

Poetry Series

Jim Sularz

- 30 poems -

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Jim Sularz (December - 1949)

Currently, I am a Senior Staff Systems Engineer with Fujitsu America. I've been employed with Fujitsu America for over 25 years. Prior to that, I was a Mainframe Systems Engineer / Field Engineer with IBM for 9 Years. Military Experience - 8 Years, US Navy (USS Enterprise CVA65 - Vietnam Veteran) : Naval Instructor at the Naval Reactors Facility in Idaho for nearly 4 Years.

Aspiring singer and songwriter. Married for 41 Years, with a beautiful wife and two great kids. I have been writing poetry for 3 years. I particularly enjoy history and I focus many of my poems based on historical events and persons.

Works:

Poster - Faith, Hope and Love

Poems accepted by various museums:

'Soldiers Called' - US National Archives/Imperial War Museum (London) .

'Kinship' - Imperial War Museum (London) .

'Stops Along an American Dream' - Forney Transportation Museum (Denver, CO) .

'Ghosts of Buzzard's Breath' - Colorado Mining Museum (Colorado Springs, CO) .

A Cloth Of Linen

A stitch, a knot, a sudden tear,
some missing counts along the folds.
Her cloth was sewn in Life's fine linen,
and bordered, in marygolds.

Still monogrammed, but mostly worn,
in bold initials, RHS.
With mauve tear-dropped appliqués,
in the center, two silhouettes.

For naked she came and naked she left,
her embroidered life was sewn untold.
In pink chenille and diamond eyelets,
with resplendent marygolds!

Jim Sularz

A Meadow's Sanctuary

A Meadow's Sanctuary
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

A morning Meadow - tall, red-yellow speckled,
now, humbled low by the wind.

Conifer Sundials – mirrored shadows,
slowly stretching, dancing, and then diminishing -

along blurred edges of a lush, flowing Sea.

Feathered, high flying Eagles soar, circling small and wide,
against a blue, white pillowed sky.

... a Crow caws.

Nuzzled Prairie Dogs, with tethered tails, scamper for cover,
for danger spirals, just above.

Harvester Ants marching in tiny zigzagged columns,
tunnel an ever deepened Colony –

twisting around canvassed rocks and roots.

Lightning fast Dragonflies – thin tinsel winged airships,
darting, spinning, some kissing.

And white petite wild-flowers,
bobbing from Honey Bees, stand quivering.

Multi-colored Butterflies flutter, undecided,
and brown-helmeted Grasshoppers oddly peer -

like Praying Mantises, eager to leap.

Chirping Sparrows, with cocked tails,
sand-bath in a warm, thirsty, summer Sun.

And Cat-tails, bursting,
pierce through a sparsely wooded Island.

A distant thunder-clap,
and crawling, flat, anvil-headed Clouds –

slide down majestic, snow-capped mountaintops,
marking the hour, like clockwork, this time of year.

Dusk comes, bathed in a warm, orange-amber hue,
waxing and waning with a melting Sun.

A Red Fox stirs, finding at twilight's gate,

fresh promising scents, for Her young.

And black masked Raccoons steal away,
through soft, cool moonlit grasses –

in a hushed, clown-like parade...

As I dwell in this Sanctuary of place and spirit,
beneath an infinite, star-painted canopy.

I know with certainty - of mind, heart and soul,
that when God's rainbow palette had hardened and dried -

All were - Forever One.

Jim Sularz

A Politician's Creed

© 2012

We are conceived by short sightedness,
nurtured with unbridled power.
We believe in self-interest,
and the dollar almighty.
As masters of deception and treachery,
we father hatred and misery.
We revel in our own injustice,
wallow in our lies and debauchery.
We believe the ends justify the means,
and we will prevail at any cost.
War is our flagged banner,
diplomacy is retreat.
We are judges and lock key,
and will suppress all opposition.
We shall never relinquish our fraternity,
to the higher purpose of the people.
And through their manifest ignorance,
will our aims take flight and conspire!

Jim Sularz

A Summer's Edge

A Summer's Edge
© 2011 (Jim Sularz)

On blue ocean's tide, on mid-summer's ides,
cold steely eyes stirred the deep.

Memories lingered and spied, starred sand dollars died,
where anemone and jellyfish sleep.

Otter bobbed with the waves, some laid back and sun bathed,
in a lazy late morning whim.

Green leaves of a tree, draped in long branched symmetry,
nestled chickadees from a seaside wind.

Dried flowers sighed low, a dropp of rain, a rainbow,
soft petals and white feathered clouds.

Caught flying bugs bereft, roared the West winds spent,
ensnarled in a widow's shroud.

Soaring black-tipped birds, flew small circles as they turned,
sandcastles towered below a butterfly's grove.

Windowed, crumbled then denied, sunset drenched with the tide,
slowly languished near a lover's cove.

A steam-roller fog, cooled, white blanketed along,
washed ashore like a ghost shipwreck.

Time-worn hands of a man, carved impressions in sand,
and held fast to a summer's edge.

