

“Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant: A Villanelle”

by Ryan Hunke

For CPT John King—“¡Viva Brasil!” “Go Pack!”

Dear John—
I saw you died on Facebook.
I’m so sorry that you’re gone.

It’s been years (way too long)
and I’m ashamed *this* is what it took.
Dear John—

We last crossed paths in the hills of Genghis Khan:
Kyrgyzstan—Green Bean Coffee—talking army gobbledygook.
(I’m so sorry that you’re gone.)

Some years passed, I meant to say things all along;
is there making up for lost time? (I’m writing now, look:
“Dear John—”)

Then you posted it was Cancer—that you’d Fight—that you’d be Strong.
Still I said nothing, time left remaining I mistook:
... I’m so sorry that you’re gone.

I saw a clip: just three days whence, you led your church in song.
(I still fail to understand how your faith was never shook.)
Dear John—
I’m so, so sorry that you’re gone.

Ryan Hunke served on active duty from 2010 to 2020 as a Military Intelligence Officer. He transitioned to the Reserves in 2020 to teach Army ROTC while returning to school. He’s now an aspiring writer, Army ROTC cadre, current English Professor at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX. He is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom. Connect with him on Twitter @rehunke.