

**andokides**  
s.g.t. grasmuck

a father  
takes his sons  
into the forest  
the older of the two  
carries the rifle  
they come to a clearing  
the man places a vase  
on a stump  
after instruction  
the boys struggle  
to pull the trigger  
shattered glass  
youthful exaltation  
the father leads them  
to the fragments  
*we did it*  
cries the older  
*yeah*  
shouts the younger  
both admonishing  
and compassionate  
the way wisdom  
should be

the father tells them

*put it back together*

a pause

*we can't*

the reply

*you cannot*

**s.g.t. grasmuck** served as a sergeant in the invasion of Iraq and in the Battle of Fallujah, all with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. He is currently a stay home dad raising seven children while continuing his writing.