

## *OUR GUARDIANS*

J.B. Drori

They said he was  
Strong, tall, robust;  
Not even allowing  
Novocain for a root-canal.

He was gentle with the wounded,  
Tender to the bereaved.  
But hard on slackers,  
Short with four-flushers.

His son fell on the banks of the Euphrates River,  
At the head of his platoon,  
Guarding a nation,  
Defending the inalienable rights of man.

Attired in his beribboned  
Marine colonel uniform,  
He saluted his child's bier,  
Unloaded off an airship at dawn.

He followed the coffin  
At precisely three paces,  
Carried high by six marines,  
To the cadence of a nation's heart beat.

Erect as a non-blinking statue,  
His gaze dead-eye on the grave,  
Long after all had gone,  
He remained.

At twilight, still attired,  
He was greeted in their garden,  
By their fifteen year old golden retriever,  
To throw and fetch, to love and scratch.

He stroked the dog's ears,  
Whispered his son's name,  
And hurled their red rubber ball,  
Far and hard, faster and faster.

Throw and fetch, back and forth,  
The dog came abounding, panting,  
And leaped into its master's arms,  
All a' trembling and shuddering, and went still.

“Oh, No! No!” he cried, kneeling,  
And hugged their friend to his bosom.  
Tears streamed down his face and neck,  
Dripping on the golden's head.

“My God! My God!  
Why another? Why again?”  
Tears muffled his plea,  
Choked his voice.