Semper Paratus

Warm tropical ocean peppered in Japanese shrapnel
Mortar rounds bombardment propulsion with acute accuracy
Four by four feet of twisted metal debris
Fading realities entrenched in Ohio and home
Memories of fresh baked apple pie
Dime-store novels and mother's Woodbury powder
Mother's face whispering fervent prayers
Juanita bickering and Martha's storytelling
Letters from Jim and his Italian love
Dad hollering for Shirley hidden in the apple tree
Smoke fading, ears awakening and hollers amongst explosion
Rescuers from The Bayfield dragging weary limbs from war torn sea
Today the axis felt our might
Always ready – do or die.

Green Apple

A child's summer is green,
   not like dark grass or a fresh new leaf.

It is the shade under a fragrant tree dappled with bright sun,
   not shamrock, kiwi, or mellow mint.

It is there in the tint of sweet and sour on the tongue,
fresh green basil and sunflower yellow.

It has shades of cornflower skies, daffodil sun and it is lilac blooms, the very essence of a green apple.

**Bitter Copper Pennies**

The walls bled today
stick sticky like maple syrup or honey
red like pomegranate seeds

Flowing in rivulets
then gushing as the dam broke - stopping at nothing -
not the shattered family pictures - broken stairs or
the door left half ajar

Fragrant – the blood ran
wafting of bitter copper pennies full of iron and salt
thick – rich – warm

It followed the smacks – kicks and cries
no more and never again
silenced with sonic boom
and just one swift fire crack

Walls sprayed in that of life
that comes with swift death
in that of a twelve gauge
not locked away
Ever Watchful

Next to her heart is my home
its beat a ceaseless tattoo
against my 2.5 mm face.

Emblazoned in pressed stainless steel
I hold her name,
my identical twin her permanent jewel.

In case of emergency, please see me,
she's allergic to penicillin
with type 2 diabetes.

She needs me with her always
on my rope of ball chain
safely around her warm neck.

There is no name attached to me,
yet I am her guardian angel
until at last, she or I is smelted to dust.

Look at me and you will see
where her beliefs lie
along with rank and number.

I'm all there is between her
an uncertain death
or in returning to her loved ones.

I alone know who she is
where she came from
and I will see her home.

For now I sit in resolution,
a requirement, an object
of superfluous meaning – only for her.

Someday I will be placed in a box, or a drawer long forgotten – inconsequential, but not now when she needs me the most.

My job is to protect without armor those that she holds most dear until we rest homeward bound – together.