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The Man I Saw Outside Post 4 7 5 at 3 a.m.

Matthew Miller
Denison University

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The Man I Saw Outside Post 475 at 3 a.m.

In the war, every Brit officer we saw
was a damn nobleman. They lorded
it over us, pissed because they needed
our guns and our money. Their rank-
and-files got almost the same look down the nose.
I've thought of titles—Lord, and Sir,
and Baron, and etc. I've no use—
just leave me America, a life in
the mills or mines or factories, free to die
of a sawblade or black lung or poverty
from labor outsourced to the goddamned Commies.
I'd settle for dying nobly—
strong to the end, some good fight, enough
time for a speech. But who dies nobly?
I'm an old man, drunk on the ground
of the blurry alley outside the Amvets,
touching the medal always pinned
in my jacket, Lady Liberty's head
worn smooth and "Freedom From Fear
and Want" too small to read in the dark.

Matthew Miller, 2010