

This story was one of the first I ever wrote - 2 years ago -
and it contains too much Faulkner.

It was getting dark and the cold was setting in and we couldn't hear the guns off by the blue haze of the mountains anymore, which made us more nervous than if we knew the rebs were breaking out of the hills right down on us this minute. The men were even more quiet tonight than they had been for the last couple of days since we had pitched camp, waiting. I guess the men just didn't care anymore what was going to happen. They had even stopped hanging around the lieutenant's tent for news or rumors or anything about what was happening in the blue haze of those mountains where the guns had not stopped in all of the time that we had been here. But when the guns did stop things around camp were worse than they had been before. Everyone was quiet, even the old-timers were quiet and not speaking much and stopped speculating about when we would have to move out; they were old timers, they knew now, but still they didn't speak. I guess every body including even the greenest of the recruits really knew what was going to happen soon except by some action common to soldiers and to other people (soldiers really aren't different from any other people) they would not admit it even to themselves. But the old ones did know and they were quiet and they didn't speak much because they were as nervous as anybody else but they wouldn't let you know, so you knew all the time.

The guns had stopped, the men were quiet and they all were turned to fixer ~~up~~ ^{some} mess and the blue grey smoke from their separate ~~little~~ fires rose slowly in to the cold blue of the sky and drifted south toward the blue ridges of the hills where they all knew that they would be fighting and dying ^{and} ~~in~~ twisted agony under the bellows of the guns that had stopped. Back in the woods where you couldn't see anymore because of the darkness men were chopping firewood and now and then you could hear a tree felled and the men would kind of jump like a cannon ball had just hit near by, I mean the young, green ones jumped; the old experienced ones never flinched from any sound. They all knew that you couldn't jump from a shell. The darkness came too quickly. The fires made only enough light to see close by and outside in the darkness there was silence and in camp around the fires there were only a few whispers. The sound of tin spoons on tin plates had stopped earlier tonight. I guess the men weren't hungry; I only had a couple of biscuits soaked in drippings and I didn't care. I had been through this before. I had been one of the boys that had taken this here woods from the grey coats, before they moved the green kids in here to sort of get them ready for the big push and the killing and dying that was to the south. Yes, sir, I've been here before. But the woods weren't shot to pieces and the trees weren't ripped apart by shot and canister and bullets then. In fact we had taken this woods with out a fight, but some devil of rebel turned them kids back and they came like screaming, ragged hellions to take the woods from us and they didn't have a chance but still some of us (and they weren't all green ones) ran and the others stayed on and shot rebs like they were targets

at a shooting match and they fell like targets but still they kept coming.

And now you didn't even hear the sound of tin on tin, or the clearing of rifles, or much of the voices of men, only quiet uneasy and yet an almost sleepy silence. It was colder now, but I didn't feel like sleeping in a tent, so I ^{Just put my blanket} slept by the fire and so did some of the other men. On nights before battles it is hard to keep yourself in any thing with walls or sides. You just feel too closed in, that's all. And you don't like to be by yourself; you don't want to really think about battles, especially if you have been in one. If you think about one you will run the next day. By God you will and you can't help it because you have thought about it too much. Some of the boys, you could tell were were going to run tomorrow, even some of the old timers. If they kept to themselves looking real thoughtful you could make a good bet that they would run.

I was young, but I had seen action and so maybe I wasn't so young after all. The boy was younger than I was by a long shot and he hadn't seen any service, so the lieutenant had told me to watch out for him because he was one of his friend's sons. The boy was a nice kid. He was quiet at first but after we had become friends over the last two days he talked more and waiting for the push out wasn't so bad with him along. I could tell that he was scared, but he never talked about it, or about the battle that would come, or about dying or any of the other things that the first timers talk about. He even called me sir. He had wandered off with some of the other young ones to probably talk about that which he wouldn't mention to me, and I hadn't seen him since the afternoon sky had begun to darken. I was laying in my blankets by the fire, trying to keep those thoughts and speculations about tomorrow out of my mind when I heard him stepping over the other men in their blankets and saying excuse me as he came closer. He stopped over me, but I didn't look up. He began to lay his blankets down beside mine. I finally turned around to look at him. He wasn't smiling like he usually was; I guess the guns stopping had bothered him too, and then him talking to those young nothings and getting twice as worked up and scared than if he would just stay away from them. He didn't speak right off and I didn't say anything to him because because I couldn't think of anything to say. So he moved around getting his blankets laid out and not saying anything until he was finished and not taking his boots off either. Then he said to me in a voice that was trying to be brave.

