

COMING IN MARCH 2006

THIS OPEN EYE



Seeing What We Do
Poems 2003-2005

REGGIE MARRA

ISBN 0-9627828-2-3
Poetry / \$12.00 (\$12.72 in CT)
Price with shipping: \$14.00
(\$14.84 in CT)
Trade paper / Perfect Bound /
51 pages
Publication Date: March 19, 2006

“Reggie Marra writes with stunning, graphic precision—brutal scenes the American news skips over, scenes of endless sorrow that politicians bury under false phrases like ‘total victory.’ I read these small but huge poems with a chill of recognition and gratitude—

thank goodness for poets like Reggie Marra who look deeply and care even more deeply about telling the truth. These poems are tributes to the nearly-invisible wounded and the honest humanity so many of us yearn for now.”

—**Naomi Shihab Nye, author of *You & Yours*, and National Book Award finalist for *19 Varieties of Gazelle***

“Reggie Marra captures the tragedy of war from all angles. His vision expands beyond gender and race to embrace the humanity of us all. Unafraid to depict the graphic consequences of hate, uninhibited in his words by the politics of aggression, Reggie bravely steps into the epicenter of world conflict and individual suffering. He captures the colors of youth and the mud of death, creating a dichotomous reality that has brought poets and artists to their knees since the dawn of civilization. Reggie is the journalist of our times. His poetic images will be remembered for centuries to come.”

—**Eileen Albrizio, author of *Messy on the Inside; Rain—Dark as Water in Winter and On the Edge***

Give It Back

Commander-in-Chief
photo op over
we learn the
vehicle that crushed your
legs and pelvis was
American driven. Your
Purple Heart a mistake,
you have to
give
it
back.
Your
splintered bones,
real—
those
you get to keep.

This Open Eye

Swollen shut the right
eye seeps semi-clotted
blood that streams
and blotches a map of
hell across the three-
year-old face. Wide
open, the left eye
appears injury-free—
untouched, but
ultimately more
lethal.

Through this open
eye the child sees
the world that has
closed the other.

“This Open Eye is a powerful, devastating, and stunningly beautiful book. Reggie Marra has unflinchingly absorbed the images and voices of the war in Iraq, pared them down to the bone, and handed them back to us that we, too, might bear witness to our times. Not in any of these poems, or the essay, has he taken the easy way out. Like Breyten Breytenbach, Nelly Sachs, and Antonio Machado before him, Marra reclaims the essentially human from both the brutal and the brutalized.”

—**Trebbe Johnson, author of *The World is a Waiting Lover: Desire and the Quest for the Beloved***

Banned in Geneva

Backs, thighs, faces and heads
awash in a rash of deep scarlet
spots—shrapnel shards
buried an inch into the flesh, wailing
children live stories of bombs
falling like grapes from the sky.

Sunday 10:30 AM in Nadr
Rahed Hakem hears the
voices of the explosions
sees *the sky raining fire.*

Mohammed Moussa sees
clusters of *little boxes* that
fall like *grapefruit* from the sky.

Some explode still airborne
some on impact
some remain
unexploded
in our
home.

Ten brain surgeries here
to remove metal from heads.

None
in London or
D.C.

TO Order: Send check for \$14.00 (\$14.84 in CT) to:

Integral Journeys

TOE-PRW206

15 Orchard Heights

New Milford CT 06776-3018

The Eyes of the Beholder

The Iraqis are sick people and we are the chemotherapy.¹ We stand for human liberty.² We shoot them down like the morons they are.³ Freedom is beautiful and when people are free they express their opinions.⁴ They are killing us and nobody's talking about it. We want Saddam back. At least there was security.⁵ You got to go in there and bust their chops badly, and let the speed and momentum and violence overwhelm them.⁶ Our nation and our coalition are proud of this accomplishment.⁷ Fire a warning shot! Stop fucking around! Stop him. Red 1, stop him! Cease fire! You just fuckin' killed a family because you didn't fire a warning shot soon enough!⁸ Ours is the cause of human dignity; freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace.⁹ I did what I had to do. I don't have a big problem with it. I think they thought we wouldn't shoot kids. But we showed them we don't care.¹⁰ This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind.¹¹ Then once you release the weapons, that's a good feeling. It's a good feeling to have the bombs come off the jet, because you know you're aiding someone somewhere by striking a target.¹² Society is a better place because of the American troops.¹³ Amid the wreckage I counted twelve dead civilians who had been trying to leave Nassiriya overnight. Their mistake had been to flee over a bridge that is crucial to the coalition's supply lines and to run into a group of shell-shocked young Marines with orders to shoot anything that moved. One man's body was still in flames. It gave out a hissing sound.¹⁴ We believe in human dignity. We believe every individual has worth.¹⁵ Wait

'til I get hold of a friggin' Iraqi. No, I won't get hold of one—I'll just kill him.¹⁶ We believe in respect. We believe in tolerance. The best way to secure America is to get the enemy before they get us.¹⁷ We ought to be beating our chests every day.¹⁸ If we are an arrogant nation, they will resent us.¹⁹ We ought to look in a mirror and get proud and stick out our chests and suck in our bellies, and say, "Damn, we're Americans!"²⁰ If we're a humble nation, but strong, they'll welcome us.²¹ The invading troops in Iraq are not Christians, and those who sent them are not Christians, and have nothing to do with Christianity.²² That's the interesting thing about being the president. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something, but I don't feel like I owe anybody an explanation.²³ Terrorism is in the eyes of the beholder.²⁴ My answer is bring them on.²⁵

¹ Corporal Ryan Dupre, US Marines, *UK Times*, 3/30/03

² G.W. Bush, 5/1/03; USS Abraham Lincoln, San Diego, CA

³ Brig. General, John Kelly, 4/9/03, *Sydney Morning Herald*

⁴ G.W. Bush, 4/20/03, <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/iraq/text2003/0420bush.htm>

⁵ Zahra Yasin, hospital in Mosul with wounded son, 4/17/03

⁶ Army Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey, 3/25/03

⁷ See note 2

⁸ Capt. Ronnie Johnson, Army 3rd Infantry Division

⁹ G.W. Bush, 9/11/02, Ellis Island, NY, White House Press Release

¹⁰ Army Private Nick Boggs, 4/8/03, Karbala, after killing a boy around 10 years old, with machine gun fire

¹¹ See note 9

¹² B-1 pilot, Capt Chris Wachter, 4/8/03

¹³ G.W. Bush, Little Rock, Arkansas, 5/5/03, White House Press Release

¹⁴ *UK Times* reporter, Mark Franchetti, 3/30/03

¹⁵ See note 13

¹⁶ See note 1

¹⁷ See note 13

¹⁸ Retired General Jay Garner, 4/30/03, Reuters

¹⁹ G.W. Bush, Campaign 2000, www.tompaine.com/feature.cfm/ID/7215

²⁰ See note 18

²¹ See note 19

²² Orthodox Church Spokesperson, Archimandrite Attallah Hanna, 4/1/03

²³ G.W. Bush to Bob Woodward, 2002, interview for *Bush at War*

²⁴ Nidal Sakr, Spokesperson for March for Justice (.com)

²⁵ G.W. Bush, 7/2/03, in response to attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq (quoted throughout the media)