

Of Arms and the Man

**I first saw you in history books.
They said the Chinese discovered
You by accident -- marrying
A firecracker to a pipe.
Your birth was someone else's
Death.**

**Then there was no stopping. You
Quickly became famous; moving
Westward, knocking knights off
Horses forever -- going places
Doing things no sword or arrow could.**

**You shot forward, filling cemeteries
With evidence of your expertise.
Even then the barrel, sight and
Trigger were more than enough.
But you weren't satisfied.**

**Through early battles, verified
By skeletons, you began to improve
Upon yourself, firing faster,
Shooting farther, a larger bullet into
A deeper wound. Such successes
Made your reputation.**

**It was then I was introduced
To you. Remember the day we met,
In bootcamp, when they handed you
To me and said,
"Take care of this as though it were
Your life." You were my life,**

Much less for others far away.

**We were trained and sent off.
The two of us became inseparable.
We would lie together on a windy
Hilltop or balance motionless**

In the warm branches of a tree:
Me theorizing, you deciding.
When to act out what I could only
Dream of doing. Those times
Were soon over. Now there is no
More need of you. Each day
I read of your relatives exploding
In suicides, murders, weird
Crimes of every sort, but
It'll never be like it was.

That is why I take you down
From time to time and shove
A cartridge in your chamber,
To remind you, dear, what sort of
Lovers we once were.