

## **That Man**

**By Dan Bowles**

(Spring Hill Writing Group) – Fiction

He raised his head, and looked. He took a step back. Who is this? Raising his arm, preparing for a fight, the scoundrel must be a lefty, for he threw his arm in the air all so.

I give him a keen look and he returned it, just as bold! What's with this old guy! Don't he know I will drop him like a rock. He raised his head, and looked. He took a step back. Who is this?

What's with this old fool! So I step back to let him lead. It's as if we trained at the same academy. Back he went just as fast as I.

So I rush forward, just as he did. Up close he looks like my long-lost brother. But he was gone; the war had taken him when I was just a lad.

We stare deeply in each other's eyes. Holding myself so near that I smelled his breath. Pulling back at the same time, we just looked at each other. Why was this old guy wearing the same clothes as me? And I notice he was just as surprised as me.

Then I look at him a long hard minute. Could this be my older brother! As we look each other up and down, the fight leavin' us, I say, Who are you! And the damn fool said it at the same time. It rose the hair on the back of my neck. Was this fool making fun of me! I'll show that old fool, I'll pull him right out of there. It seems he had the same idea.

There we were, nose to nose. I looked him deeply in the eyes, for I had no fear of that old guy. But he seems to have no fear in him either.

I quietly pull back as he did. I say out loud, "What the hell is going on here! I move, you move, who put you up to this!" He seemed to be yelling back.

I step back finding my glasses, and wouldn't he dare to have glasses as well! When I turn back with fresh eyes, there he was, mocking me with his own glasses.

What's with you, old fool! Who put you up to all this? I look top to bottom. All seems to be the same. He even had the same spots on his hands as I. But why was this old guy doing this.

We were so much alike, but he was old—much older than me! But why was he here? Was this a lesson to be learned? A glance at him told me he was thinking the same.

Was I bringing him wisdom? What would I tell this old fool? That he needed to take better care of himself; that time was shorter than it had ever been; that it marched on beyond us. To use his time wisely; to say "I love you" to those he loves. What could I tell an old fool like him! Look at him. He's waiting for an answer.