"Sir, do you think its goin to be fightin tomorrow?"

"I suppose," I said trying to sound as experienced and casual as I could.

"We'll lick the hide offn them tomorrow, won't we."

"We'll run 'em clear back to georgia." I said.

"But some of us are going to get killed, maybe."

"That's the way it usually is, boy."

He didn't say much after that and we both kind of rolled up and looked at the fire. It was still pretty early, but in most places the fires had almost died down to red coals that still lighted the bare trees up around us and only a few were up and moving around camp at all. The lieutenant's tent was still lighted but there wasn't anyone around it and I could see the lieutenant's shadow on the tent wall and from where I was, it looked like he was studying a map or something, probably for tomorrow. We still had not had any word that we were going to pull out of these woods but the guns had stopped and though we didn't know exactly what it meant we knew that there was something brewing. Still the camp was quiet, not even crickets or bull frogs though the weather was still warm enough for them and we had heard them last night. Ignorant people take signs from such things but I only gave them a little thought and I had my eyes closed and my thoughts and the tickle in my belly were getting away from me when I felt the boy nudge me. I did not move hoping him to think that I was asleep but He nudged me again.

"What is it?" I said trying to let him know that I was a little bit mad.

"I don't want you to think that I'm crazy but I know that I'm going to die tomorrow." *Mr Go to Sleep*

I sat up and looked him square in the face. There was no childish fear in that face; it was the face of a boy and yet it was a face of a man, and he looked me straight in the eye. I hardly realized that I had my hands on his shoulders.

"I am going to die tomorrow," he said and he wasn't scared either.

"What in hell are you saying, boy," and I think for a moment that I shook him. I noticed that a couple of the men were looking at us. "Don't ever talk like that in front of me or any other person, do you hear?"

"But I am. I know I am; I can feel it and it'll happen tomorrow."

"Every kid thinks that before his first battle. That feeling happens to every boy."

"But it is different with me. I know."

"We don't even know if there is going to be any fightin tomorrow." I said.

"There will be," he said.

I didn't have any answer to that, because we were kidding ourselves if we didn't think that there was going to be a battle tomorrow, and that with the rising sun we would be on some dirt road marching over the waste left by the guns, knowing that each passing minute would bring us closer that from which every thing within us, our reason, our fears, and even our compassion for the enemy told us to run and to keep running and running until the sounds of the battle, the sights of the twisted, dying armies and their death cries remained only in memory from which they could never be

erased. But we would keep on marching toward the sounds, pasted the remains and the smells, like machines with no will to turn back and only pride to push us on.

"Go to bed", I said. But the boy wasn't even looking at me. He was staring off into the woods.

"I can't," said the boy. I have to let them know first.

"Let who know what first?"

"I have to write a letter to my folks and I have to do it tonight."

I could see his face in the remaining fire light, not mannish but round and smooth like a boy's, motionless in the yellow light, a face calm, almost bemused, the features simple and severe. You could tell from that face that the boy really did think that he would die tomorrow and it would be useless to dissuade him from the thought, but he wasn't afraid.

"You can write a letter tomorrow; you need sleep tonight."

"No sir, I reckon that it better be done tonight and not put off, and I'll be needin some paper and pen."

"Where in hell are you going to get paper from the men tonight. You don't disturb a man's sleep for something like that on a night like this."

"I just know that I got to have some paper and I am goin to get it somehow."

"Listen, boy, who has been talking to you and putting these ideas in your head?"

"There are things that a man sees by himself."

"Your only a kid, you shouldn't even be here in this war."

"I need to find some paper," he said and he got up and stepping over me in my blanket and over the other men bedded down near the fire, he headed over to where a few men were sittin by the fire and not talking much and passing around a bottle that they had saved or stolen. The boy stood there and the men didn't pay much of head to him and him still standing there saying nothing. One of the group, an old man with a grey beard that was turning white except where it was brown from tobacco juice, was the first to really look at him. He looked at the boy then turned his face back to the fire.

"You best git to your bed sonny, us soldiers is what needs this licker."

"It ain't licker that I want," said the boy respectfully.

"Then what it be you want, sonny," said the old man.

"I need some paper to write a letter with and a pen or a crayon if you would oblige."

"What in hell an old man like me got ^{up in} paper for sonny. I ~~ain't got any kin to~~ cry when I'm gone or to even care."

