick.
The fiend's breath made armor black and dull;
The beastly heat 'most made George sick.

George, sore afraid when dragon's breath he saw,
Raised high his shield and charged the ugly beast,
And waited 'till a chance he glimpsed;
He would not be this dragon's feast!

When the dragon almost knight devoured,
George raised his lance and split that brutish throat.
The dragon drew back like a coward,
Then flew and fell into the lady's castle moat

George, with the maiden, to her castle went;
Her father thanked him o'r and o'r.
Back to home castle George he sent
With the prize that George most wished for.

When the gentry of his home country
Heard of the noble deeds that George had done
They dubbed him Sir George of the Dragon.

"King Arthur: The Pendragon"

When the Romans left Britain, as Rome fell and barbarians invaded, the Britons were left to fend for themselves. In such times arise men of grit and men of greed.

Waves list and swish about the oaken hull,
As the galley creaks and oars begin to roll.
And Roman banners can be viewed
Departing Britain's isle.

King Uther's dead, the people need a king
As Saxon raids breath fearsome fire on the land,
While but weak armies do defy
The ever-coming flood.

Merlin was not a wizard, but he was
A man with fiery few tricks up his sleeve.
And Merlin knew a thing or two
The people sure did not.

King Uther's death had left a male child heir,
Who's now a warrior and chivalrous besides.
And Merlin thought "'Tis now the time
"To present the youthful king."

Into the finer castles heir Arthur went,
At Merlin's instructions and introduction, too,
Arthur announced himself as king.
But the people doubted this.

Even barons understood when Merlin spoke.
So speak he did, and gave a great long speech
Of Arthur's birth and nobleness.
At this the people awed.

All subordinates were glad to thus be ruled
When they found what kind of man young Arthur was.
That is apart from the troublesome few
Who wanted bad the kingly spot.

The baron villains called out Arthur to do war
With them on morrow at high noon's hour.
And try they would to defeat him there,
And they were sure they could.

Arthur, advanced with his Round Table of knights,
Was ready for the battle come at noon
With Lancelot, Merlin, and other men
And wife Guinevere at his side.

The parting troop asked God's help on the day,
For the help they needed was surely His.
Then they formed a long line and then went
And stopped in a great field of green.

Soon the armies both met in their splendor:
A sea of lances, helmets, men, and horse.
Soon both lines eased forward and met
With a clash of steel upon steel.

Arthur and Lancelot were dashing to and fro,
While Merlin cast fire among the ranks,
And Guinevere bent back her bow,
For the days fighting was fierce.

Before long, the day went for King Arthur
And his knights as the battle raged on.
Then the enemy gave up their swords,
Surrendering themselves to the king.

And when the battling was all done and o'r,
Arthur invited all to come and dine a feast
With him on the morrow, and he
Would take heed to all their plights.

Arthur Pendragon ruled for many years
And enjoyed many a happy time
And kept Briton safe from enemies
Until his dying day.

"Robin Hood and the Freedom Fighters"

The legends of Robin Hood are quite popular, and filled with stories of bravery and good will.

He dwelt in Sherwood with his men:
 One-Hundred forest'rs deep in a glen.
 And there they tried the Sheriff to shun;
 This job was rarely eas'ly done.
 Robin Hood.

The Sheriff hunted Robin, a hare,
 "Come and get me!" Robin would dare.
 The Sheriff's lies were falsely laid;
 But most forbore to give him aid.
 For the Sheriff was cruel.

Among Rob's men, his right-hand man
 By far was the tallest in all his band.
 Among the men, John's might was most;
 Of Herc'lean strength did minstrels boast.
 Little John, the lofty forester.

Will Stutely, Scarlett, and Alan, too,
 Were, all of them, to Robin true.
 The Tinker, Miller, and others many
 The peasants held were better than any.
 Robin and his merry men.

Marion was Robin's maid,
 And she would help how'er he bade.
 She was to Hood an immense help,
 And seldom thought much about herself.
 A kindly lass was she.

Friar Tuck was another one
 Through whom important jobs were done.
 But he was fat and loved to eat
 And did not like to use his feet.
 The fattest friar in Nottingham shire.

Robin and his outlaw band
 Were true, courageous, and full of sand.
 They watched their people till Richard came back,
 So that their lands the Sheriff not sack.
 That God-fearing band.

Often the Sheriff they engaged,
Though that Sheriff was sore enraged.
The greenwood their base, oppression they fought.
And some with blood their freedom bought.
Their legend lives on.

"The Broadsword Melody"

During Scotland's war for freedom in the 13th and 14th centuries, men gave much for the sake of freedom.

Their piper is piping a shrill Scottish song,
Naked swords shining bright in the light morning sun,
And they lilt to the tune of a time now long gone.
And they shout as they run to the Broadsword Melody!

They fight for their lands and a dignity lost,
Some young and some old, but all pay the cost
And fight for their freedom, that which they have sought.
And they cry as they form to the Broadsword Melody!

