

# Names Cannot Die

*Naomi J. M. Estes III*

I have never known you  
But I have forever been a part of you.  
I was named for you  
But I will never hear you.  
My old name twists and turns in time  
Whenever I think of you.  
My name gives me dreams,  
Because it was your name, too.  
Among them I see the howling forms of countless Zeroes  
And feel the roaring flames that lick the flanks of sinking ships  
Clomping my sodden feet, laden with sand  
Wading through a wake of crimson tide  
The sticky warmth of blood on helmets  
And the creased darkness of wrinkled bags under sleepless eyes.  
I see a symphony of destruction,  
Bullets endlessly whizzing  
And scalpels ever slicing  
Fleshy things screaming  
And propellers singing.  
Through my dreams  
I can grasp a trauma,  
Masked as a triumph.  
And when I wake,  
My father will tell me, again and again,  
That I was named for a hero.  
I do not look like this hero  
For which I shared a name.  
I do not feel like this hero  
For which I shared a name.  
I never met this hero  
For which I shared a name.  
But here I stand before you,  
And I can see you.  
I can imagine the bend of your jaw, cracked and brittle  
The dimpled smile that so resembles  
The man who raised me.

I see the Pacific blue of your eyes,  
The ocean that cradled you,  
When you fell from the sky.  
I can hold out my hands  
And almost feel you hold them.  
Standing here, the woman I am now,  
I can see you smile  
The same way my father had  
When I told him I was changing everything.  
We still share a name,  
No matter what I call myself.  
We still share a life,  
For you gave me mine.  
And now I stand before you,  
Alive and breathing,  
A legacy of you,  
With your love in my heart.

*In memoriam of Dr. Jack Martell Estes I  
The man for which I was named.  
August 15th, 1923 - June 18th, 1981  
U.S. Veteran of World War II, Naval Frogman  
of the Pacific Theatre  
Former Chief of Staff at Christian Hospital Northeast-Northwest,  
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