

“Camouflaging the Chimera”
by Yusef Komunyakaa (2001)

We tied branches to our helmets.
We painted our faces & rifles
with mud from a riverbank,
blades of grass hung from the pockets
of our tiger suits.
We wove ourselves into the terrain,
content to be a hummingbird's target.

We hugged bamboo & leaned
against a breeze off the river,
slow-dragging with ghosts

from Saigon to Bangkok,
with women left in doorways
reaching in from America.
We aimed at dark-hearted songbirds.

In our way station of shadows
rock apes tried to blow our cover
throwing stones at the sunset. Chameleons

crawled our spines, changing from day
to night: green to gold,
gold to black. But we waited
till the moon touched metal,

till something almost broke
inside us. VC struggled
with the hillside, like black silk

wrestling iron through grass.
We weren't there. The river ran
through our bones. Small animals took refuge
against our bodies; we held our breath,

ready to spring the L-shaped
ambush, as a world revolved
under each man's eyelid.

“War Is Kind”
by Stephen Crane (1899)

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind,
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them.
Great is the battle-god, great, and his
kingdom--
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbles in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind!

“Not to Keep”
by Robert Frost (1917)

They sent him back to her. The letter came
Saying... And she could have him. And before
She could be sure there was no hidden ill

Under the formal writing, he was in her sight,
Living. They gave him back to her alive—
How else? They are not known to send the dead—
And not disfigured visibly. His face?
His hands? She had to look, and ask,
“What was it, dear?” And she had given all
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,
And all the rest for them permissible ease.
She had to ask, “What was it, dear?”

“Enough,
Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care
And medicine and rest, and you a week,
Can cure me of to go again.” The same
Grim giving to do over for them both.
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes
How was it with him for a second trial.
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.

“I Have a Rendezvous with Death”
by Alan Seeger (1917)

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air —
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath —
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

All members of the Armed Forces of the United States are expected to measure up to the standards embodied in this Code of Conduct while in combat or in captivity. To ensure achievement of these standards, members of the armed forces liable to capture shall be provided with specific training and instruction designed to better equip them to counter and withstand all enemy efforts against them, and shall be fully instructed as to the behavior and obligations expected of them during combat or captivity.

Article I

I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.

[Article I amended by EO 12633 of Mar. 28, 1988, 53 FR 10355, 3 CFR, 1988 Comp., p. 561]

Article II

I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command, I will never surrender the members of my command while they still have the means to resist.

[Article II amended by EO 12633 of Mar. 28, 1988, 53 FR 10355, 3 CFR, 1988 Comp., p. 561]

Article III

If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.

Article IV

If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.

Article V

When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am required to give name, rank, service number and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.

[Article V amended by EO 12017 of Nov. 3, 1977, 42 FR 57941, 3 CFR, 1977 Comp., p. 152]

Article VI

I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.

[Article VI amended by EO 12633 of Mar. 28, 1988, 53 FR 10355, 3 CFR, 1988 Comp., p. 561]

"Executive Order 10631." *Federal Register*. National Archives and Records Administration, n.d. Web. 20 Apr 2010. <<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10631.html>>.

"January 1991"

by Lucille Clifton (1993)

they have sent our boy
to muffle himself
in the sand. our son
who has worshipped skin,
pale and visible as heaven,
all his life,
who has practiced the actual
name of God,
who knows himself to be
the very photograph of Adam.
yes, our best boy is there
with his bright-eyed sister,
both of them waiting in dunes
distant as Mars
to shutter the dark veiled lids
of not our kind.
they, who are not us, they have
no life we recognize,
no heaven we can care about,
no word for God we can pronounce.
we do not know them,
do not want to know them,
do not want this lying at night
all over the bare stone county
dreaming of desert for the first time
and of death and our boy and his sister
and them and us.