

My Talk With Dad

A steel man of
youthful charm from
“old New York” as
he would say
of himself.

Hell’s Kitchen was
his stomping ground
girders and joints he clasped
with sweat and brute hands

later ship construction
in the “yard”.
He fought for his way out,
in the ring too,
where he could even the odds.

But in the evening, he was a ballroom
dancing dandy in suit and tie.
Roseland and the Cotton Club
were his stepping
out haunts.
Stories he spun
of the times before he had children
juggled my imagination
while tumbling into adolescence.

“Son, don’t show your back
to the enemy, keep your eye
steeled on the infantry,
Move your navy guarding the shores
for tomorrow industrially
we’ll overpower them.
Remember the real war,” he said,
wielding a beer can Monty-like
in the ever open 1950’s garage.

The patriotic conservative march
ruled his turf.

Freedom and self-determination he roared
but later I wondered whose freedom
and self-determination.
And yet, with courage his

sons and daughters
would take the challenge, blindly sometimes.

Deft as ever,
the dancing dandy boxer
reflected shots
yet when hit,
always regained a balance.
And charged once more
in conquest..

It is difficult to win
and father loved to win.