Jim Sularz

All Things Beautiful

All Things Beautiful
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

I am neither Man nor Woman -
or naked flesh and blood.

I journey at the speed of compassionate thought -
without limitation or boundary.

I draw near only in Peace and I will reshape the World -
like no Great Army ever could.

I am Christmas, 1914.

I am Gentle and Childlike -
a joyful melody in the Hearts of Young and Old.

I am Spirit without Malice or Hate -
a Mother's undying Love, a Father's embrace.

I reign above the loftiest Mountaintops -
dwell in the silent depths of blue Oceans and Seas.

I am Light eclipsing all other Lights -
to Heal and Comfort those in need.

I am All-Knowing and Eternal -
the Universe, my Heavenly abode.

And upon my Divine Mantelpiece,
I affix - All Things Beautiful.

Jim Sularz

Believe

© 2012 By Jim Sularz

When blossoms droop and withered fall,
one final drink from solace rain.
A chilling night, dark shadows steal,
lost seed that's washed away.

Last tears subside, bright stars peek out,
a guiding light beyond timeless shores.
Tethered souls sail through faith-filled seas,
await Tide's harbor doors.

Young restless larks preen at water's edge,
launch wide-eyed and catapult free.
Neither stop to sow nor worry themselves,
instead, they just - believe.

Jim Sularz

Carry On!

Carry On!
© 2009 (Jim Sularz)

There is a way to save our Earth,
from rain-swept plains to desert's thirst,
and moonlit lakes to rivers fast and wide.

From canyons carved with Nature's hands,
to soft and fickle hills of sand,
and shore to shore to mountains stretched out high.

From sea to sea to oceans deep,
Her icy Worlds now start to weep,
and disappear before our careless eyes.

And from dark starry nights to bright sunny days,
green northern lights will dance away,
with flying clouds and rainbows painting skies.

There is a way to save our Earth,
it's you and I, and Nation's worth.

Carry On!

Jim Sularz

Climb-up the Tall Ship's Masts

Climb-up the Tall Ship's Masts
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

Heave Ho! Aweigh, the Ship's anchor,
Lads, climb-up, the Tall ship's masts!
Unfurl the sails white billowed,
all pray, the stiff Trade winds blast!

Men briny from white-capped Oceans,
Terra firma's, a distant quest.
Feel the salt spray, stinging the faces,
of the ship's crew, tossed fore and aft.

We're compelled to sail the Oceans an' Seas,
with a plumb compass an' a ration's tack.
Tattoos an' a Gypsy squeeze-box melody,
the Gale blows on our ruddy backs.

All Hands scramble, to assemble on deck,
for the Captain rings-hard a muster.
Churning waves in our rudder's wake,
luminous, with a strange glowing luster.

Land Ho! A calm, deep harbor,
a smoke filled Pub an' a bonny Lass.
But the Sea's, our only steadfast lover,
an' She beckons, to call us back.

We stand proud to call ourselves - Mariners,
Men without Fear, we tame the High Seas.
Bright stars as our comforting beacons,
fair weather with God's given speed.

By Moon beams an' Dawn's faint Daylight,
we'll turn our ship's namesake back.
Heave Ho! Aweigh, the Ship's anchor,
Lads, climb-up, the Tall ship's masts!

Jim Sularz

Conscience

© 2012

Every human knows it's spark,
a gentle tug, a singing heart.
From unknown isles, an alarming ring,
raining unseen feathers from flailing wings.

An abiding guide, a forgiving strum,
from a single note, to a louder drum.
Along it's journeyed byways, high above a thorny sea,
is a gilded road followed - to one's gloried destiny!

Jim Sularz

Every Third Man

Every Third Man
© 2009 (Jim Sularz)

Young Men thrust up against a Wall,
eyes forward, and standing tall.
And there we stood, unknowingly,
that some would not come back at all.

One, Two, Three – Marine. One, Two, Three – Marine.

Every third Man, like a pawn,
took one step forward, one step gone.
And there we stood, knowing, that all would go.
– Welcome to Vietnam.

One, Two, Three – Marine. One, Two, Three – Marine.

The echoed count grew louder,
and closer to me.
My heart started to race,
my muscles started to freeze.

One, Two, Three – Marine. One, Two, Three – Marine!

Older Men face-first against a Wall, eyes dimmed, but still standing tall.
And here we stand, with distant memories of All.
And Call Out to those etched deep in our Hearts,
– now timeless imprints on The Wall.

Jim Sularz

Faith, Hope and Love

Faith, Hope and Love
© 2009 (Jim Sularz)

Faith pierces the gray morning clouds,
and a new age has dawned.
A Faith that outstretched wings of Peace will soar,
through stormy skies now calmed.
With Faith we'll wake to see that promised day,
when swords are hammered into plows.
Faith that moves hills and mountains about,
a Faith that believes and will never Doubt.

