

New Poetry from Randy Brown

victory conditions

My father taught me
to say *I love you*
every time
you stood in the door

left for school
went to work
flew off to war

it became a habit
a good one
like checking the tires
or clicking your seat belt

but now
every conversation feels
like a movement to contact

we took the same vows
we swore the same oaths
we wore the same uniform
we see the same news

I raise my kids
like he did his
and have the same hopes for them

How is it that we now live
in two countries?

three more tanka from Des Moines, Iowa

1.

The leafblower drone
buzzes into consciousness—
fast cicada hum.
I wave to the new police,
before I close the window.

2.

Yellow Little Bird
hovers near high-voltage lines
conducting repairs
outside my bedroom window,
but I am miles away.

3.

Thunder and popcorn;
a remembered joke about
the “sound of freedom.”
In rain, I stand listening
as rifles prepare for war.

a future space force marine writes haiku

1.

This drop won't kill you—
terminal velocity
varies by planet.

2.

We spiral dirt-ward,
samaras in early fall,
sowing destruction.

3.

Reconnaissance drones

orbit our squad's position:
Expanding beachhead.

4.

"Almost" only counts
in horseshoes and hand grenades.
Go toss them a nuke.

5.

If war is still hell,
at least my bounding mech suit
is air-conditioned.



"An American pineapple, of the kind the Axis finds hard to digest, is ready to leave the hand of an infantryman in training at Fort Belvoir, Va, 1944. American soldiers make

good grenade throwers.”

This is just to Say All Again After ...

after William Carlos Williams’ “This is Just to Say”

I have expended
the “pineapples”
that were in
the ammo box

and which
you were probably
saving
for final protective fires

Forgive me
they were explosive
so frag
and so bold

Most Likely / Most Dangerous Enemy Courses of Action

what most
threatens my children

social media /
unending war

the rat race /
the daily grind

half-baked policies /
global warming

a lack of hope /
a lack of justice

my constant distraction /
my constant distraction

the stand

if you can't stand injustice
take a knee

if you pray for others
take a knee

if you believe in freedom, not fabric
let others see

you practice
what you preach