

BASIC TRAINING

There were government employees in the post office once
government employees armed with small arms
armed with small arms and with rifles slung behind their backs
with rifles slung across their bodies and in uniform
in uniforms of camouflage
and I want to ask

if it's conditioning

if

it's conditioning me to expect that I have no right
to knowledge that
there are armed, uniform soldiers in the post office
while I'm trying to send my grandmother
poems through the mail.

I look around to see if anyone else has a grandmother
who says these men are here to guard your word
against fire bombings and dirty nuclear weapons
and intercontinental ballistic missile threats,

but all I see are glowing faces and memes
luxury suits and straight, white teeth,
new houses and cars and garages
filled with grandmothers
who have landed
and are ready to send their daughter's sons
through the mail
with no insurance
or worry that they may come under fire.

This is the son's poem,
and it is barely kindling