

Three Poems by Victor Henry

The System

is top-heavy with politicians who speak for corporate capitalists who control the media that informs the masses of unquestioning people what to think and dictates the party line in order to target minorities who fight amongst themselves to keep the illusion that the American Dream is alive and well while the military plans the next war two years in advance.

Private Numnuts

Before we can get to a place of peace, we have to touch our suffering—embrace it and hold it.

At Hell's Gate: A Soldiers Journey from War to Peace, Claude Anshin Thomas

The Drill Instructor, veins protruding from his neck, yells at a platoon of new recruits to answer post haste. He says, Which is easier to kill? A fly? Or, pointing to a cruit in the first row, private Numnuts over there? With his left hand rolled tightly in a fist, and the other with forefinger extended, he signals to private Numnuts to move front and center. The platoon hears the whirring. The fly trapped inside the D.I.'s hand going bonkers. And, as quick as a gambler moving thimbles in a shell game, he has private Numnuts by the throat. Which is easier to kill? He screams again to the platoon, standing at attention, outside on a very hot Kansas afternoon,

sweating bullets in their skivvies. The fly or Numnuts? Paralyzed with fear, they are speechless, their mouths open, forming perfect round O's. Numnuts! he yells. Goddammit! It's Numnuts! The D.I. squeezes tighter and tighter until private Numnut's eyes pop from their sockets. Now, speaking softly, almost in ecstasy, the D.I. slowly punctuates each word, saying, as innocently as a murderer confessing his sins, Believe me girls, I wouldn't hurt a fly.

Body Mist

She was a lovely woman, but I had to drop her after she had acquired a penchant for heights. For the past six months she has dated an airline pilot, a flagpole sitter, a mountain climber, a high-rise window washer, and a Brooklyn Bridge painter. Her desk is located on the 86th story of the Empire State Building where she looks out over West 33rd Street, while attending to menial clerical duties. Patiently, I have listened to her memorizing Hart Crane's **The Bridge** on her lunch hour. Furthermore, I have seen her standing on a parapet in a crazed state, preparing her leap like Crane's balloon shirted bedlamite. Already miles from Vera Cruz, Crane's ship has left without her. This afternoon, however, she has been feeling an altitude of suffocation, the indissolvable substance of body mist.

Victor Henry's work has appeared in various small press magazines, anthologies, and Ezines. He holds two earned master's degrees, enjoys working as a reference librarian, is a Vietnam veteran, and a member of Veterans for Peace.