Submission of a Narrative to the Moral Injury Project Writing Project National Website

Former SVWG group member/OEF Army Veteran Andrew Miller is working with the Moral Injury Project at Hendricks Chapel of Syracuse University to mount a writing project on moral injury that has a national scope. The project will consist of a website that publishes narratives of military veterans or military family members who have dealt with moral injury. Some of you have written moral injury narratives that you may want to submit or may have other connected narratives to write. Some of you are encountering this project for the first time. Here’s the writing prompt.

Once you’ve written and revised this narrative to your satisfaction, please submit it to Andrew at andrewhansenmiller@gmail.com The narratives can be submitted under a pseudonym or with your full name. You also will be asked to fill out a waiver to allow the piece to be published on the website. If you have any questions, please contact Andrew at the email address above.

The writing prompt:

A term that has emerged in discussions about veterans processing the aftermath of war and military service is "moral injury."

Moral injury involves the transgression of an individual’s moral beliefs or ethical code, which can result in a serious "inner conflict" or schism within the self. Psychologists like Dr. Edward Tick, author of *War and the Soul* and the founder of the organization "Soldier's Heart," have referred to moral injury as a "soul wound."

As Syracuse Veterans' Writing group member Don Western said of moral injury, you "saw wrong, did wrong, or didn't stop wrong." Keeping in mind the prevailing definition(s) of moral injury, make sense of the concept in your own terms.

Write about a specific time in your combat experiences or experiences serving in the military where "you saw wrong, did wrong, didn't stop wrong."

- How do you make sense of that experience now?
- And what do you feel are the long-term effects of that experience as you think back on it?

Syracuse Poster Project

Letter from Jim Emmons, Project Coordinator for Syracuse Poster Project...
I'm getting in touch on the chance that some of your writers would enjoy participating in the Syracuse Poster Project's annual call for haiku, which is ongoing through Sept. 4.

The Poster Project brings together poets and Syracuse University artists to create an annual series of illustrated poetry posters for the city's poster panels. You can learn more about us at [www.posterproject.org](http://www.posterproject.org).

We're always trying to expand and diversify participation in the project, and it would be great to have some work from veterans. If you think any of your members would be interested, please direct them to the following link for entry materials:


Sincerely,

Jim

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**Guidelines for Writing Haiku**

1. A haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Each poem is three lines long. The first and third lines each have five syllables, and the middle line has seven syllables (5/7/5).

2. In composing haiku, the writer strives for direct, immediate treatment of a specific image, grounded in time and space. Use your five senses to tap into your subject matter, but remember, you don’t necessarily have to remain faithful to “realist” modes of representation. (For example, notice the magical moment in the first poem below where the author writes, “liquid pigeons pour through sky”)

3. It’s a good idea to write many haiku, and then choose your best ones for the project. Look for places where something “magical” happens spontaneously in your writing.

**Sample Haiku written for past posters…**

Under tumbled black
Liquid pigeons pour through sky
Chased by peregrine.

Passing crows caw as
notes glide from a bluesman’s slide

Comment [IK1]: Maybe this wasn’t what the author originally wrote, but then he/she became attentive to the verb “pour” and decided to embellish the metaphor?

Comment [IK2]: Nice sound patterns: “crows caw” and “glide”/”slide” help to give the poem some body.
in Armory Square

Fizz of cicadas
Slows as evening cools—lights hum
On in Armory

In a Rose Garden
at the top of Campus Hill
wedding dresses bloom

Stroll the town parade
Bar hop, coffee shops, bus stops
Times when friends are made

heron stands upright
jail feathers brush stream waters
teaching me stillness

Humid moon rises
over the stopped clock tower
like a real city

despite these Syracuse blues
two parts snow and two parts cold
soul red hot to burn

Like the red lotus
I bloom from mud. A symbol
for struggle; new life

Comment [IK3]: This image picks up on the image of the rose garden in a surprising way.

Comment [IK4]: Using many one-syllable words can make the line feel longer, crowded (like a city) with more "stuff" packed in.

Comment [IK5]: It may be ok to leave out articles ("a" or "the") in order to achieve the full effect of the image.

Comment [IK6]: The surprising use of the word "humid" hooks the reader. Also, the symmetry between the image of the moon and the "stopped clock" makes me imagine two "faces" looking at each other across a great distance.

Comment [IK7]: Notice how the rhythms of this poem feel syncopated, like jazz.

Comment [IK8]: Simple, straightforward image, but the sense of persona is strong and immediate. The use of first person POV may be more rare in haiku, but look how powerful it can be.