

“Uncle Ollie in the Ball Turret”

by Billy Thrasher

Anytime I would call and ask how you were doing you said,
“Just sittin’ here twiddlin’ my thumbs,” and while you told
stories, they twirled faster and faster until you flew up
out of the chair and your head disappeared within the clouds.

The “Fuddy Duddy” was a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress that,
“... fought for the stinkin’ Jews against those damn Nazi Germans!”

The room felt like the inside of an empty tin can
in the middle of the Sahara Desert, and a fan was pointed
directly at you, sitting shirtless in your pants with the rope belt.

“The sons-a-bitches would fly under me and turn belly up
‘cause the metal was two inches thicker on the bottom of their planes.”

They put you in the ball turret, with a pair of .50 caliber
machine guns because you were the only one short enough to fit inside.

“I wasn’t gonna’ let this son of a bitch get away.”

Every story ended with your eyebrows rising and a bright-eyed
boisterous laugh as you leaned forward nearly falling out of your chair.

“I must’a shot between a seam ... ‘cause ... smoke ...
I saw ‘im ... dive into the clouds.”

Your thumbs stopped twirling; oil-stained fingers curled
then began tapping on the arm of the chair. Tapping. We
were trapped in the eternal silence of you not talking, but staring
at the wall above me as a mist covered your blue marble eyes.

Billy Thrasher is a poet and graduate of the MFA program at Lindenwood University. He writes at home in his office, at the coffee shop, at the park, and in his car during lunch breaks. The simple, brief moments in life catch his attention and spark his creativity. He has poems published in *Moon Magazine*, *Lagom: A Journal*, *Jenny*, *Dovecote*, *Panoplyzine*, *White Wall*, and *Obra/Artifact*.