Hope with hearts bared and prayers extolled,
that only good will come to pass.
When disease, hunger, the orphaned and cold,
are no longer memories of our past.
Hope that shapes a World of dreams,
and one that keeps us safe.
Hope with a soft and warm caress,
a Hope that will fill our Emptiness.

Love, an unbreakable golden thread,
that weaves through Hearts and Souls.
When Love resonates with Truth from above,
the Heavens open, a Universe unfolds.
Love heals those who stand in it's Light,
and guides those lost in the Dark.
Love without blame and endless in scope,
a Love that Forgives All, through Faith and Hope.

Jim Sularz

Fall

Fall

© 2011 (Jim Sularz)

Come sorrow there is poetry,
dry, wind tossed leaves blow here and there.
Naked trees thin shake and shiver,
no turning back Time's rusted gears.

A row of sparrows, autumn heights,
blue oceans, stars, a twilight's love.
Faded photographs, tear-filled eyes,
this season chills, Fall clouds above.

Cold fingers cloak a metal sky,
a Winter's start we'll come to know.
Our flowers bloomed that once have dried,
awake new, at last fallen snow!

Jim Sularz

Ghosts of Buzzard's Breath

Ghosts of Buzzard's Breath
© 2009 (Jim Sularz)

Quiet mounds of yellowed tailings,
and dead weeds whisper low.
And proud rusting relics,
telling tales of striking Gold.
The Rush from East, from North and South,
by wagon, train or foot.
Days not all that long ago,
in tall ships made of wood.

"A Gold Rush struck in '49,
all quite by accident.
A burning fever that cut Men to bone,
in a sea of dingy tents.
Day and Night, they toiled and tolled,
many headed home without a cent.
But some packed out bags of glistening Gold,
and made a stop at "Buzzard's Breath."

The town's mud logged street, deep with horse manure,
bubbled like a shallow grave.
With a Sheriff's office, a livery stable,
and a church for souls to save.
And a fancy house, on a grassy knoll,
- sign read, "Madam Lil la Tart."
With soft, curvaceous Ladies who mined for Hearts,
- and Gold of a different sort.

Didn't take long before easy Gold,
was extremely hard to find.
And burly miners, tough as steel,
moved in to hard rock mine.
With bloodied knuckles, dented hats,
they blasted at a furious pace.
To find the Gold, called the Mother Lode,
yellow blood coursing through their veins!

The mine they worked was called "Long Shot, "
the men thought that name a curse.
But the miners hankered for the handle, "Buzzard's Breath, "
and the mine's name was reversed.
As Luck would say, they held a Royal Flush,
when they hit that horse-wide vein.
Of the purest Gold, yet to be found,
this side of the Pearly Gates.

Eyes wide as saucers, they were all in awe,
everyone was filthy rich.

The miners should have all retired,
and should have cashed in all their chips.
But a Man's hard to figure, when his blood is yellow,
and he's stricken with a Gold Fever.
"Eureka! Boys, git the dynamite,
and a whole lot more mining timbers! "

They mined that vein to the bowels of the Earth,
and the heat increased by day.
Buzzard's Breath became the hottest place,
to Hell – the shortest way.
And then one day, the Men never came back.
– Hell must have jumped that claim.
Of the purest Gold, yet to be found.
– that's where the Devil mines today! "

Quiet mounds of yellowed tailings,
and dead weeds whisper low.
And proud rusting relics,
telling tales of striking Gold.
The Rush from East, from North and South,
died a slow and quiet death.
Along with days of tall wooden ships,
and the Ghosts of Buzzard's Breath.

Jim Sularz

Homecoming

Homecoming
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

Was it by chance or pure circumstance,
that the path I took, led me far out West?
An Island hop, a drifting castaway,
with treasured moments, of bygone Yesterdays.

Where Family, Friends, who all grew old,
there, one by one died, as I was told.
Faint Northern Lights, where Paul Bunyan swings,
I'll take back from Time, my Boyhood dreams.

I'll renew the Love, my Heart holds High,
and celebrate in Life, what remains of Time.
I'll turn back this vessel, that's been adrift,
to a warm embrace, a last-forgotten kiss.

And when this journey draws near complete,
I'll feel the soft Earth, cool, beneath my feet.
On that final hour, deep within my Soul,
will live a place I once left, I'll still call - Home.

So, bury me High within the Hills,
with the purple lilacs and the daffodils.
Where Loons wail, and sighing Willows weep,
where Hiawatha, rocks us fast asleep.

Jim Sularz

Kinship

Kinship

© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

Caught a Kinship from Ellis Island,
sailed to craggy shores across the pond.
Burnished bayonets shimmered in a bright warm sun,
on a Western Front by dawn.

Surging waves of men in full retreat,
pungent death was everywhere.
Screams from sweet smelling poison gas,
were mere whispers, through burning tears.

The War to end all Wars came to an end,
but the end, would never really come.
While the hearts and souls of military men,
were made of tanks, battleships, and bigger guns.

A Kinship sailed from Isle and sea,
to Lady Liberty's beckoning shores.
But Versailles, punished the Innocent with a bitter price,
sowing seething hatred, a blinding fear,
a World at War,
once more and near.