Their kilts are a'flapping as the heathers they plod,
Bows and their arrows the first to maraud,
Then they wait and lie down in the clean morning frost.
And they crouch as they hear the Broadsword Melody!

They jump. "Up! All forward! No quarter today!"
Does their prized brave-heart in eagerness say
As he prays to great God He'll help in the fray.
And he dances the dance of the Broadsword Melody!

"Bunker Hill"

*During the American Revolution, many men, and women, gave up various comforts and safeties
for the sake of liberty, just as the Scottish had five-hundred years previous.*

Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, onward
Marched the great scarlet snake, the British regulars.

They'd sailed slow into the bay, expecting but no fight,
And found war at Breed's Hill, of infamous placing.

Gage, haughty, commanded CHARGE!, reliant in numbers;
They fell by the masses there, at patriot breastworks.

Colonials held steady there, chest deep in their trenches;
They used up there good lead here, and more besides that, sure.

Blood fed the ground all around, more so for the Britons;
Thrice up the hill redcoats marched, up the hill, onward.

American lines, they broke, some died in the breaking;
The British held victory, but to little effect here.

Revolution'ries showed they'd fight, complete to the dying;
At Bunker Hill not all was lost, not all in that battle.

Up the hill, o'r the hill, past the hill, onward
Came the great scarlet snake, the British regulars.

But they knew not there'd come a day, when they likewise retreated,
Defeated by peasants here, on New-Lander soil.

"The Warriors"

Settling early America's savage lands was a risky business.

The woodsman squats by campfire dim,
A deer of wood in human form.
He expects the Natives to attack tonight,
His horses precious rubies in their eyes.

Lo . . . what lurks down there?
Naught but a creature in the dark of night.
He hearkens to the sounds cast round him nonetheless,
For skin-clad ghosts are creeping up the hill.

The time has come; the cougars now attack.
Their hail of arrows fall 'round him in a storm.
And when the savage warriors come in sight,
His gun spurts fire o'r and o'r again.

Then when the thunder is all quieted down
The painted warriors are all dead,
And bodies are strewn across the soil,
Their lives cut short to gain some little horses.

The white warrior, hair brushing buckskin garb,
Gets up from his position when the fighting's done,
Looks toward the Indian chief and much regrets:
He sent forth the ship that bore this warrior home.

This is the life that this man did once choose.
This life must be lived in for a while.
So, before he can go back where others are,
A few more battles must be safely won.

"Normandy's Beaches"

Here is yet another poem concerning men of courage and worthy of honor.

They charged the shore through leaden hail.
God helped them, even as they fell,
Pierced through the head, the heart, the trunk.
Fighting for liberty,
Their freedom's cause,
On Normandy's mine-strewn beaches.

They floated down, a silken dove,
And from their carriers jumped and dove
Into the night, the ground below.
An airborne army
Back inland
Of Normandy's infamous beaches.

Confusion came, as both sides fought,
And they, their victory, blood-giving sought.
They turned the foe, a fierce regime,
Gave them reason
To ponder implications
Of their Normandy's beaches loss.

Dead men lay floating, they littered the shore,
As they, their loved ones, went before.
But the victory was counted sweet
By many who fought,
Who would have died,
Battling on Normandy's beaches.

"A Monument of Mourning"

It is always good for one to remember what men have done in service to one's county, even when they did not reach their goal.

So long ago, not often in our minds
A mission was left unaccomplished.
Let us now remove time's heavy binds
And clear away low-lying mists.

Desolation lay desert-bare,
While twisting through populous streets
Of cement, sand, none hardly fair,
The Rangers watched from Humvee seats.

Others slid down ropes of choppers,
Quickly working their way to the ground,
And avoided the deadly haters.
But their target could not be found.

Then shot the RPG—loaded—
Finding its way to a Black Hawk, crucial.
Fast in, it—deadly—exploded.
"Black Hawk Down!" came a voice from the hustle.

Afterwards most help abandoned.
The men, they were left behind,
While bullets, explosives, all cannoned
And Mogadishu-men sought to find.

"Americans!" those enemies cried.
"You DOGS! We will find you all soon
"And spill your blood to the earth, fried
"Under the sun and the moon!"

They fought them off, tried desperately,
To find a stronghold in fire,
While brothers across the great sea
Walked about in everyday tire.

Rescue came, but not soon enough
For the those pinned down by the mass
Of demons who wished them to suffer
And die upon evil harass.

But there were some who gladly survived that
Horrible day to the morning,
And lived to hang Kevlar hats
Upon a monument of mourning.

"Waiting"

Waiting, as far as I can tell, is one of the harder things for a warrior. Patience is, in truth, an art.

Waiting.
The bell tolls.
The clock ticks.
Done are the rolls.
The commander is not sick.
But there is still some reason we wait.

Waiting.
I think back,
To times when
Our rucksacks
Were heavy, there back then.
But now we are battle-ready.

