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## Choice: A Marine's Battle Through Hell

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# Choice: A Marine's Battle Through Hell

[Maddie Jackson]

It begins with a choice.  
Good, bad, simple, complicated –  
Unknown to those  
Who read and hear the news at home.

The soldier from Salvation  
Knows the choices he makes –  
The dogtags that clink, clank, clack  
Remind him of them  
As he sweats in the jungle heat.

He is one of ten, the soldier from Salvation,  
Here to stop the evil lurking in the green,  
Watching from the mud  
With the swish-click-lock  
Of vengeful iron and sulfur.

Led by the honorable Captain V, he marches  
Through mosquito clouds and deception's blinding camouflage.  
Led by the honorable Captain V, he fights  
With ice-cold soul and white-knife precision,  
Rifle screaming death at enemies.  
He's seen only in his nightmares.  
They're demons, the Japanese – mindless, soulless animals.

He knows that they are not.  
He knows the truth – but the soldier from Salvation is ignorant.  
He is like his fellow Marines  
Who stand in the battle's aftermath,  
Spitting at the enemy.

Such poor choice of perspective, says the honorable Captain V,  
They have as much right to hate, to kill us  
As we do them. Why can we kill –  
But they cannot?

*continued on next page*



The soldier from Salvation shrugs.  
Where they chose, he was forced;  
He now fights for honor, life,  
And wounded country.

Fool, the honorable Captain V scoffs.  
Can't you see? You know nothing.  
You young soldiers are so passionate,  
Swept here by glory in bloodshed  
And dead Japanese honor.  
Fool, the honorable Captain V scoffs.  
Songs will be sung and you will be swayed –  
But the truth will break you, body and soul.

When the honorable Captain V departs,  
The soldier from Salvation follows in silence,  
Arms cradling hatred and smoking iron.  
And as the dogtags clink, clank, clack,  
He's reminded of his choices  
As he sweats in the jungle heat.

## *Shy Man* for r.w.

[Tricia Marcella Cimera]

when a shy man  
flirts,  
he is like a bee  
hovering above  
the hibiscus,  
hoping the flower  
makes the first  
move, takes  
the first kiss,  
stretches

her petals,  
catches,  
caresses  
him, the bashful  
bee hopeful for  
bliss,  
for a whispered  
yesss yesss,  
for...  
pollination.