

Freedom Is Not Free

- Kelly Strong

I watched the flag pass by one day.
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it,
and then he stood at ease.
I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
He'd stand out in any crowd.
I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years.
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?
How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, freedom isn't free.

I heard the sound of TAPS one night,
When everything was still
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.
I wondered just how many times
That TAPS had meant "Amen,"
When a flag had draped a coffin
Of a brother or a friend.
I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.
I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.
No, freedom isn't free.

