

# 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