

M I C H A E L H . L E V I N

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## Bougainville

*(Solomon Islands, South Pacific, 1943-45 / 2010)*

Thick-wristed vines have overtaken  
craters where boys thrashed  
and died, the screams of spilled guts  
and incoming shells. It was the noise,  
the blinding noise that killed.

Above white beaches tamarind  
and jacaranda filter sun  
that coils and hammers flat the day's  
damp heat, while distant voices  
falter, gasp, go still.

Strung round the globe such places lie,  
idyllic tableaux now, while I  
part easily cascades of  
trumpet flowers. It is the turquoise  
hour, the murmuring time

that slaughtered choices fill.

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**MICHAEL H. LEVIN** is a lawyer, solar-energy developer and writer based in Washington DC. He has published poetry in more than 30 periodicals including *Adirondack Review*, *Midstream* and *Poet Lore*, and has received numerous journalism and poetry awards. His recent collection *Watered Colors* (Poetica) was a *Washington Independent Review* “Best Book” selection for May 2014. See [www.michaellevinpoetry.com](http://www.michaellevinpoetry.com).