

The Lighter Side:

So Long, Mom (A Song for World War III)

By Tom Lehrer, mathematician and satirical song writer.

This year [1965] we've been celebrating the 100th anniversary of the civil war, the 50th anniversary of the beginning of WWI and the 20th anniversary of the end of WWII. All-in-all, it's been a good year for the war buffs. And a number of LPs and TV specials have capitalized on all this nostalgia, with particular emphasis on war songs.

I feel that if any songs are gonna come out of WWII, we'd better start writing them now. I have one here. Might call it a bit of pre-nostalgia. This is the song that some of the boys sang as they went bravely off to World War III:

So long, mom,

I'm off to drop the bomb,

So don't wait up for me.

But while you swelter

Down there in your shelter

You can see me

On your TV.

While we're attacking frontally

Watch Brinkally and Huntally

Describing contrapuntally

The cities we have lost.

No need for you to miss a minute

of the agonizing holocaust. Yeah!

Little Johnny Jones,

he was a US pilot,

And no shrinking violet was he.

He was mighty proud when

World War III was declared.

He wasn't scared, no siree!

And this is what he said on

His way to Armageddon:

So long, mom,

I'm off to drop the bomb,

So don't wait up for me.

But though I may roam,

I'll come back to my home

Although it may be

A pile of debris.

Remember, mommy,

I'm off to get a commie,

So send me a salami

And try to smile somehow.

I'll look for you

when the war is over,

An hour and a half from now!

Source: From *That was the year that was, 1965*. <bridge.anglia.ac.uk/~systimk/Humour/Lehrer/Tw3.Html#Brotherhood>

The US\$2.2 billion spent on each B-2 could pay for any one of the following:

- Supplying family planning services for one year to 120 million women in the "Third World."
- One extra year of primary schooling for 25,900,000 girls in the world's poorest countries.
- Immunization program with added vaccines & micronutrients for 88% of the world's children.
- 5.5 years of treatment for 400 million children suffering from debilitating intestinal worms.
- Eleven years worth of vitamin A supplements for 400 million children.



The Dark Side:

All that is Good and Holy

I am not above you, I am beyond you;

You do not understand me, and you may well fear me;

But you will call upon me to fight the war you cannot.

I am your worst nightmare and your best hope;

I am the edge of the Sword that cuts both ways.

I am the world you cannot attain;

The perpetuation and annihilation of all that you hold dear.

I am the embodiment of all that you admire and despise;

I am honor and tradition, amoral and profane.

I am the highest rung on the ladder of your evolution,

and I am the living symbol of your degeneration.

I am the God of War.

My armor is titanium and no armor at all;

My voice is the thunder on the edge of sound;

My movements are swift and beyond your comprehension.

My touch is cold;

My love destruction.

My life is measured by a sweep-second hand.

I AM A FIGHTER PILOT;

and I do not fear oblivion,

Because Hell, for me,

is what you are walking through right now.

Source: Anonymous, "The Dark Side" web site, devoted to the F-117 bomber. <members.aol.com/stlthdrv1/good.html>

Children line up at the Abbotsford military air show, to get autographs from a pilot.



Photo by David Thiessen