

# I Met the Flag At Iwo Jima

By Dale Faughn, A KY Poet Laureate

When I was just a lad in school,  
I never disobeyed the rule—  
To burn the flag  
And treat it as a common rag;

I never would have torn it down  
Or mocked its meaning over town,  
Or spat upon the stripes there  
Or wiped my feet on stars fair;

In no way now that I recall  
Would I have damaged it at all,  
But on the other hand you see—  
It meant not very much to me.

I pledged allegiance as the rest  
Just idle words from out my chest;  
I sang about the “Banner”, too,  
But never felt constrained to do  
A deed to honor those who gave  
Their lives the flag to bravely save;

And though its history oft I’d heard,  
Yet still my heart was not much stirred.  
My training all had hit a snag;  
I’d never really met the flag;

But then it all did change one day  
When I was very far away—  
It happened back in ’45  
Where some were dead or half alive;

The morning sun was shining bright  
Where there had been a bloody fight—  
Up to the Mount I looked, and there,  
A sign of triumph in the air!  
Our precious flag was waving high,  
Announcing victory to the sky.

Though I had seen the flag before  
And said allegiance times galore,  
The flag meant more that morn to me  
Because it heralded victory;  
It waved a message back and said,  
“For me to fly, your friends are dead.”  
And then it all made sense to me—  
The flag’s the symbol of the free!

That special morn on Iwo’s isle,  
I stood and gazed a long, long while;  
My heart leaped up—gone was the sag,  
For there I truly met the flag.