The Irishman was sitting next to the old man and he had the bottle and he was pretty drunk. His face was puffed up and red in the light of the fire and you could

see that he wasn't in no mood to be talked to. The kid didn't know that the Irishman had lost his brother in the battle that took this woods and that he had a bad temper anyway and that a lot of us even thought that he was crazy. His brother was the only one that could make him mind when he got in one of his fits when he would run around camp and bustin up stuff and maybe takin a shot at somebody. But he was a good fighter, as good a fighter as they come but he weren't to be reckoned with when he got distempered and now they had found the Irishman's brother out in the woods where the reb cavalry had charged down and them that didn't hide were killed right off and we all knew that the Irishman's brother would never hide from no reb. The kid looked at the Irishman and the old man gave the kid a warning look but the kid didn't pay no heed.

" Ain't any of you men got writin gear?" but he wasn't asking the other men; He was asking the Irishman and the old man waved his hand for the boy to move away and the Irishman didn't seem to see anything except maybe the fire, but his red eyes were getting redder and there was kind of an oily sweat on his face that shined in the fire light. The kid took the hint and started to back off when he seen the Irishman's face, but it was too late. He set the Irishman off. The big soldier dropped the bottle and ran for the kid's legs; the kid tried to turn around to meet the Irishman but he didn't make it and they went to the ground fightin and kickin and the kid tryin to get away and the boy's chest and then up around his neck and the kid still kickin and tryin to hit but he couldn't because he was got kind of from behind and he was being choked and slobber was comin out of his mouth. All of the men by the fire were up now and some were lookin out of the tents. It all happened so fast. For a moment I just sat there and looked but then I jumped up but I was too late because I heard glass break and I saw the Irishman layin there still on the ground and the boy was coupin and rubbing his neck and the old man was holding the neck of the whiskey bottle in his hand. He pulled the kid up.

" The Irishman will wake up tomarry and won't remember a damn thing. I can't 'pologize fer em cause he ain't really right in his head and he's gone kind of ~~crazy~~ tonight. They found his brother yestyday, kilt by rebs and his brother is what used to look out after 'em and now he's dead and there ain't nobody to look out fer 'em. That's why we done let^{him} get drunk, hopin he'd go to sleep."

" God I didn't know that. He did look funny. I shouldn't of riled him."

" Well, sonny he won't remember nothing come tomarry."

The boy tried to wipe some of the dirt off his pants and was about to walk away when the old man put his hand on his shoulder to stop him. The old man was straight and strong with his hair kind of golden in the fire light. He was taller than the boy and you had the feeling that he had been on this earth fightin wars and fightin life for maybe a thousand years and he would go on living and fightin and burying his friends and kin and keep on buryin and bein left behind so that you think that he don't mourn people like other folks do, that he's better than that and that perhaps death is probably an old friend. He looks like who you'd think Johnny Appleseed must have looked like and he looked just as induring. The only thing that we knowed of him is that he had come from Kentucky where he had buried his family and his children and with them gone he couldn't stay in Kentucky livin off of friends so he decided he would see the world and hit a lick for Abe Lincoln at the same time. The boy stood there looking at the old man and the old man went over to his blanket and was huntin around for something in his Knap sack. He pulled out a folded piece brownish paper and he held it out to the kid.

"It's nothin but an old raisin wrapper," ^{He} the old man said shyly. "I don't even know why I saved it."

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~~The boy had wandered off I supposed at first to write a letter. The other men that could tried for more sleep and the old soldier put a blanket over the Irishman who hadn't moved since he was hit and I went back to my blanket~~

I don't know why I woke up, maybe it was the fire which was flared up and cracklin with new wood and the smoke which was kind of driften over me. At first everybody looked asleep and I could feel that we were in the morning hours, but then I could see that the boy wasn't asleep and I could hear him talkin to him self like he was thinkin inside of himself only he wasn't; He was writen a letter. I couldn't see him but I knew that he was writen a letter just the same because he talked real slow like he was findin it hard to make the words. . . . and so tommorrow it's likely that we will get into our first big fight and I guess I am goin hear a rebel yell for the first time and maybe killin some of them when I really don't know why I am doin it cept what they tell us why. I feel like runnin but I know I can't and will not. That is the terrible thing about it all because I think that tommorrow there is going to be trouble for me, and I can maybe get away from it but I know that I won't and so what ever is goin to happen will happen with out a say so from me when I could have done something. Do you understand? It is hard to make sense now and what I thought was goin to be a lot to say really isn't so much after all because I can't seem to say what is really in side of me. I only know that I won't shame the family none. I know that runnin would be worse than just bein kilt outright because the people ^{a coward} ~~left~~ behind really have to carry the heaviest load. We talked, you will remember, ma, about this before I left and since you and me don't keep secrets between us I could not keep what I thinkin from you though it might cause you anguish. I can not help this feeling that is inside of me. I feel it so strong that I know what is goin to happen to me tommorrow. But you always told me that it was better to know what's facing you than to be like a sucklin suddenly jerked for killin, or like my brother your little quiet one who was takin like a whisper from your lovin arms to join our dear Lord. There is more pain in knowin but then life is that much more dear. I only regret that I couldn't have knowed you better, ma, and that I am leavin you behind to manage pa who I think is getting worse.

