

Changing My Genes

I'll never forget that fateful day,
The day they stole my innocence away.
"Christmas Island" 1957, The 8th of November,
Is the day that I will always remember.
I was, like many others, a lad in his teens.
They never informed me that they would alter my genes.
"Just sit in the trees on the edge of the beach,
You'll be quite safe there, out of harms reach".
Between us and a clearing, trucks were parked tightly nose to tail
These were supposedly our "Free card" to help us get out of jail.
Over 13 miles of unmade road they'd carry hundreds of men down to the "Port",
On the off chance something went wrong and the "BRASSHATS" decided to abort.
The logistics were truly amazing and as far as we squaddies could tell,
The chances of us surviving, Were less than a "Snowball in Hell."
We'd practiced for weeks, getting up in the dark,
Laughing and joking, it was a bit of a lark.
Never knowing what quite to expect.
Never realizing, how many lives would be wrecked.
Putting our trust in the "Powers that be",
That trust to be shattered by the "M.O.D."
We were all congregated there on the sand,
Awaiting instructions from "Joint Operations Command".
"The Valliant" aircraft had started it's initial live run.
That's when we knew the "Operation" had begun.
Down at ground level it was pissing with rain
And the tannoy serenaded us with "Frankie Laine".
Then they announced, there would be a delay,
A Liberian registered ship had got in the way.
So proceedings were put back for a couple of hours.
Meanwhile, we sat in the open and suffered the showers.
Then at last the show got back on the road,
The "NUCLEAR BOMB" they were about to explode.
The bomb left the aircraft, the countdown had begun.
It would soon be the time of "The Second Sun".
As we adopted our positions there on the sand
At the moment of detonation you could see the bones in your hand.
Then the tannoy announced "You may look if you please,
But! First of all, you'd better get out of the trees".
So we crawled under some trucks and made for a clearing,
Not knowing really if "Armageddon" was nearing.

People were gathering in a sizable crowd,
Gazing in wonder at the "MUSHROOM CLOUD".
As you gazed at the "FIREBALL", it was a brilliant light
And even with "Shades" on, you feared for your sight.
After a while, it turned orange, yellow and grey
And the column it produced, stood for most of the day
Then after a few minutes there came a terrible blast,
You wondered if that moment was going to be your last.
You could see it coming, it was bending the trees,
As you turned to run for cover it knocked you down on your knees.
When the dust settled we were laughing and crying with relief.
What we had just witnessed was far beyond belief.
We couldn't hope to understand it, it was beyond our ken,
But those wide eyed young boys had just been transformed into men.
"Evil and Awesome "are the only words to explain,
The device that brought down that "POISONOUS RAIN".
As for the "Suits"/"Boffins" who had planned it, they decided not to stay.
They abandoned their concrete bunkers for somewhere safe, far away.
Now, 50 years on we are faced with the same neglect,
But it's nothing more than we've come to expect.
It's now that we face our toughest trial,
As we face up to the fact of "AUTHORITY'S" denial.
They state we were never placed in jeopardy,
That we were safer than someone in "Blighty", having a cup of tea.
But if it's true what they were saying and that then it was the case,
Why didn't they get their suitcase packed and offer to take our place.
So you see we don't believe them, their opinion takes some proving
And we know they must be lying because their lips keep on moving.
Those "Mandarins of Whitehall", just don't give two hoots.
They are too preoccupied following other pursuits.
It's alright when you're in service, they'll pretend to be your mate.
But!, Then as now, God help you, when you've reached your "Sell by date".
They will use you and abuse you and take you for a ride,
Then when you've served your purpose they'll just cast you aside.
So please don't bother writing or contacting them by phone
Because when you need their backing, you'll find out, you're on your own.
You would have thought the "BRITISH NUCLEAR VET'S" by now would have earned some
respect.
But we've all reached the same conclusion.....
.....In our case,

"England Does Not Expect!"

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Alan Lockwood R.A.F. Equipment section
[tent D11. Grapple X&Y 1957/8]