

Reported Missing

by

John Bayliss

(1919-2008)

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With broken wing they limped across the sky
caught in late sunlight, with their gunner dead,
our engine gone, -- the type was out of date, --
blood on the fuselage turning brown from red:

knew it was finished, looking at the sea
which shone back patterns in kaleidoscope
knew that their shadow would meet them by the way,
close and catch at them, drown their single hope:

sat in this tattered scarecrow of the sky
hearing it cough, the great plane catching
now the first dark clouds upon her wing-base, --
patching the great tear in evening mockery.

So two men waited, saw the third dead face,
and wondered when the wind would let them die.

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End

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