He stopped mumbling then. I guess that he was finished because I heard him fold the paper and get up and go over to the fire. I didn't feel good. I didn't know what it was that made me feel so ^{bad} ~~bad~~. It was almost like I had stolen his letter and had hid out and read it. I guess that was it- that I felt like a thief even though I still felt different. I didn't stick to it, the blanket was wet with dew when I put it over my head. I didn't want to think any more.

I thought it was thunder when I first heard it. It came as if in my dreams like dull thuds in the back of my mind, but the ground shook with the noise. The boy must have heard it first; I felt his hand shaking me. I stuck my head out of my damp blanket to see the boy's face looking down into mine. He looked as scared as hell.

"It's the guns," he said pointing to the south and acting like this was the first time that he had heard them since we came here.

But I heard other sounds than the guns. The men were stirring near the fire and about the edge of the woods breaking sticks for ^{wood}, and cleaning their guns and talking low but excited in the early morning darkness. But they still weren't the sounds that I heard. They came from the north, something like the sound of a stampede. The old man had noticed the sounds too and he had noticed that I was worried about them. He was looking at me from the other side of the fire, he not moving while the young ones, the green ones ran about the camp, not to be running anywhere but just to be running, ~~because of fear and excitement~~. He knew right a way what I was thinking.

"There wagons," he said, "and probably cannon. Heard em a hundred times before a fight. It looks like there's going to be a big one today."

He was right and I didn't say anything to him, because ~~there~~ wasn't anything to say. Rumors spread like wild fire and every man was up before the bugle even sounded. The lieutenant's tent was surrounded by scared kids ~~trying to find out~~ some of them not even dressed, just standing there shivering and the lieutenant not paying any attention to them and finally having them driven away. The old man was silent and his face was still but just the same, he was laughing. He was laughing at everybody and he was crying for himself at the same time. I didn't see the Irish man.

I wormed out of my blanket slowly, deliberately a small way of ~~stalling~~, I guess, and I took my time cleaning up even though I knew there wouldn't be much time before we would be out on the road. The kid was quiet ^{and} ~~but~~ he stayed close to me, even following me to the latrines. His face was white like an egg shell. It kind of flashed in the blue morning air, but he didn't ask questions like the others. His eyes asked questions though and when I looked at them I could see myself. I could see myself and my first battle and how scared and green I was, and I could see that there wasn't really any change in me ^{from} that kid standing there. I had only seen more and somehow had convinced myself that just seeing a war was enough to change you, to make a man out of you ^{so to} speak. But the man that don't get scared is either out of his mind or ~~dead~~ ^{not a man}. The only thing that a sane man can do

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is to become a little insane, to let or make his mind play tricks on him, to fool him, ~~to keep him from ever realizing his true situation.~~ ~~to put him in another world where he is master with sole control over destiny.~~ Everyone of the old timers has his own method. Some wouldn't admit it, some wouldn't even believe it but they all have it ~~and that's its strongest point of obscurity.~~

There weren't very many eating this morning, but some were. The old man was, and he was eating slowly with seemingly no change from the other lazy camp mornings. The boy couldn't eat but he couldn't sit still either so he went to the stream to fill our canteens. Already the men were assembling under the trees and sargents were yelling at the men and some of the boys down the line were already moving out quietly. They had none of the green boys with them so they would see action first. I almost wished I was with them and could march along with the dignity of their quiet order, mature and quiet like what a machine of war ought to be. There was no sun. The light came up in a grey, low sky, and when I looked up again, down in the direction of the road, the men had merged into a thin line of blue, flags sheathed, no drums, a silent well ordered machine.

