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Re-enacting

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Re-enacting

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Author Bio

Eric Kozlik is a sophomore at Gettysburg College majoring in Psychology and minoring writing. In his free time he enjoys track and field, alligator tag, and elephant tipping, but always in moderation. Born in the back seat of a Greyhound bus, rolling down Highway 41, he has always been bored by slow animals and fast women. Several aliases include: The Gettysburg Gangsta, Arthur Writis, and Cliff Hangar, but most refer to him simply as "one hell of a guy."

Re-enacting

Early afternoon:

The Army of Northern Virginia gathers
behind the crest of some unimportant ridge
to wait out the cannonade.

Joe Henderson, standing beside me,
sucks on a Virginia Slim.

How appropriate.

Officers pace up and down nervously,
moustaches carefully trimmed,
shouting with great gusto, but we forgive them.

They always get a little too excited.

Forward March.

The brigades lurch forward
led by the stars and bars.

The enemy is massed atop a low rise
(as usual) with bayonets already fixed,
seeming to know how it will all play out.

No one dies till they open up on us!

Let's make this look real.

I look back at Bobby Lee,

"The Gray Fox," glorious and resplendent
with his swarm of aides de camp.

He drove in this morning, in his Lincoln Continental,
after a night at the Motel 6—

he never sleeps in a tent.

Camp life is hell on his bad back.

It's hot.

Woolen britches chafe and foreheads glisten—
the price we pay for authenticity.

As the sweat begins to pour freely,
a few puffs of smoke bloom from enemy guns
but no one falls—

accuracy was never a Yankee strong point.

There is a single tree on the field,
roots spilling out across the dusty grass,
dressed in rebel gray-brown bark.

I find it sad (and slightly amusing)

that so many have fallen

clutching their imaginary injuries

and accumulated in the same place,

lying like acorns in the blessed shade

of this ancient Live Oak.

We'll rest here until the fighting stops,

letting our pretend death wounds

and enthusiasm bleed out,
swatting flies and watching casually
as some green Yankee private sees Jackson,
Good Ol' Stonewall (the accountant),
and bayonets him in the gut,
changing history with an overdramatic thrust.
In this way the past repeats itself-
like a game of telephone,
confused a bit in transmission.

And we?

We are the end of the line,
the last recipients of some garbled message,
gone to play out the circulating secret
in the fields of make believe.