



A Plebe year plus 3 !

Shawn Smith USNA 74

Alone - each of us came.
On that day, How long ago?
A passing moment, an eon - or - just four years?
No matter - one by one, we reported.
It was the beginning of the most significant four years.
In a lifetime - we came - from far and wide.
Who will ever know what it was really like unless he lived it?
Day by weary day - hour by endless hour -
heartbeat by lonely heartbeat.
While those we love, at home or somewhere -
Away - wait for us. Watch for us - hope and pray for us.
How could we face them if we gave up? If we just quit?
Yet, so many did. The smart ones? Not really.
Just people unwilling to face life here.
To face it for what it is and then to keep trying in spite -
Life here - yes pettiness - childishness and occasionally
a man worth following - anywhere.
Loneliness in abundance, disillusionment.
Maybe a little happiness for balance.
Sometimes work, hard work - failure, disappointment - Quit?
Or keep going. More work. And more - only limited success.
Just enough to make it worth trying a wee bit harder.
A bit longer. All that - that's life - that's here, but -
There's more disappointment - everybody has them.
Goals - there just dreams still too high to reach even with a ladder.
Hurt? It always does - deeply - when dreams walk faster than you can run.
But the hurt heals - leaving only a faint scar.
Dad - Mom - encouragement. A care package - what a lot of friends -
Until the cookies are gone. And life inches on slowly.
Along it's sod covered rocky way - an empty mailbox -
It's mouth wide open - laughing - nobody really cares.

Excitement - anticipation of a great weekend. The girl !
loneliness? Where did you go? It is still there waiting -
Around a corner, behind a tree, in every room after she packs and leaves.
Could the ache be worse than before? Only if there was no one at all.
A friend to get a sub with in town and sit and just talk.
Good or bad, or to plan for the next weekend.
Memories are all we have, and all our plans become memories in time.
But a friend will always be more than a memory if only,
he has given friendship freely - the best any man can give.
A brother like no other - not only blood, but tears and sweat bind.
This will last when all else fails. The bond is inexplicable - strong.
Everybody has seen or heard of the grown man with a sword and a mate,
Hiding - waiting. Don't worry - everyone gets caught sinning, a form II
The dreaded restriction ! Go to your room and stay there !
Academics - two hours in for one out - right?
Term papers, projects, labs. "Why did you come to class unprepared?"
29 hours make up a day - not 30.
Even we need to sleep - so they say. Mistreated? No - trained.
Hardened - for four long years. We have lived it.
We will meet whatever comes our way - as always.
But sit back and shudder to think that so much lies ahead - and so little.
Life moves on and so must we. Amazed at how much we now get done before noon.
When protesters finish protesting - and marchers wear out their shoes,
and strikers all stop striking for they don't know what -
God let there be a country left for us - the ones who care.
We believe and love in the undertaking of not only these four years,
but years to come. For God and country - something bigger than ourselves.
Ironically, when the critical moment comes - each will remain as he was -
since that first day we came - Day one from far and wide.
Just one man.
Alone.