

1984

## Ensign in the Naval Corps

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Betsy Oster

## Ensign in the Naval Corps of Engineers

The polished stare,  
Shaded by stern salute,  
Camouflages the unscheduled wonder  
of your first Erector Set.

Respect for a \$28,000 paycheck and  
Officers of the military-industrial complex  
Suspends your stiffened hand.

Wash and wear white shell conceals  
The frightened embryo that will ooze  
When grenades shatter the grin of imperialism.

Your innocence registered,  
The exact dimensions of your dreams determined and  
assigned to microfiche,  
Who now will defend my sandcastles from the MX missile,  
big brother?