Jim Sularz

Let The Heavens Sing

Let the Heavens Sing

© 2011 (Jim Sularz)

I will walk through fields of chrysanthemums,
with giant dragonflies in gloried hues.
In a curved space-time continuum,
I'll stand in wonder, they'll peer and zoom.

I will reap, from deep treasures ploughed,
when love's full measure is weighed in me.
Where far flung coalescing spirit clouds,
conceive their stardust progeny.

With bright candle lights, melt my waxen wings,
rekindle my spirit shadow to set me free.
Then, within my soul, I'll rejoice and let the Heavens sing,
that it be Earth, I've come back to see!

Jim Sularz

Love Found

Love Found
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

Were they to know, when Love whispered so,
where now, a broken Heart refrains.

Hearts once entwined so tenderly,
are torn apart worn with tattered seams.

Harmony ends in a cold dissonance,
with it's flats and sharps and cords.

But Love still flows warm and resonant,
a flooding spring that fills the Soul.

Hearts will mend, and soon will Love again,
another promise, a soft kiss to hold.

A Love found unfolds as a beautiful Symphony,
that lifts and climbs and leaps – and then soars!

Jim Sularz

Remember Me

Remember Me
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

What Final verse, which Season's breeze,
will billow Death and come for me?

Will I slip away cold ashen lips,
or slowly fade with each shallowed breath?

Will my Faith endure when the Clock is struck,
in the Book of Life is my soul intrust?

Will I ever wake from Night's burrowed sleep,
and soar with Angels through Heaven's Gate?

Born of love – Die in pain,
what mournful words will attempt to say?

When granite's cut-in stony deep,
who'll stand and wait, to remember me?

Jim Sularz

Runaway

Runaway
© 2008 (Jim Sularz)

On the streets, dark and lonely,
in the shadows, down the lane.
Many young, lost and homeless,
lives another runaway.

Day by day, night by night,
the World's a cold and nameless face.
Take the good,
and the bad, as it comes.

Day by day, night by night,
the World's unfair, life knocks you down.
Where there's pain,
and a pleading prayer from Home.

She had tears, in her eyes,
on the day that I found her.
Had a tear in her jeans,
her hair streaked, a bit longer.

I held her, crying in my arms.
"What did we do to lose our Girl?
Mom and I, we love you,
and want you back! "

Day by day, night by night,
the World's a cruel and frightful place.
"Won't you please,
won't you please, come Home - tonight! "

Where there's shame, there's regretting,
and a change, a new heart.
And new days, without blaming,
and a life-changing start.

She told me, "Missed you Daddy.
I know I can do better.
Daddy please, can I please,
come Home with you? "

"Here's the phone, call your Mother,
your Sisters and your Brothers.
Tell them all,
that you're coming Home, right away! "

On the streets, dark and lonely,
in the shadows, down the lane.
Many young, lost and homeless,

lives another runaway.

Day by day, night by night,
the World's a mean and selfish place.
Where there's still Hope,
in a Loving prayer from Home.

Jim Sularz

Six Men Dead

Six Men Dead
© 2011 (Jim Sularz)

At the headwaters of the Red Woods Branch,
near a gentle slope on a dusty trail.
On an iron gate, at the Twin Mounds cemetery,
a bouquet of dry sunflowers flail.

In a grave, still stirs, is a Father's heart,
that beats now to avenge his death.
Six times murdered by cold blooded killers,
six men branded for a Son's revenge

Rye whiskey and cards, they rode fast and hard,
the four Campsey's and the Ferber's.
With malicious intent, they were all Hell bent,
to commit a loving Father's murder.

When the gun smoke had cleared, all their faces were seared,
in the bleeding soul of a grieving Son.
Ain't nothin' worse, than a Father's curse,
to fill a boy with brimstone and Hell fire!

Young Eaton yearned and soon would learn,
the fine art of slinging lead.
Why, he could shoot the wings off a buzzin' horsefly,
from twenty paces, lickety split!

Slightly crossed eyed, Frank had a hog-killin' time,
at a Fort Gibson shootin' match.
Upside down, straight-on and leanin' backwards,
he out-shot every expert in pistol class.

By day's end, when the scores were tallied,
Frank meant to prove at that shootin' meet.
That he would claim the name of the truest gun,
and they dubbed him - "Pistol Pete."

In fact, Pistol Pete was half boy, half bloodhound,
a wild-cat with two 45's strapped on.
In District Cooweescoowee - bar none,
he was the fastest shot around!

Pistol Pete knew his dreaded duty had now arrived,
to hunt down those who killed his Pa.
He vowed those varmints would never see,
a necktie party, a court of law.

Where a man is known by his buckskin totem,
in hallowed Cherokee land.

There, frontier justice and Native pride,
help deal a swift and heavy hand.

Pete was quick on the trail of a killer,
just south of Webber's Falls.
Shannon Champsey was a cattle rustler,
a horse thief and a scurvy dog!

