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# Sergeant Piacek

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## SERGEANT PIACEK

In the fall of my senior year,  
the notice arrived bringing Greetings,  
and an invitation  
to the armory in New Haven  
on a Friday afternoon.  
My Connecticut physician  
composed a letter describing  
my migraine headaches. An old  
doctor in a brown suit  
glanced over it, showed it to someone,  
and declared, "He's *in*,"  
to the room at large. Just a week later,  
General Hershey proclaimed  
student deferments.

Naked, cold,  
we moved among corpsmen  
with their stethoscopes and chill fingers.  
When we had finished,  
Sergeant Piacek called nine men by name,  
to dress and leave.  
I wanted desperately not to exchange  
Harvard for Korea,  
yet pitied the rejected men. We  
remaining stood meaty  
and shameful while Sergeant Piacek  
called us in gangs  
of five to congratulate us on making  
1-A. With each group,  
the Sergeant clapped one new soldier stoutly  
on the shoulder, saying  
a word or two. "Hall, you're my lead scout."