

Sleeping Miracle Below The Surface

A "fire follower" is a flower that grows only after an intense wildfire has devastated a landscape. Seeds of these long-hidden flowers lie dormant for decades, and will only germinate after fire roars across the landscape. There is a rare species of fire followers that need an extra element to bloom, and that element is smoke. The Golden Eardrop is one such flower that requires smoke to germinate. This flower is rare because it demands smoke for 10 minutes before it will grow. This amount of smoke is lethal to most seeds, which makes this smoke-induced germination of the Golden Eardrop a rare and miraculous event. In our lifetimes, we will all face devastation in our lives, in one form or another. The Golden Eardrop is a visual representation of the veteran; not only do they face ruin, but they go through a crucible that life demanded from them. The profession of arms requires them to fight without question and be prepared to die. The endurance of this demanding life in the military and after service is a physically representative by the 10 minutes of smoke inhalation.

I want this flower to be a visual reminder to ALL veterans: the emotions you feel after your service is real and, unfortunately, a rite of passage. The sense of no place in this world, being buried and forgotten and left to the unrelenting darkness, is a feeling I know all too well. This darkness is not only external but internal, and it is relentless in its grip. This process will test every fiber of your being, and it will seem that you are alone in your fear. Your fear enhanced because of your inability to see the light. But, if you stay in the fight, keep pressing on for one more day, I promise that there is a new days dawn just on the horizon. Just when you think you can't fight for one more minute, the sleeping giant within you starts to wake. As you awaken, you will begin to rise to the surface. When you finally reach the surface, you will soon realize a whole field of Golden Eardrops, that understand the life and death cycle of renewal that you just endured, have sprung up along the side of you. You are not alone in your struggle. You dared to live after the destruction despite the pain, and this makes you heroic.

Most people will suffocate with the amount of trauma, scars, and hell a veteran has endured, but it takes a miracle of a person to suffer this kind of crucible with all its suffering and pain. That is the real legacy of a soldier, the one that is put in front of the gates of hell and chooses to still fight despite the cost, but after that fight, a new battle is just breaking under the surface in a glorious dark that will test you like nothing before it. It's your fight, and please chose to fight because you matter, and when you get to the other side, it's a work of heart that is enduring in its healing and stands as a testament to those who follow in your footsteps. Every veteran who dares to live after the devastation, coupled with the added smoke inhalation, is a rare miracle and elusive to those who chose not to comb the dead debris of a scorched Earth. Still, those lucky few who want to venture out will see a true bastion of strength and endurance, the veteran, also known as the Golden Eardrop.

I dedicate this art piece to my beloved family and every service member who has dared to live and dream in hopes of a better world. This painting renders honor, and I am humbled to be a veteran artist. I survived because of my faith in the Lord, and his love is sustaining beyond measure. I pray that you can find this peace that is full and everlasting. God bless America and God bless our military.

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