

Help, Trainees!

by James Britch

Sitting on the bank by the barracks in the shade on the grass
Wet bulb's so high all we do is sit keep an eye out for the brass
Drill Sergeant's got an M16, he's giving a class
We've been sitting so long I got a sore ass

Around the corner squealing its tires a Chevy Malibu
Bright red, mags, loud pipes, a long-haired crew
They're drunk we could see as they came into view
Get back yelled the drill sergeant, they're coming through

Arms akimbo he stood there a traffic cop
Screeching, twisting it came to a stop
Beside him so close he only had to hop
Once to the window grabbed the guy's mop

The window rolled up lifted him off his feet
Cranked so tight it ripped right through the meat
Pipes roar, wheels squeal, smoke on the concrete
Dragging him, zig-zagging him across the street

Help, Trainees! he screamed, terror his face
So scared us, unnerved us we all took chase
Running, yelling all reason forgot
One threw his rifle, one a steel pot

They swerved up the bank into the wall crashing
Wheels spinning, horn stuck, left-turn signal flashing
We were on them buzzing stinging bees on a bear
Found Drill Sergeant holding one by the hair

Twelve men berserk each a rifle butt over his head
Thud! Pock! Like kicking a gourd 'til all inside dead

The other drill sergeants were quick to react
Just like that it was over, they herded us back
Dress-right-dress at the foot of our bunks
While they boarded the windows, cleaned up those punks

The hammering locked us in, no escape, no light
What are they doing, someone coughed, it feels like night
The plywood in the hall has a hole I can see
Motion on the other side, *what's happening, Trainee?*

C.I.D.'s asking questions, no one's talked, all so afraid
No one's moving, no mail, training's delayed
Now look at the mess we've all gone and made
Just sitting on the bank by the barracks on the grass in the shade

James Britch grew up on a Vermont hillside farm and was too busy to realize that he was a draft dodger until his father's friends made him sign him up for the draft. He enlisted three days later and served as a Vulcan crewman in Germany. When he came home he went to college and joined the National Guard, went to OCS and commanded an armor platoon for nearly twenty years concurrent to teaching math in schools and universities. He has written an autobiography and a how-to-teach-math book in addition to two albums of song lyrics and a cartoon book about the Garden of Eden. He has performed his lyrics at poetry slams, on local TV, and won several awards. People cry from his poems; it helps them understand their fathers.