

## **Chasing Victory**

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**Writing through Art Literary Competition**

**Cass High School**

**Teacher: Dr. Kathleen McKenzie**

A sudden rush of adrenaline engulfs me. Anticipation.  
'till "click," I finally pull the trigger.  
"BOOM!" the sound rings out above all else  
like an earthquake,  
or like the only thing alive in this world.

I watch closely as the bullet whirls, precisely  
to its final destination-  
into one of Victorio's men,  
taking all the breath out of him,  
him, who is making a sacrifice, taking a chance for his people,  
just as I am for mine.

I think I know the way life goes,  
and the sound of the bullet fills me with pride.  
I learned to read and write from a mechanic, a slave, back in my hometown.

After the Emancipation, when my time had come,  
I saw a chance; I took it and ran.

I chased opportunities, and I chased my dreams.  
I chased life, and I chased who I wanted to be.

Of course I had to suffer, and feel some pain,  
But I was happy, proud, eager for adventure.

First black graduate of West Point,  
First to hold an officer's commission from the all black 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry.

Dignity is not only earned from patience  
It is earned through hard work.  
The power of dedication showed itself to me  
And it was great.

I chased a successful life.  
Now I'm chasing Victorio – the smart, strategic military leader leading his men on raids....

The Apache people want fair treatment.  
But they're not about to get it by causing all this ruckus.

My people wanted fair treatment too- and we're on our way.  
Not there yet, but much progress has been made.  
That's why I'm here today,  
in this prestigious position, protecting our country,  
protecting it from people like Victorio.  
And I wouldn't be here in such a respectable place if I had led raids like he has.  
Or if I had not been patient.  
Or if I had not worked hard.

Doesn't he know the way life goes?

I pull the trigger again. "BOOM!"  
Echoes blur in the canyon, causing a cacophony,  
Yet the sound of the bullet rings loud,  
music to my ears,  
and to the country, for which we're fighting.

My men begin to grow weary  
when the sunny skies escape us,  
and when the dusk turns into darkness.  
But no one will give up hope.  
We are Buffalo Soldiers.  
We chase victory.

~Henry Ossian Flipper