

## P.O.W.

He has come back from that world within a world;  
A world with four boundaries of barbed wire.  
Remote ... inaccessible ... a world where “food”  
Had sudden, incredible meaning.  
He was a weedy boy when he went away  
In love with airplanes  
And with the chance to see England.  
He has come back  
A man ... with remembrances.

Of the happy things that rise to the surface  
Stratford-on-Avon ... sketching along the river;  
Learning to walk like a cat in the eternal blackout  
And do a Pub Crawl by some sixth sense  
That had nothing to do with sight.  
A quiet English girl in Newcastle-on-Tyne  
That made getting back to England  
And out of Germany  
The most important thing!

The night they “got it”  
And the giant Lanc came down, crashing and burning,  
Spiralling ... and spewing out parachutes and crew;  
Plopping him down into Germany minus his flying boots  
And making the capture a matter of fifteen minutes!

Playing the violin in the “Symphony” aggregation  
At Sagan  
And the Traps in the Swing Band  
Studying, and sketching and pushing the days away  
‘Til it was almost time,  
And the enforced march across Germany began.

Coming with surprise right back to the place  
He'd been taken.  
Seeing enough of the thorough ruin  
To be secretly SURE of freedom!

A little short soldier with glasses and a red face  
Out of the Fifth Army  
Who said “Gentlemen” ... or “Fellows” ... or ...  
Anyway, he was the key that turned in the lock.

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Freedom is not something like a word  
To him.  
It is five eggs and two steaks  
And seeing your girl again!

What is it like to be back?  
How does it seem, that year  
A world away,  
Locked up ... out of circulation?

Well, already it is like something read in a book  
About someone else.  
An island ...in the long voyage home.

But in his eyes  
What abysses.

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