











MURAD
THE TURKISH CIGARETTE

FAGS
By Corneil Jack Turner

Whatsoever really comes to a soldier has been noted in
this poem, and what is not noted, has been noted in
the poem. It is not a poem of the war, but a poem
about the war. The Turkish word 'fags' means a cigarette,
and that is how it has been explained and widely distributed.

When the cold is making ice cream of the marrow of your bones,
When you're shivering like a jelly and your feet are dead as stones,
When your clothes and boots and blankets, and your rifle and your kit,
Are washed from hell to breakfast, and the dagger where you sit,
Is looking like a basket, and upon the muddy floor
The water lies in filthy pools, the holes deep as moats;
The life seems cold and vain and all the world is wet,
You'll always get that comfort if you get a cigarette.

When you're lying in a fatening post 'way out beyond the wire,
While a blasted Hun, behind a gun, is doing rapid fire;
When the bullets whine above your head, and splinter on the ground,
When your eyes are strained for every move, your ears for every sound—
You'll bet your life a Hun patrol is prowling somewhere near;
A shiver runs along your spine that's very much like fear:
You'll catch it in the middle—bet, I'll make a little bet,
You'll feel a whole lot better if you had a cigarette.

When Fritz is starting something and he goes on on the beat
When the pumpkin goes up in chunks, and settles down to dust,
When the very "jerry" comes a-waddling down the air,
Till it lands upon a dunce—and the dunce isn't there;
When the air is full of dust, and smoke, and scraps of steel, and noise,
And you think you've backed for golden crowns and other heavenly joys,
When your nerves are all a-tremble, and your brain is all a-fee—
It isn't half so hopeless if you've got a cigarette.

When you're waiting for the whistle and your foot is on the step,
You'll hear yourself, it's a lot of fun, and all the time you're kept.
To the fact that you may stop one 'fore you've gone a dozen feet,
And you wonder what it feels like, and your thoughts are far from sweet;
Then you think about a little grave, with B. I. P. on top,
And you know you've got to go across—either you'll die or stop;
When your backboard's long as water, and you're hauled in icy sweat,
Why, you'll feel a lot more cheerful if you put your cigarette.

Then, when you stop a good one, and the stretcher bearers come
And patch you up with string, and splints, and bandages, and gum;
When you think you've got a million wounds and fifty thousand breaks,
And your body's just a blasted sack packed full of pain and ache;
Then you feel you've reached the finish, and you're sure your number's up,
And you feel as weak as Belgian beer, and helpless as a pup—
But you know that you've not done and out, that life's worth living yet,
When some old war-wise Red Cross guy slips you a cigarette.

We can do without MacConaughy, and Bully, and hard luck,
When Fritz's cousin Jim keeps the ration parties back;
We can do without our generals, and our marks, and stars, and shoes,
We might almost—the I should fit—get along without our bones;
We can do without "K. I. & C." and "Military Law,"
We can beat the ancient Semetians at making bricks, some straw;
We can do without a lot of things and still not die, you bet,
But I'd hate to think of soldiering without a cigarette.

Evening why?