Pete ponied up and held his shot,
to let Shannon first make a move.
The next time he'd blinked, would be Shannon's last,
to Hell he'd make his home.

With snarlin' teeth and spittin' venom,
Pete struck fast like a rattlesnake.
Two bullets to the chest in rapid fire,
was Shannon's last breath he'd partake.

Pete galloped away, hot on the next trail,
left Shannon there for a vulture's meal.
Notched his guns, below a moon chasing sun,
and one wound to his soul congealed.

There's a saying out West, known by gunslingers best,
that'll deep six you in a knotty pine casket.
One you should never forget, lest you end up stone dead,
"There's always a man - just a shade faster."

Doc Ferber was next, to feel Pete's hot lead,
"Fill your hand, you Son of a Bitch! "
With little remorse, Pete shot him clear off his horse,
left him gunned down in a shallow ditch.

After getting reports, Pete headed North,
to where John Ferber hunkered down.
A Missouri corner, in McDonald County,
filled with Bible thumpers in a sinner's town.

Pete rode five hundred miles to shoot that snake,
with two notches, he welcomed a third.
He carried his cursed ball and chains,
to kill a man, he swore with words.

But John Ferber was plastered, and he didn't quite master,
deuces wild, soiled doves and hard drinkin'.
Someone else would beat Pete, the day before they'd meet,
sending John slingin' hash in Hell's kitchen.

There's a night rider without a Father,
under a curse to settle a score.
In all, six murderous desperados,
three men dead - now, three men more

Pistol Pete was now pushin' seventeen,
just a young pup, but no tenderfoot.
With two men in the lead, he was quick on his steed,
to kill two brothers, who killed his kin.

Pete rode up to their fence, with a friendly countenance,
spoke with Jonce Campsey, but asked for Jim.
"There's a message from Doc, that you both need to hear, "
Pete readied his hands – both guns were cocked!

Pete continued in discourse, and got off his horse,
all the while, in an act of pretense.
Jim came to the door and Pete read them the score,
and shot them both dead in self-defense.

With the help of the law, they verified Pete's call,
then gathered any loot they found.
Laid Jim and Jonce out, in their rustic log house,
and burnt them both and the house to the ground.

Might have seemed kind of callous, but weren't done in malice,
that those boys were burnt instead of swingin'.
They just sent them to Hell, sizzlin' medium well,
besides, it "saved them a lot of diggin'."

There was one man to go, he'd be the last to know,
that a hex is an awful thing.
That a young boy would grow, with a curse in tow,
to kill a man, was still a sin.

Pete garnered his will, with the best of his skills,
to take on the last of the Campsey brothers.
It would be three to one, Wiley and two paid guns,
Pete knew his odds were slim and he shuddered.

At nearly twenty-one, Pete knew he may have out-run,
his luck as the fastest gun.
This would be the ultimate test, of his shootin' finesse,
only a fool would stay to be outgunned.

But Pistol Pete weren't no liver lilly,
and he loaded up his 45's.
He rode into town with steely nerves,
maybe no one, would come out alive!

Pete knocked through that swingin' bar-room door,
Wiley stood there with a possum eating grin.
He said, "Hey there kid, who the Hell are you? "
and Pete shouted, "Frank Eaton! You killed my kin! "

All four men drew quick, with guns a' blazin',

Wiley got plugged first from two 45's.
The bar-room crowd dispersed in a wild stampede,
everywhere, ricochetin' slugs whizzed by!

When the shootin' had stopped, there was just one man standin',
all four men got plugged, includin' Pete.
But only a shot-up boy rode out of town that day,
and a Father's curse, that played out complete -
was a bitter mistress to bury....

At the headwaters of the Red Woods Branch,
near a gentle slope on a dusty trail.
On an iron gate, at the Twin Mounds cemetery,
a bouquet of morning glories flail.

In a grave, still deep, is a Father's heart,
that lays quiet in a peaceful sleep.
And six men dead, who now burn instead,
compliments of Pistol Pete!

Jim Sularz

Soldiers Called

Soldiers Called
© 2009 (Jim Sularz)

In a strange Land, in a far-off Sea,
ships set sail to scar Man and Earth.
When diplomacy fails, shattering Hopes for Peace,
hate propels War's unwanted birth.

Months and years of mock exercise,
and drills to check complete.
To prepare for a War that may never come,
but is born when tyranny's unleashed.

On that tearful day when Soldiers called,
break formation to say goodbye.
Children rush out to clutch Soldier's legs,
tremble, and start to cry.

But Soldiers know, they have to go,
to keep play soldiers safe.
From yet another tyranny,
in yet, another place.

On embattled shores where fallen foes,
and heroes fiercely fight.
The battle ground will be sanctified,
by those who die that night.

Through the grime, and with sweat,
and with blood, and with tears.
Through the horror of War,
many frozen with fear.

From battle to battle, fighting shore to shore.
Nothing escapes from the Hands of War.
Men killing Men with all of their might.
Unchain a Bomb with a blinding light.

