

## After Chickamauga

At midnight, the call of a Chuck-Will's-Widow  
Across the cypress swamp  
Gleaming stark in full moonlight  
Rimmed by red clay washouts  
Touched by a moment of breeze.

A rustle of oak leaves there  
Blue-clothed figure stumbling  
Fell upon a log half out of black water  
Kneeling, cupped his hands  
Drank and retched.

Then came the soft command and click  
He jerked around and dove toward the shadows  
Caught the blast in mid-air, sobbed and fell  
Lay a moment, still  
Jerked again.

A struck match lit the crumpled mass  
Torn and crudely bandaged leg  
Sassafras cane, "Mother of Christ!"  
And white-faced shadow rimmed in gray  
Turned away.