Despair

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS
Fingers crossed
breath held
pitching pennies
in a gray mop
pail wishing well,
for something wanted
undeserved.

DESPAIR
Fear's cold arms around me clasp.
And in my ear I hear the rasp
Of withered leaves, my withered hopes.
Then closing, cutting, coiling ropes
In snakes embrace my neck entwine.
With whispered, wincing whine,
Slowly to my death I go.
Go to join the neat stacked row
Of those that went before.

JOSEPH DeROLLER

THEY HAD NO MUSIC
They rode on short shaggy mounts. Two—with a wounded one in the middle. It was dusk and they were silhouetted, black, against the descending sun. Their trail wound through the hills from the place of battle, where the enemy retreated down a valley to the sea.

"Why here, what does America want with these stinking hills." "Why is my friend dying?" "Our countries are huge yet they fight for this barren, rocky soil." "Only five years ago we were allied against the Japanese, now we are bitter enemies." They thought these things as the animals picked their way.