

BOYS WITH TOYS

We were boys with toys, real shiny and bright —
 Pistols and cap guns, as tall as our height —
 Shoot 'em up BANG BANG "Hey, you're dead!" —
 "Am not!" "Are too! I shot you in the head!" —
 John Wayne, Audie Murphy, our heroes of war —
 "Kill the Germans, the Japs, those dirty Gooks too!" —
 When I grow up John Wayne, I wanna be just like you —
 18 came fast, with nothing to do —
 The Marine recruiter said, "Hey boy, we can use you!" —
 Onward to boot camp, staging, then 'Nam —
 Flew in real quick-like, the stewardesses were a charm —
 Hey! Real pistols, real guns, cannon 4 times our height —
 "Get some" Phantoms, "Man, those flyboys are alright!" —
 Look at those pop flares and tracers crisscrossing the night —
 Shoot 'em up BANG BANG "Fuck, he's really dead!" —
 "I'm hit!" Danny's hit, and so we bled —
 "Where's Danny, and Simons, and skinny old Roy?" —
 "Didn't you hear, man? They got wasted in Hue City." —
 By boys with toys —

GEORGE LANGEVIN



SPRING'S RETURN

Geraldine Nunns

THE MEHAMA KANGAROO

Any place where the loggers gather
 Any place where they sell cold beer
 There's many a terrible tale that's told
 If you listen close you'll hear

The strangest story, the awfulest tale
 That ever the West Coast grew
 The absolutely ridiculous tale of
 The Mehama Kangaroo.

Mehama's a burg on the Cascade slope
 Not a kangaroo's usual home,
 But more the kind of a place you'd expect
 The deer and bear to roam.

But one evening along about dusk,
 There proceeded to leap
 An undeniable kangaroo
 In front of Jack Hurley's Jeep.

It crossed the road in a couple of jumps
 And disappeared into the dark
 And Jack pulled off to the side of the road
 And there proceeded to park.

"Now then, here's a tale," thought Jack, "that
 I can never tell.
 Before they'd believe a kangaroo
 They'd believe ice cream in Hell."

So Jack he drove to a local joint and
 Sat down and ordered a brew
 But all poor Jack could think about
 Was that damned kangaroo.

Along about six beers later
 (In beer as in wine is truth)
 Jack couldn't stand it he had to tell,
 So he told the barmaid, Ruth.

Ruth leaned her massive arms on the bar,
 Looked at Jack with a narrowed eye,
 "Jack," said she, "I've known you awhile
 And I've never known you to lie."

"But I've heard loggers' tales before
 Quite a few of them here,
 And if you saw a kangaroo
 It came out of a bottle of beer."

Jack jumped up with a mighty oath,
 "Don't call me no liar, Ruth,
 I'll catch the critter and bring him in
 To show I tell the truth."

"A circus must have come through here
 And the varmint got away.
 I'll catch that hopper and bring him in
 And I bet for that they'll pay."

Now money was tight on the western slope
 And a bit of reward sounded good,
 So next day several rigs sat by the road
 Where Hurley's old Jeep stood.

It had rained the previous day and the
 Ground was soft by the road
 And there were the tracks of a two-legged beast
 A hoppin' like a toad.

Now Jack had brought his old red hound
 Naturally called Old Red,
 "He's perfect for this," said Jack, "He's all
 Nose and not a brain in his head."

Now after Red wetted down all of their tires,
 His canine duty he knew,
 They brought him to the tracks to see
 Would Red hunt that kangaroo.

Now Red he snuffled at the tracks and
 let out a tentative squeal,
 Then off he went with a voice like a bell
 And that ragtag crew at his heels.

Red never balked at the river, not him,
 He swam it and climbed a ridge
 He got ahead of the rest of them there,
 They went around by the bridge.

Then over the ridges and canyons and creeks
 With Red singing wild and free
 'Til finally under a tall shale ridge,
 Old Red, he bayed, "Tree!"

"Can kangaroos climb?" asked someone,
 "That's something I've never heard."
 "Hell, for all we know," said Jack, "the damned
 Things can fly like a bird."

When they finally caught up to him
 Red wasn't under a tree.
 He was baying and clawing at a hole in the ground
 Under a slide of scree.

They didn't have a shovel with them
 So they couldn't dig,
 Jack said he had one in the Jeep, "But
 It's three miles to the rig."

They gathered up twigs and sticks and leaves
 From under the trees about,
 If they couldn't dig for him
 They'd smoke the varmint out.

Into the hole they fanned the smoke
 That rose up from their pall,
 And out of that hole came the kangaroo as
 Fast as a cannonball.

Jack he grabbed it by the tail, it
 Bit him on the hand,
 With a mighty shout the rest of the group
 Upon the two did land.

With bellows and curses and occasional squalls
 They wallowed about on the ground
 While Red shrieked and barked fit to bust a gut
 And circled the fight around.

The combat stopped, they all got up
 And stood in a circle around.
 For there it lay with its front legs gone
 A dead coyote on the ground.

Now whether by trap or hay mowing machine
 It lost its legs I don't know,
 But it learned to hop like a kangaroo
 Or at least Jack swears it's so.

So if you go where the loggers gather
 And if by perchance they sell cold beer
 You listen close to the loggers' talk, for
 There's terrible tales to hear.

But if you don't want a broken nose, and
 Unless you like black and blue,
 Don't ever ask Jack Hurley about
 The Mehama Kangaroo.

ALEX LAFOLLETTE



SPRING FOR SOLACE



They are not enough,
 though they are very lovely,
 the tulips, crocus, hyacinth,
 the new leaves of the bleeding heart.
 For them I have spent my penny for the soul.
 But the soul wants more,
 more assurance
 than the hardiness of bulbs,
 more permanence than the brief array
 that tempts us to invest in beauty.

The soul wants steady warmth,
 not brilliant color,
 the savor of another soul
 that does not fade with summer.

ELIZABETH HOBBS



SI YA
 LAYED'ER

(Or Mon Qui in Fifty
 Words or Less)

We've been dry on a raindrenched night
 Sheltered by a lack of light
 For which reason we may say
 Quiet, truly we were wet
 Graced by a poverty we loved
 Enough — that care is for a day
 Amenable to a needed intender
 What conclusion may be drawn
 By judges without an ink or brush
 Albeit, it is not our due, et al.
 Now — it is a gift that we receive.
 Chaste, what result might that conceive?
 None, apart from a deluded preacher
 Who hammers at the souls of crystal vessels.

DARREN MacWILLIAMS

Raine Patti

