

land is fictioned unforgettably, humorous, sad, swift and reflective, concerning Air Force people on tours of peacetime duty — jet pilots, noncoms, and the storm rages of the geophysical insanity of Icelandic winds which affect the novel's moods and characters. Both novels, of course, are serious undertakings, but they are never without the relief of Wright's wit and mingled comic inevitability.

Dave went to Vietnam in November of 1965, after a tour in Iceland, to work in the administration in Saigon (he received the Bronze Star for his diplomatic abilities). There he compiled notes and outlined another novel. He returned from Vietnam to his home in Montgomery, Alabama, in November 1966, worn out but anxious to get on with his new book. He had become very close to many of the war's Vietnamese sufferers, of regime after regime, and wanted to write about them. But after his return home, Wright and his wife separated. In February, 1967, he suffered a severe heart attack, and four months later, a month after his thirty-eighth birthday, Wright was dead.

DAVE ELEGY

James Miller

When he left for Saigon
I asked him what about killing if you have to —
We were pointing around in an Idaho cemetery
 the villager
 graves kind
 but one overlooking
 small, barn villages
 the Air Force major my friend grew up in —
 What will you do?
Shoot blanks he said. Ancestry subjects kept him pointing around.
 That's Amos's, he said. Grandfather Wright's.
 Shot the hell out of the meetinghouse lights —
 rode his horse right in and shot out the lights.
I was listening.
 Got excommunicated, he laughed. But got back in.
 Amos settled Bennington.
A bees blue wind kept clovering, and working the sunflowers
 running east to Joe's Gap, to John the Baptist's mountain.
 He meant what he said about blanks.

In Saigon he found a beat up pocketknife he kept
and he hipped a regulations gun, risking enough
to come come looking whiter to some,
having knowledge of bankrupt coups
for the common good — understanding revolutionary blood.

Then it happened. Having always tried
facing things bravely he usually won —
a gutty endurer, whether battling small
as halfback or barefist fighterboy
or grieved to his brother's grave from childhood

Right there by Rich I'll lay, he used to say —
by his singer brother Rich

the dead brother
laughing with voice
boy-young, in fun

If fyew go to Hev'n bufore ah do,
Jus' bore a hole and pull me through —

Oh — ah aintta gonna 'gree
Mah Lord no more . . .

That life is worth its masterpiece,
alive, the major believed.

His *Still The Mountain Wind* had played at Cambridge —
Minnesota — schools of the West towns
of Rich, the dead brother

no more . . .

Then wide as Joe's Gap pulled open — home looked chasm.
The agreement his wife could leave, be free

for some
one other

and he have the children. Somehow —
agreed. Decreed and agreed.

Yet, split in,

it killed him
and the Air Force about to discharge him
after an intensely cared for heart. He died.

Above in the children hills the writer Dave.
Deep in the wind the silver, manlength coffin.

And the Air Force saluted why airmen die.
By the wind gap mountain, in the wind grass silence —
shot blanks above goodbyes.