When a long, brutal War finally ends,
claiming it's broken and countless dead.
The Boys that charged as a spirited Godsend,
return dazed, War hardened, Iron Men.

And when some Soldiers come Home,
they're never quite the same.
Because their silent War rages on,
every Night and every Day.

On Veteran's day with the cheering crowds and the waving flags.
They celebrate the Soldier's sacrifice in a very special way.

But a Soldier's mind is just a flash away.
To a place called Hell where they died that day.

Now, with the Soldiers worn and their bodies bent.
A once embattled foe has become a Friend.
And when the Day comes, to blow the Final Taps for all.
The old Units will be lined up and ready - for the last Roll Call.

Jim Sularz

Stops Along an American Dream

Stops Along an American Dream
(Omaha to Ogden – Summer 1870)
© 2009 (Jim Sularz)

I can hear the Whistle blowin',
two short bursts, it's time to throttle up.
Conductor double checks, with tickets punched,
hot glistenin' oil on connectin' rods.

Hissin' Steam an' belchin' smoke rings,
inside thin ribbons of iron track.
Windin' through the Hills an' Bluffs of Omaha,
along the banks of the River Platte.

A Summer's breeze toss yellow wild flowers,
joyful laughter an' waves goodbye.
Up ahead, there's a Sea of lush green fields,
below a bright, blue-crimson sky.

O'er Plains where sun-bleached Buffalo,
with skulls hollowed, an' emptied gaze.
Comes a Baldwin eight wheeler a rollin',
a sizzlin' behemoth on clackin' rails.

Atop distant Hills, Sioux warriors rendezvous,
stoke-up the Locomotive's firebox.
Crank up the heat, pour on the steam,
we'll outrun them without a shot!

'Cross the Loup River, just south of Columbus,
on our way to Silver Creek an' Clark.
We're all lookin' forwar' to the Grand Island stop,
where there's hot supper waitin', just before dark.

On our way again, towards Westward's end,
hours passin' without incident.
I fall asleep, while watchin' hot moonlit cinders,
dancin' Eastward along the track.....

My mind is swimmin' in the blue waters of the Pacific,
dreamin' adventures, an' thrills galore.
When I awake with a start an' a jerk from my Dreamland,
we're in the midst of a Earth shatterin' Storm!

Tornado winds are a' Whirlin', an' lightnin' bolts a' Hurlin',
one strikes the Locomotive's right dash-pot.
The Engine glows red, iron rivets shoot Heaven sent,
it's Whistlin' like a hundred tea-pots!

The Train's slowin' down, there's another town up ahead,
must be North Platte, an' we're pushin' through.

Barely escape from the Storm, get needed provisions onboard,
an' switch out the Locomotive for new.

At Dawn's first light, where the Valley narrows,
with Lodge Pole's bluffs an' antelope.
We can all see the grade movin' up, near Potter's City,
where countless Prairie Dogs call it Home.

On a high noon Sun, on a mid-day's run,
at Cheyenne, we stop for grub an' fuel.
"Hookup another Locomotive, Men,
an' start the climb to Sherman's Hill! "

At the highest point on that Railroad line,
I hear a Whistle an' a frantic call.
An' a ceiling's thud from a Brakeman's leap,
to slow that creakin' Train to a crawl.

Wyomin' winds blow like a Hurrican',
the flimsy bridge sways to an' fro'.
Some hold their breath, some toss down a few,
'till Dale Creek disappears belo'.

With increasin' speed, we're on to Laramie,
uncouple our helper Engine an' crew.
Twenty round-house Stalls, near the new Town Hall,
up ahead, the Rocky Mountains loom!

You can feel the weight, of their fear an' dread,
I crack a smile, then tip my hat.
"Folks, we won't attempt to scale those Alps,
the path we'll take, is almost flat.

There ain't really much else to see ahead,
but sagebrush an' Jackalope.
It's an open Prairie, on a windswept Plain,
the Divide's, just a gentle slope.

But, there's quite a few cuts an' fills to see,
from Lookout to Medicine Bow.
Carbon's got coal, yields two hundred tons a day,
where Hawks an' Coyotes call.

When Dusk sets in, we'll be closin' in,
on Elk Mountain's orange silhouette.
We'll arrive in Rawlins, with stars burnin' bright,
an' steam in, at exactly Ten.

It's a fair ways out, befor' that next meal stop,
afterwards, we'll feel renewed.
So Folks don't you fret, just relax a bit,
let's all enjoy the view."

Rawlins, is a rough an' tumble, lawless Town,
barely tame, still a Hell on Wheels.
A major depot for the UP Rail,
with three Saloons, an' lost, broken Dreams.

Now time to stretch, wolf down some vittles,
take on water, an' a load of coal.
Gunshots ring out, up an' down the streets of Rawlins,
just before the call, "All Aboard! "

I know for sure, some folks had left,
to catch a Saloon or two.
'Cause when the Conductor tallies his final count,
we're missin' quite a few!

