

Five ways to kill a man

[Religion](#), [Jesus](#)



In this very blunt poem, Edwin Brock describes five distinct eras in which death had taken place. It is also hinted how man has evolved in their methods to kill themselves. Each stanza represents a different time and place. This is ranged from the biblical era to the mid-twentieth century. Different phrases within the stanzas give away which era Brock is referring to. All of which have different meanings and a very unemotional tone to them. “ And one man to hammer the nails home. ” The first stanza features the phrase above.

It refers to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, when nailing a person to wood using nails to hold the victim was capital punishment. The people are assumed to be Roman, since this form of capital punishment was only practiced by this group in ancient times. The line in which “ a crowd of people wearing sandals” reinforces the idea of the people being Roman. Brock suggests that in order to do something as gruesome as killing a person, all one would need was a person, some wood, as well as nails.

Things become more a tad more complicated in the “ war or the roses”, or the European Middle Ages when weapons come into play. “ A length of steel, shaped and chased in a traditional way” applies to swords or really any type of weapon that could be used “...to pierce the metal cage he wears...” or armor. Brock illustrates how wars were fought for honor. “ At least two flags”, is referring to two different armies, or royalties that fight against each other so that one can gain glory and celebrate their victory by having a banquet. Gas warfare in the First World War is described in the third stanza.

In this time, men would blow mustard-gas, or chlorine gas, at their enemy when the wind would be blowing in the right direction. In this time, “ mud

ditches” were also introduced, allowing for soldiers to hide from their enemies as well as attack without being in full view. “ Round hats made of steel” describes the helmets that soldiers would wear for protection. In the forth stanza, the “ age of aeroplanes” describes being to dispose of the enemy by only “ pressing one small switch”. This means killing by bombing, as what was done in world war two. Since bombing was practiced by the Germans, the Japanese, as well as the Americans, no one can be too sure which nation Brock is referring to, if any specifically. However, since the line “ an ocean to separate you, two systems of government, a nation’s scientists, several factories” it is implied that it is referring to the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. This is because both nations used every scientist possible as well as every factory in order to find new ways to destroy one another. “ A psychopath”, is mentioned in regards to Hitler. The last stanza is even broader than the last.

Purposely making it to where the reader’s own opinions can take form and assume their own reasonable explanations. “ Simpler, direct, and much more neat is to see he is living somewhere in the middle of the twentieth century, and leave him there. ” In my own interpretation of this line, I think Brock was trying to say to us that it’s so much easier to kill a man in this day and age than it was in biblical times or the Middle Ages. Man has evolved so much in their attempt to perfect their way of killing, that all one would have to do is leave a man in this day and age and death would be able to find him.