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Sitting On Cannon Square When Young

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The spoken and unspoken "whys" will not be answered.

To men, death is never timely.

In battle, and violent, and pulling the full flush of youth, it abhors the sensitive, ridicules the statesman, oppresses the philosopher, strains the theologian, confounds the scientist, mocks the smiling promise of a youthtime given to lights, stifles with all-gugging darkness a youthtime given to lights.

And yet how better bear the burden of penultimate despair than summon Him whose death seized ultimate hope, whose symbols all proclaim that death's not all nor life here.

To Him, death is never untimely!

FOR TOM WAY

KILLED VIETNAM, OCTOBER '67

JIM MAYS

SITTING ON CANNON SQUARE WHEN YOUNG

We are all turning khaki green from washing our clothes in red cross puddles from sitting on cannon square when young and smashing scientific pacemakers with memorial mounds of chocolate éclairs.

We are all turning khaki green from cutting naked army mess lines from playing taps on civilian coat hangers and thinking soldiers are only stunt men in summer reruns of gunsmoke.

We are all turning khaki green from an undeserved state of kill from an unawashed G.I. bill and sweating alcoholic history in antiseptic volumes of suburban libraries.

We are all turning khaki green from pulling dead roses of exploded votes from singeing the pigeon of conscience and cooling our tired feet in a bucket of programmed poker cards.

We warm our hands in our armpits, waking up stung from a wet dream of peace asking with our dark eyes to the G.I. Joe when his black hand will freeze the air.

We warm our hands in our armpits, staring in horror through reflecting windows asking with our dark eyes to the G.I. Joe when he will send his soggy package of care.

We warm our hands in our armpits, gathering our shrinking skin when we wait when we wait on the commonplace rattle of natural causes and waiting for the homecoming of a wasted generation we wait for generals to melt their stars and recast a cannon plaque to his reign was mild.

All war hero museums should be treated as jealous cemeteries and drowned in ten cent comic books.

THOMAS HUGHES

JOE RUFFINO

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