

Three War Poems*

By **GEORGE SHEPPERSON**

Rain

Goes in the sun now. Falls the cool now.
Flickers the rain now. Then stops.
Then comes again in great black drops
upon our sickly white tent tops.

We turn in bed and yawn:
"More rain?"
Then go to sleep again.

Askaris** at their tent flaps huddle.
and watch a jeep-track grow into a puddle.
And whisper:
"The crops are coming up now in Nyasaland."

And out there
 somewhere
 in those dark Satanic hills
our men are dying.
But we can feel no pain
 lying
 in bed
under the sickly white tent tops
 and the rain.

By **ROBERT HAYDEN**

Dead Soldiers: Pacific Theater

Dead and suddenly other and swiftly far,
they lie among exotic travelogue trees
the hemorrhages of battle stain and our
guilty phantasies guiltily abandon.

* These three poems on war and preparation for war seem especially timely. "Rain," (written in 1944, but never published) pictures the inevitable boredom of waiting for action, just behind the lines — the "dark Satanic hills."

** East African private soldiers (G. I.'s).

Those yet alive and therefore obliged to get on
 with the killing, turn from them
 as from signs of rotten luck
 and get on with the killing, the killing and dying.

Dead and multi-single and of no further use
 to ambitious death, they lie
 in the burning zero weather of logistics,
 in the fire-path of advance. In the foreground of the mind.

By **LINDLEY WILLIAMS HUBBELL**

Secret Weapon

I looked up to the sky and saw it there,
 Not really saw, for it was made of glass
 Or some plastic like glass
 And only a faint suggestion of the perimeter
 Was visible where the sun's rays hit the rim.

But there it was, filling half the sky,
 Invisible except where the reflected light
 Glanced off the edge:
 The inevitable, the diabolical
 End of invention, the weapon perfected in darkness.

It has come, I said, and I tried to take courage
 By remembering the countless dead that have died in the past,
 But that did no good, I was afraid,
 I was filled with anger and despair
 As I waited, helpless, looking up at the sky.