I couldn't understand why all of the men weren't heading south with us. In fact it seemed like we were the only men who were marching towards the sound of the guns. We passed them in their camps, some not paying any heed to us, others with fear written on their silent ^{faces} ~~never moved their cold, white faces~~ ^{faces} from us as we moved on by. We were noisier than the men that had left before us. We had had our flags flapping in the wind and we marched to drums and the boys were singing and some of the others who had caught the spirit were singing too. Wagons and cannon, like the old man had said, thundered by us as we marched and sometimes we had to scatter or be hit, for they weren't stopping for anything and the noises to the south were getting louder and we were passing wounded left beside the road and some of the kids that had joined us since the battle for the woods (and there were many) were seeing this for the first time and maybe seeing their first dead rebel too. Their faces were straight for the most part but some looked away and a few got sick. The morning was not as cold as I thought it would be, or maybe I just didn't care. The roads were muddy in spots, and we got caught in it ~~and the singing stopped and the drums stopped and we became a slow, clumsy, lot teetering in our mudsucking boots and trying to look like an army and at the same time just looking like a bunch of idiots. We broke formation each man left to fight the mud by himself and we followed along the fences, no great blue line but a scattered mudstained blotches of blue fumbling our way to the battle field. There would be no more singing. There would be very little talking, but we would all reach the~~

Not all of the men were heading south with us. I couldn't understand it. In fact it seemed like we were the only men on the road. We passed the others in their camps, some not paying much heed to us, some with fear written on their silent white faces which never turned from us as we moved on by.

We were noisier than the men that had left before us. We had our flags flapping in the wind and we marched to drums and the boys singing and some of the others who had caught the spirit were singing too. Wagons and cannon, like the old man had said, thundered by us as we marched and sometimes we had to scatter, for they weren't stopping for anything and the noises to the south were getting louder and we were passing wounded left beside the road and some of the kids that had joined us since the battle, and there were many, were seeing this for the first time and maybe seeing their first dead rebels too. Most of the boys had straight faces but some looked away and a few got sick.

But then there came the rain. It fell lightly at first—just drizzle. The sky got light then dark again and the rain got heavier but we didn't stop. They wouldn't let us. It was the mud that stopped us. All ahead the roads were muddy and we couldn't help but get caught in it. The drums stopped and the singing stopped and the mud sucked around our boots and we had to break formation. The cannons and wagons got stuck in the mud and we had to push them when we couldn't move in the mud ourselves. The horses were muddy and the men and the guns and wreckage and dead laying by the road were covered with the reddish slime and we broke formation, each man left to fight the mud by himself and we followed a along the fences, no great line of blue but scattered mud-covered blotches of blue fighting our way in the mud to the battlefield. Finally we stopped; we couldn't fight the rain and the mud and the distance at the same time, but the sounds of the guns had not stopped and the sky was getting lighter.

We didn't know if we were to defend our position or charge the enemy. No one was giving any orders. There was a low wall of mud and leaves and rocks near the edge of the woods which we hid behind when the shells started falling. Since then we had taken about all we could take from those rebel guns. The whole valley seemed to be filled with thunder, but all of the noise seemed to be coming from the rebel side. Some of the men had begun to fall back. Some were already running for their lives back into the thicket of the woods and you could hear them scream when the shells hit back there, and smoke rising and trees falling. I could see our line beginning to break as the shells struck the edge of the woods. The boy was next to me and so was the old man. The boy was trying to keep himself from saying something to me but he said it anyway. He grabbed my arm and kind of pulled me around to face him.

"I want you to get away from me. I am going to die today. It may be a shell that gets me."

I turned my head away. He grabbed my arm again.

"Did you hear me?" he yelled. I could hardly hear him above the noise of the shells. I shook his hand off my arm and slapped him across the face. He grabbed up his gun and turned to run but I grabbed his boot and he fell in the mud. I pulled him back. But then I heard the old man's voice, ^{so low} high pitched and weak above the thunder of the guns.

"Somethings gone wrong with the command. I think the boy has a pretty good idea."

He didn't have to say anything else. I never questioned his words and the next thing that I knew, we were running. The boy was far ahead, trying to keep keep away from us, I guess. I wanted to go with him, but if that was the way that he wanted it, I wasn't going to bother him. The old man was a little behind me and when I looked over my shoulder I could see him and most of the other men running too, some even without their muskets. The boy disappeared ahead of us into the woods but then he came out again running as fast as he could. He was followed by other men. I grabbed the kid. His eyes were large and white and sweat was falling into them. "It's a colonel," he said.

I looked up to see a large, black but mudspattered horse coming at us from the thicket. It was a colonel and he was dirty and his horse was breathing heavy and the colonel didn't have a hat on. His grey hair fell in his face and he waved a sabre in his hand.

