

Poems**Gary Beck****Discharged**

Combat veterans
return home
where little has changed
while they served
in a hostile land
of roadside bombs,
ambushes, sniping,
stubborn determination
to drive out occupiers
with implacable jihad,
but the tour survived,
welcomed by loved ones
who don't understand
why they miss their rifles.

Protest II

Radical groups
easily infiltrate
righteous protests
of social injustice,

using their agenda
of mindless violence
to kidnap the headlines
from sincere efforts
to make changes
in an unfair system,
implicating everyone
in hostile confrontations
with law enforcement,
eliminating the chance
of improving conditions
for those in need.

Plague

Persistent inclinations
to oppressively bully
the weaker, vulnerable,
are symptoms of disease
in a corrupted body,
a carrier, polluted host,
untreated infecting others
with debilitation, illness
halting healthy development,
depleting potential
due to negligent parents,
dysfunctional system.

Gary Beck has spent most of his adult life as a theater director. He has 8 published chapbooks. His poetry collections include *Days of Destruction* (Skive Press), *Expectations* (Rogue Scholars Press), *Dawn in Cities*, *Assault on Nature*, *Songs of a Clerk*, *Civilized Ways* (Winter Goose Publishing). *Perceptions and Displays* will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. His novels include *Extreme Change* (Cogwheel Press) *Acts of Defiance* (Artema Press). *Flawed Connections* has been accepted by Black Rose Writing. His short story collection, *A Glimpse of Youth* (Sweatshoppe Publications). His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. He lives in New York City.

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CLRI is published in two editions (1) online quarterly (eISSN 2394-6075) (2) print annually (ISSN 2250-3366).

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