

Tuesday is Poetry Day at Tiny Town Times: Welcome, Eric Little

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 10 November 2015 01:01 - Last Updated Tuesday, 10 November 2015 01:23



DEATH FROM THE SKY, 1953, by long-time Ithaca artist Salvatore Grippi

In anticipation of Veteran's Day, We offer this work by tiny town correspondent Eric Little ...

No Man's Land

I sent up a distress flare
You took for muzzle-flash
After close inspection you
Hauled me to your camp
But only with my white sheet always raised
Round the clock watch and an ankle-brace.

The name on my tags rubbed out by fretting
My uniform all ragged and ill-fitting
I made a poor countryman and seemed to you
More likely spy or mole:
I may have killed the man I seemed to be
Along the road and taken his identity.
Or maybe I was truly who I seemed,
But that seemed unlikely.

So when the cold bit through my clothes
And made me bark, you listened for

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A German undertone. You pined for the poor
Man dead along the road, in your mind
In turns pretended I was he, and pressed me
For some sign of his demise and whereabouts.

I lived in no-mans land, a POW
Held captive by my own,
Awaiting pardon, serving time
Prisoner at home still better
Than conscription in a landless regiment.
I waited for the day you might arrive
With some papers, or a settled heart,
To let me know that I am known and free again,
To take my hand and finally take my part.