

# WWII Bomber Pilot's Poem

by

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A low incessant rumbling cracked the stillness of dawn  
With a whirl that grew in volume to a quake;  
Armored monster birds of battle hit the runway, then were gone  
Leaving only deadly silence in their wake.

Turbo's churning, engines roaring, ever driving toward the sun,  
Rank on rank, in vee and echelon they stacked;  
Bucking broncos, pitching inward as they tightened for the run,  
While the lashing, steel drawn 50's slowly tracked.

Then for minutes all was silent, save for ceaseless engine din  
As the heavies drove like arrows to their ring-  
Just as cluster upon cluster plunged from bomb racks deep within,  
Raging hell came bursting upward on the wing.

First it puffed, and then it bellowed, like a clashing cannonade  
Belching ragged steel which ripped and then destroyed;  
Tough metal twisted, engines coughed, heavies fought and then they swayed,  
'Til they finally hit the rally and deployed.

Then the crippled journey homeward bound for those who still remained  
For the others – peaceful rest from the battle flight;  
Once again above the runway clashing engines were unchained,  
As the combat – wearies peeled off to alight.

Shaded talking, ever softly, came from grim – faced lips of men  
As the ground crews heard of battle's latest fate  
Then in strained and reverent silence, each returned to work again  
"For they also serve who only stand and wait"\*.

\*Quote from John Milton