Poem

San Antonio Summer ’64

...there are approximately 16,300 nuclear weapons located in 14 countries.
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2014

Rising on columns of fire,
rockets launched to the moon –
and I who’d wished
to work with astronauts,
am assigned instead
to weigh SAC bomber crew
immersed in water –
measure “lean body mass,”
wondered what difference
a paunch on a pilot would make
sitting in a B52.

Silent—
eyes hidden
behind red goggles,
ythey swaggered
in their muscled nakedness
into my lab.

Dark-adapted to their cockpits,
ready day or night, airborne
at the President’s command –
fly over the pole, drop hydrogen bombs –
mutual assured destruction.
MAD it was called.

Richard Bronson

Correspondence to Richard Bronson, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Stony Brook University Medical Center,
New York 11794-8091, USA; Richard.Bronson@Stonybrookmedicine.edu

Competing interests None.
Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.


Published Online First 28 September 2016