the sky. Grimy hair hid the ears and made the head appear large and rectangular. The face showed teeth but had no expression.

"Drop the ladder down inside," Matthew directed, lifting his head slightly. "Did you bring water?"

But the dark face was no longer there, and soon the ladder disappeared. It fell on the sand with a dry rattle of old wood.

"Vamonos." Chapo's voice came loud above the sound of his hand on the charcoal mare's rump. The empty stirrups slapped against the black's ribs as she galloped away to the north, toward sweet piles of alfalfa and pleading voices that would mean nothing to her.

The nervous stomp of the palomino faded southward, and the grey shadow of a cool evening played in the fine white hair of the man in four-mile well.

Frequent contributor to EXILE, senior John Miller selects from his collection of verse . . .

THREE POEMS

By John Miller

Security

A midnight tide had stormed the wall
That guarded an arc of ocean glass
From outside shock; fishermen remarked
They'd seldom seen the reef-head's morning hair
So capped with surf. But order was restored
And water sheeted smooth against the sand;
Bare-legged dowagers stepped out,
Their wards still clinging to the skirts of shore,
To snip the stems from liquid seaweed beds.
Then one raised her eyes and saw
A scimitar slice through its surface sheath.
"Shark!" snapped out. "Shark!"
And shallows boiled with wildly-churning legs.
The desperado, turned back by the sea,
Was swept toward resolution of his life.
A vigilante boatload soon passed judgment:
A rifle barked, a final spurt,
Then acid blood turned litmus blue to red.
Their trophy dragged across the beach
Stained the sands, as peaceful citizens
Hacked and mauled the six-yard corpse
While children scraped the suckers from its flanks.