

## 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.