

Of a Friend Whose Brother Died Young

by Con Chapman

I heard as we leaned, drinking beer,
against our cars on a low-water bridge
that a friend lay crying, in a field
for a brother, dead now several years.

There was no logic to the thing;
he'd left to drive his girl around.
She had lived and he had died
that's just the luck that chance will bring.

The place was much too far away
for us to do him any good.
We pictured others helping him
and so we stayed, and so we stood.

The sky above us was the same,
a carousel that spun around
a pole star blinking overhead
that didn't know its earthly name.

I saw it as a cobalt blue
I guessed to him that it seemed black
as beer flowed o'er my rising gorge
and he lay weeping on his back.



The bridge beneath my feet was dry,
the ground on which he laid his head
was wet and cold to chill his heart;
he asked "Why did you have to die?"

We heard the tale from someone else
who saw him and relayed his words.

The earth's indifferent to us all,
and so no answer would be heard.

