



## Glory<sup>1</sup>

I've been in war. Don't tell me of glory  
That cost the lives of dear friends. Young as me.  
Most of them whose coffin was their cockpit.  
All - Fresh faced children. Old before their time.

Whose brave demeanor masked our greatest fear.  
Not of death, but failure in first combat  
Against the foe that none would care to know.  
Did our mortal enemies fear alike?

Pacific once meant peaceful, bright, and calm  
When Balboa knelt on its golden<sup>i</sup> shore.  
Now, obscene war and death belies its name;  
Monster warships like vampires feasting blood.

A rising sun<sup>ii</sup> once announced the bright day.  
Proclaimed now by klaxon<sup>iii</sup> and cannon fire  
Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Man your battle stations!  
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Running to their planes on slippery flight decks  
Heavy-laden boys with life vest and knife  
Plotting boards to navigate their way home  
Always armed with tracer-loaded pistols.<sup>iv</sup>

Death in the air was no concern of ours.  
No enemy we feared; but fire and trapped.  
For signal use if rescue tried in darkness.  
Otherwise, none wanted to consider.

Both fleets launched screaming fighter, bombing planes  
Their young and finest for the sacrifice  
Sunlight on a hundred eager faces  
Reflecting the countenance of children.

James Brown - Carrier pilot-World War II-Korea

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<sup>1</sup> Free verse

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## Notes

- <sup>i</sup> Before Balboa, the Pacific Ocean was called The Golden Ocean.
- <sup>ii</sup> The battle flag of the Imperial Japanese Navy was called the Rising Sun as it had rays extending from the red "sun" off-centered in their flag.



- <sup>iii</sup> Loudspeaker boxes throughout Navy ships. Announcements were clearly heard.  
Impending enemy attacks are announced by four loud bell strokes, followed by the announcement, "GENERAL QUARTERS! GENERAL QUARTERS! "MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS! MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS! MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS!"
- <sup>iv</sup> Pilots generally carried .38 caliber Smith and Wesson pistols in shoulder holsters under their life vests. They were loaded with tracer bullets for signaling during a rescue attempt at night. Or, for self-defense if on land. It was unthinkable, but if trapped in a burning plane...