

LONGINUS MONOLOGUE, ACT 1  
From *Teatime at Golgotha*  
By Mark Chrisler  
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LONGINUS

I was thinking, just today-and just thinking-about what an odd thing it is; death, or acclimation to death. An odd thing, too, being a soldier. Different than, say, an accountant. But not as different as you'd imagine. Which is the weird part. Because it only makes sense that accounting would become routine. Yawning at your abacus is not perturbing in the way that is yawning at your spear.

Everyday: form phalanx, thrust, stab, assure the dead their state, eviscerate the crucified... it doesn't speak well to the health of ones humours to enter these emptily. I've been thinking these things; *ruminating*-not just today, for a while-and it came to me that perhaps I might alter my routine, as to lend it novelty. For instance, there is a rhythm, a rather sing-songy pace, at which I tend to conduct my exercises and killings. So one day I tried altering it, altering the song by which I choreographed my actions. Where I had sung "To kill is but a soldier's job, and living for the wives," I now sung "What justice is there but for the spear and peace by candle and fat." But it soon occurred to me that this was merely a change in distractionary tactics, and not that great of one, at that. Things still seemed... blurry. Not blurry, but shaky. As if the world and I were moving, but it was moving slower, and without direction. Or maybe that was me wandering sidestep. Perhaps my impression that it was the world was just a... failure of imagination. In any event, next I turned to contemplation

and prayer, which seemed sage and perhaps could've been, save that I never had felt much religious fervor so, frankly, the whole thing felt put-on and platitudinous. It was at this time I started saving for a new pilum, thinking that, if nothing else, it would keep me keen by its alien balance and weight. In the mean time, I tried on a plethora of idiosyncratic behaviors: spitting and women's undergarments and drink-plenty of drink-all paramount failures in their own rights; until today when I received this pilum. It goes without saying that I was very excited and went about my duties gleefully. Things were different, if only in feel, but within an hour the weightless mail of routine had once again enveloped me. Such is the nature of the beast that almost immediately after noticing this it fled my mind and left me with my "To kill is but a soldier's job and living for the wives." It was on that beat that I thrust my spear into the Nazarene's side and was struck by a deluge of water. That did it. Shocked me the way nothing had. Song or prayer or the new spear. I looked up and saw death... really saw it. Then, slowly, I lowered my head and saw it everywhere. That water woke me fiercely. I saw all I did and it was terrible, but also precisely what I needed. This ambivalence too, was odd. And then, just now as I approached, I thought of the accountant and wondered what he would do if his abacus broke in the middle of his calculations. And then I thought "that would be completely different, because he would no longer be able to do his job." Though, now I wonder if that would be different at all.