Waiting.
We check gear
Again and
Again. Here
We wait till "the time" and
Pray we make it past "DZ,"
Just back of the enemy's beaches.

"Army Rangers"

Here is a poem in which I try to exemplify the spirit of one of America's most elite defense organizations.

Warriors undercover, we are strangers.
Are our own lives fun? They're filled with dangers.
Few are those who join us; are we major?
We're Army, in the category Ranger.

Toward enemies and rivals we are blinders;
Though apropos to are friends, be we kinder.
Its a law written in stone: don't leave brothers.
We cherish the long-lived Creed of Army Rangers.

C-130's, snipers, choppers, airborne: menders
In the missions given to us by our senders.
We as an integral team, nations' defenders,
Will move, breath, act as one; as Army Rangers.

"The Farmer's War"

Before today's inventions came into being, the farmer's work was a tiring, backbreaking, age-rushing job. To survive was truly a fight, a war.

The Farmer looked to the sky
And prayed he would survive.

The Farmer fought a war
Through Spring and Summer,
Through Autumn and Winter.
The Farmer's fight was backbreaking.

The Spring came beautiful,
And with it rains refreshing.
But the rain brought parasites
So grievous. They ate his crops, his cash.

The Summer came quite hot,
And that was good for haying.
But no rains came after that Spring,
Grass, ponds and wells withered and dried

Autumn brought its cool winds,
Welcome after Summer's breath.
Autumn brought with it gladness:
The crops were harvested, but were sparse.

Winter's biting cold brought ill:
Winds, ice and heaping snow-banks.
The Farmer's cattle nearly froze to death,
For the hay and food, energy-bringers, ran out.

Thus the Farmer did not win his war.
But neither did the Farmer lose it:
His family was well, his land his own.
And for this he was thankful; he was alive.

The Farmer looked to the sky.
He thanked God he had survived.

"Paradox"

There are many kinds of warfare. This is one of them.

A siren's voice pleads in the midnight air.
 Its the noble patrolman's cry as he rides
 Speedingly to the aid of a crash victim.
 Or perhaps he's sniffing out the trail
 Of a murderer - a threat to civilization,
 A sneak who threatens everything that
 The patrolman, his country, and his land stands for.

And then, there is the doctor in the city
 Who silently pauses by the bed
 Of a sick man, a cripple, someone mangled
 By the crash from which the ambulance came.
 The doctor knows his patient soon might die,
 But does not give up; he knows the hope
 A live man has, possesses, tries to hold.

And so he caresses the weary brows
 Of a child whom deformity early knew,
 Assures the mother and father he will do
 What he can to his utmost ability, skill.
 Thus he takes up the knife through which
 Providence sometimes breathes a gentle healing-touch
 To those who otherwise might come to see Him.

Both are honorable, chivalrous, decent, generous.
 They sacrifice themselves, their only health
 To save as many lives as possibly they can.
 The weariness of days without rest, and more,
 Are known to these men, and others besides:
 The military man, taking the bullet, literally;
 The fireman, charging a roaring blaze.

But while these diligently, bone-weary, work
 An Other sort of physician creeps among
 Dark places, sometimes shown as light, but wrongly.
 This Other smiles, toothy, says he knows
 The plight that his client faces, and he will
 Help them, free them of their burden.
 He will shoulder it, will be their father, yes.

The girl, this Other's client, says "fine."
 She is anxious, wonders if what she does is wrong.
 Her religion teaches her "everything is cool."
 So why can this not be ever good?
 She's pregnant, with a child, but who does care?
 Not her mom, not her dad, not her sister.
 And definitely not the father of her child.

That Other's mind is twisted, like the one
 Who gave the law saying his work is lawful.
 In bed, this Other snarls as he drinks
 And snorts himself to hardly-sleep.
 Yeah; yeah; its okay, or so sweetly says
 The Other's lawyer, fat and richly grand;
 Only wanting, taking, snatching, loving self.

And while the patrolman, doctor,
 military-man, and fireman work, as told
 In stanzas up above, the Other skulks
 And drives near his own office to perform
 The legal murder; the unjust execution;
 The brutal, smashing, poking, tearing murder.
 A child dies today. Thousands see not the world.

This is the horrific paradox of our time:
 Our leaders, guiders of our country,
 Stand up against murders, and any harms
 Done to a person, beast, and even plants.
 But the same leaders—heart-hard—allow
 The ignoble, detestable killing of an
 Unborn child, fully lovely, developed.

And the men who uphold civilization's pillars
 Hold back the savage, criminal night
 Only to have their good works negated
 By these so-called doctors of the clinics,
 Whom the high-place people happily fund
 And support this malicious breeding ground
 That gladly feeds the darkness.

"A Beam of Hope"

A fitting and short epilogue.

Through death and destruction,
Through booming and night,
Through human ignorance
And the trend to fight,
Through all of our struggles
And our human plight
Comes never wavering
A bright-shining light.