Nearly everyone plays cards that night,
mostly, I just sit there an' read.
A Gazetteer is open on my lap,
an' spells out, what's next to see -

'Cross bone-dry alkali beds that parch Man an' Beast,
from Creston to bubblin' Rock Springs.
We're at the backbone of the greatest Nation on Earth,
where Winter's thaw washes West, not East.

On the outer edge of Red Desert, near Table Rock,
a bluff rises from desolation's floor.
An' red sandstones, laden with fresh water shells,
are grooved, chipped, cut an' worn.

Grease wood an' more sagebrush, tumble-weeds a'plenty,
past a Desert's rim, with heavy cuts an' fills.
It's a lonesome Road to the foul waters of Bitter Creek,
from there, to Green River's Citadel -

Mornin' breaks again, we chug out to Bryan an' Carter,
at Fort Bridger, lives Chief Wash-a-kie.
Another steep grade, snow-capped mountains to see,
down belo', there's Bear Valley Lake.

Near journey's end, some eighty miles to go,
at Evanston's rail shops, an' Hotel.
Leavin' Wahsatch behind, where there's the grandest divide,
with fortified bluffs, an' canyon walls.

A chasm's ahead, Hanging Rock's slightly bent,
a thrillin' ride, rushin' past Witches' Cave.
'lot more to see, from Pulpit Rock to Echo City,
to a tall an' majestic Tree.

It's a picnic stop, an' a place to celebrate -

marching Legions, that crossed a distant Trail.
Proud Immigrants, Mormons an' Civil War Veterans,
it's Here, they spiked a Thousand Miles of Rail!

We're now barrelin' down Weber Canyon, shootin' past Devil's Slide,
there's a paradise, just beyon' Devil's Gate.
Cold frothy torrents from Weber River, splash up in our faces,
an' spill West, to the Great Salt Lake.

It's a long ways off, from the Hills an' Bluffs of Omaha,
to a place called – "God's Promised Land."
An' it took dreamin', schemin', guts an' sinew,
to carve this Road with calloused hands.

From Ogden, we're headin' West to Sacramento,
we'll forge ahead on CP steam.
An' when we get there, we'll always remember –
Stops Along an American Dream.

"Nothing like it in the World, "
East an' West a Nation hailed.
All Aboard at every stop,
along the First Transcontinental Rail!

Jim Sularz

The Austrian Pines

Deep in a Black Forest,
lost along a mystic stream.
Where the winds still whisper,
a thousand untold dreams.

Enchanted shadows,
kicking frosted leaves.
Sleep at night's darkness,
wake upon a moonlit breeze.

Castled ruins in disbelief,
sap blistered lips unseen.
Singing Austrian pines in chorus,
beneath an idyllic scene.

Dancing high betwixt the hills,
hide an' seek, and make-believe.
Pine cones popping tear-dropped treasures,
wave a kiss goodbye, "Auf Wiedersehen! "

Jim Sularz

The City

The City
© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

Walked a crooked road, steep and winding,
over shrouded hills by the Bay.
Shattered buildings rose from ashes,
street cars clang their bells, this day.

Towered bridges span an Island,
steel ships beneath their reach.
Time stuck fast to tell a tale,
when Earth rippled through a Golden Gate.

Broken lives in long remembrance,
the kites are flying high.
It's been decades since that Monster hit,
and The City, still whirls away...

Jim Sularz

The Parapet

© 2013 (By Jim Sularz)

Let me muse a bit,
below the parapet.

And bask awhile,
in the sun and grit.

That I should kill,
or be killed instead?

Come my battle cry...

'Fix bayonets! '

... Dare I charge headlong,
beyond this pit?

Through War's slaughterhouse,
past the blood and spit.

Do as I'm told,
without regret?

As I plunge over...

my epitaph.

Jim Sularz

The Sun Burns East to West

The Sun Burns East to West
(Earth's Creation to the end of an Ice Age)
© 2008 (Jim Sularz)

Sun's first rise over life-less skies,
the Earth cools, and the waters pool -
the Sun burns East to West.
And the planet's broken plates quake and move.

Lightning strikes, the waters stir,
and the bonds of life begin to churn -
the Sun burns East to West.
And the waters swirl in a living urn.

Strange aquatic things, they all evolve,
some spiny finned, start to crawl -
the Sun burns East to West.
And they slowly stretch erect and tall.

Eons past where the cunning reign, a savage place,
with small sized brains -
the Sun burns East to West.
And the dead surrender their twisted remains.

An asteroid streaks from the sky, blocks out the Sun,
cause most to die -
the Sun burns East to West.
And all in a blink of Time's eye.

Footprints in stone, some on mountainsides,
make it clear that rocks don't lie -
the Sun burns East to West.
And the Fossils always tell the Time.

Eons past and Eons more, the fittest evolves,
and Man is born -
the Sun burns East to West.
And the early brain, once fast asleep,
begins to dream and mourn.

The first million years, Man lives in fear, learns to hunt,
invents the spear -
the Sun burns East to West.
And migrates to claim the vast frontiers.

