

War Veteran at a Clinic

Clinton F. Larson

Like sponge against flaps where legs once were,
Steeping the augury or lure of notoriety,
Cordite pluming your very mind with a dream
Of mortal injury, you show the literal seam
Of groin ripped and gaping. Will your eyes
Away, to other scenes, to niceties of flies
Swatted and decked amid conveniences of home,
Where eyes do not blur as they see the comb
Of order align the news of losses in the field:
Hence, statistics; hence, a gathering to shield
Integrity. Soldier, writhe within your stain
That you mistakenly aspired to enter fury's lists.
Our decorum should have kept you an anchorite
Defensively at home, not for show, as a contrite
Civic-minded being, like anyone. Go home, rump
Of what you were, and trundle there, or stump
For a better cause than war, our privy peace,
Unseemly and unpopular as you are. Then lease
An electric chair to wheel among the caring
Folk that house such residue as you, who stare
Into voids of inattention, saluting and comparing
Ways admissible to higher echelons where wills
Are made and noted for excision. Pale mills
Of minds turn from vanes that, like limbs blown
In winds of dusk, shudder and creak, somewhat known,
As if signalling dementedly for a lesser fame.