

Unknown Poems

by Marcus Amaker, Poet Laureate of Charleston, SC

1.

As the morning rises
with the clean air of summer,
my mind is clouded
in smoke.

Anxiety is ammunition
for a duty
that haunts
my dreams:

A war that will
take me away from home,
a departure
that digs deep
within the battlefields
of my soul.

I am one
of many warriors
willing to
fight for a country
that promises freedom,

a country
that I am proud
to call
home.

2.

Home is a hollow space
when world-wide hostility
takes ahold of its habitat.

Beneath this roof
are memories
of life without combat,

a breath before bloodshed,
a love untouched by fear.

I am haunted
more than I am happy.

Reading letters
loaded with the tragedies
of war,
stories about future legends,
soon-to-be ghosts who
fought with honor,

and lost their lives
without losing their faith.

3.
If death has a sound,
then I am now its echo.

Silence will soon
pass through me

and I will remember
that I was made
to have an ending.

And war,
with its infinite reverence,
also has boundary.

I am far
from my family,
but I will soon
be home.

4.
With honor,
I march.

21 steps

in time
for the timeless spirits
of soldiers.

With service,
I march.

21 seconds
in rhythm
for the breathless voices
of the decorated
and departed.

With commitment,
I march.

24 hours
in tempo
to guard the ghosts
who gave their lives
for our country

so that we
can safely call
this land
our home.

5.
Layers of remembrance
hover over us like clouds.

When it rains,
we are wrapped
in sorrow
because we can't escape
the memory of
fallen heroes.

How many storms
have gone unnoticed?

How many more

downpours deserve
our attention?

Our homes
and hearts
are enlivened
by the recognition
of generations
who are gone,
but never forgotten.