Tools from stone and controlled fire, creates language,
that shake Man's empire -
the Sun burns East to West.
And splash Cave paintings with Human inspire.

Life-times of hunter-gathering,

and story-telling in the dark -
the Sun burns East to West.
And a World spins with a Million hearts.

The Earth starts to warm, the oceans rise,
and the waters shape the lands -
the Sun burns East to West.
And when an Ice Age ends, then comes, the Age of Man.

Jim Sularz

The Vow

The Vow

© 2010 (Jim Sularz)

When young, they took a lover's vow,
to cherish, better, or worse from now.
They loved that day, like all lovers play,
mindful of the vow they'd say.

Joyful tears, some wear and tear,
another heart they could not bear.
They forgave the mix, a bitter twist,
began to think of ever since.

Their hearts withdrew, a token kiss,
they never forgot the mix or twist.
Both may have loved once, and ever since,
but the Vow they swore, would Forever wince.

Jim Sularz

Through Mother's Eyes

Through Mother's Eyes
© 2009 (Jim Grant Sularz)

With my first Soulful breath,
it was Mother's eyes I saw.
She counted my tiny fingers and toes,
leaned gently, to kiss my brow.

Announcements sent out right away,
my name chosen, so carefully.
The name, I think, a famous General's claim,
was now the name, I'd call my own.

My first birthday gift,
sweet cake smeared across my face and lips.
The first steps I took, outside Mother's reach,
she sprinkled Fairy dust, to help me Fly!

Each year, with each measured line,
Mother made my mark along the door.
But I always tried to fudge a bit,
with tiptoes on the floor.

Bumps and scrapes and crying soothed,
some ointment, she'd kiss away the pain.
Everyday, I'd come running back to Mother,
for hugs and kisses, anyway.

First day of school, anxious cries at Home,
an endless day away from Mom.
"Draw me a "choo-choo" trains, " she said,
and I drew them - all day long.

It was through Mother's eyes, that I glimpse the World,
both good and bad were explained.
But only good would make it past Mother's eyes,
and the bad was chased fast away.

Warm Summer days, Family picnics at the lake,
corn dogs and ice cream on a stick.
Cold snowy nights, white frosted windowpanes,
making snow Angels, with half-frozen fingertips.

First school date, first Christmas dance,
where Cinderellas and Princes pranced.
But, the eyes I noticed now,
were no longer just my Mother's.

Long years of school, drills and rules,
a Foreign shore, a Sweetheart missed.

And through it all, there was always Mother's voice,
calling me Home, from a War's abyss.

Wedding bells rang out crystal clear,
those other eyes I noticed, were now adored.
The years flew by, our Children grew,
and Mother grew older, too.

Thanksgiving feasts around the table,
Children born, toasts, and loud celebrations,
Birthday gifts, songs, proud graduations,
and Mother's bright eyes, began to dim.

In her quiet manner, with a solemn look,
Mother smiled and held my hands.
"Upstairs, there's a jar, behind my easy chair,
go there - when the time is right."

When Death arrived, in wait for Mother,
with a chilled silence, on the darkest night.
Mother reached out for her last embrace,
then was whisked away, bathed in light.

Mother never washed off my marks along the door,
saved a flower from my first Christmas Dance.
Framed her collection of my "choo-choo" trains,
next to a portrait of General Grant.

Grand Children loved to dress up at "Great Granny's House, "
where Cinderellas and Princes pranced.
And upstairs - Mother left me her Fairy dust,
to help them Fly!

Jim Sularz

When The River Flowed

When The River Flowed

© 2011 (Jim Sularz)

Dedicated to my Brother-in-Law: William L. Browne III (1959-2011)

Let it be known, in memoriam, that he is loved.
And any earthly bonds that shaped his soul,
is now a wide river flowing,
to a distant Heaven bestowed.

He could have walked a much longer path,
and would have paused again, with a hearty laugh.
But, when the river flowed, when the river flowed,
- it marked this hour, for him to go.

Don't cry for him, with welling tears upset,
but celebrate his fulfilled years, instead.
When the river flowed, when the river flowed,
- it moved his gift of life ahead.

For loving sons, family, friends and beloved wife,
he leaves cherished memories, a faithful man's insight.
And when the river flowed, when the river flowed,
- it moved him gently, to Everlasting Life!

Jim Sularz

Where True Love Went To Die

© 2013 (by Jim Sularz)

Atop a secret hillside,
high above a babbling brook.
Where passions once entwined,
when time would never look.

He, in his threadbare raiments,
and she, at her wedding's best.
Vowed with a kiss and promise,
to never cross that rivulet.

But, soon possessions and envy,
days, far too busy to woo.
It was when they cherished secrets,
when they had most to lose.

Both aged with lost tomorrows,
held hostage by gain and work.
And lived with an understanding,
that chained denial never spoke.

Buried deep atop a hillside,
an empty tomb left behind.
Just across from a rushing river,
where their true love went to die.

Jim Sularz