"Back to the wall!...Back to the wall!" he yelled.

We took our positions where the wall jutted out near a stand of small trees. I could see down the line. The men had taken their positions and their bayonets bristled out from the wall like quills on a porkquippine. Every man seemed to be waiting for something big to happen. I could hear officers calling orders and reassembling companies all along the line. I could hear them plainly. It was then that I noticed that the guns had stopped. We waited. Everything was quiet even the shouting of the officers seemed muffled by the stillness. No noise seemed far worse than noise of the guns. And still we waited.

"Do you hear them?" I heard the old man say.

"Hear what?"

"The rebs. The're comin'," he said.

I couldn't hear anything and I looked and I couldn't see anything. The boy raised his head above the low wall and remained there looking. Then I heard it. At first I thought it was wind in the trees, but the trees weren't moving. Everything was still and the noise got louder.

"You'll see 'em in a minute," said the old man.

At first it looked like the trees across the valley were moving, like the woods itself was swelling out into the valley. Then the lines of ~~rebels~~ separated from the trees and they came toward us, slow at first but picking up speed as they came closer. The old man cocked his gun. I cocked mine and all up and down the line the locks of the guns clicked and bayonets were pointed towards the rebels. The colonel was giving orders but no one was really paying any attention to him. They all had their eyes on the rebels. We could hear them yelling now. We could see their arms and legs and their yelling got louder and legs moved faster and some of the jumpy ones were beginning to fire but they were still too far and the colonel was screaming at the men to hold their fire but still there were some jumpy ones. I was numb. I couldn't feel the gun in my hands. I didn't feel myself move. I didn't even hear the colonel's order to fire. I just remember smelling smoke and seeing the boy's gun jump back. I was reloading. I was firing, but I felt that I had no control over my body. My fingers fumbled the cartridge into the chamber. My arms raised and aimed at one of the running forms of grey that came into my sights. And I fired; the smoke hid every thing for a moment and then I was firing again. The sweat was in my eyes, dirt was in my mouth but I could still see the rebel lines and I still kept firing.

The grey lines swelled very close to us then receded under our fire and then they swelled toward us again—so close that I could see their bearded faces and even smell them and I saw that very few actually wore grey. They looked more like scarecrows rusing at us, their wild white eyes sunk deep into their black faces. And then the lines fell back and they were running back across the field but the colonel didn't give any orders to follow. The rebels stopped in the middle of the field. They were acting like a bunch of scared turkeys in a storm. They were still being fired upon by some and I could see sabers flashing among the men out there. Then they turned. They were almost on us before I fired. The boy was firing fast, not taking aim but just firing and reloading as fast as he could. The yelling stopped as they were torn again by our fire. They couldn't take anymore. They broke and ran and their officers trying to beat them back to face our line then giving up and running with the others. Then I heard our men yell and I could see them down the line. They were rushing out of the woods after them and the others followed and the whole line moved out of the woods like a huge blue mud stained snake. The old man, the boy and ~~the~~ ^{the} were running and I could see the Irishman; ~~and~~ the colonel was ahead of us on his horse. The rebels would turn and fire and then run and we would fire at them and then run over the dead and cripples they left behind. I saw an officer that was left behind. He had propped himself up with one arm and he had a gun in his hand but he wasn't doing anything to the boys that ran by him.

" You'll see them in a minute

But, the Irishman saw him and he ran at the wounded man and he was nearly over the reb when the reb raised his pistol and shot him. The Irishman swung his gun around and struck the rebel across the head but then he grabbed his stomach and fell across the dead soldier. The boy and me ran passed them and the boy wanted to stop but I pulled him away.

The rebels weren't firing at us any more and their lines were falling back into the woods ahead of us and we were running after them. Down the line I could see our men already running into the woods and still there were no shots. Then up on the ridge of the hill I could see rebs and they looked like ants against the grey sky as they ran over the rim to the other side. Our men began to yell and I heard drums behind us and our regiment's flag came into view and we were still running. The sky was still light but the day had seemed so long; I had no idea what time it was. I had reached the woods but the kid wasn't beside me. I looked around he was just behind me. I looked at his face. It was black with powder grease except where some tears were running down his cheeks, but he was smiling. Then I saw that he had something in his hand. He clutched it like a hawk and it was all crinkled up but I could see what it was. We stopped running and I put my arm on his shoulder.

~~"There really wasn't any time to write and he said," he said.~~