

Just Write

Gloucester County Library System

Logan Township Branch

Writers' Group Selections

Volume 7, Issue 4

October 2018

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Missing My Mocking Bird

In Loving memory of Robert "Rib" Glocker

April 7th, 2018

Your wings were soft feathers wiping away my tears
The tone of your whistle brought me comfort, never anytime for fears
So when the skies turned grey and the weather turned wary
You fluttered away to a safe place, one less scary.
Every summer I waited for your arrival, with comfort in my mind
My little mocking bird came swooping into whisk my troubles behind.
The summer spent adventuring around with nothing but a care
I had my little mocking bird nothing bad would dare.
But this last summer something was not okay
Your tune was weak, as if you had nothing to say
My little mocking bird did not have its song.
I pleaded with it to tell me what's wrong?
"Is there anything I can do?"
I had to help my little mocking bird, "oh please anything but you."
As summer came to a close your feathers turned grey
The tune you sang was nothing like before, bleak and with dismay.
As the last ray of summer shone I held you in my small sad hands
"Please my little mocking bird, come back to me in our safe summer lands"
You spread your wings and fluttered goodbye,
My little mocking bird could never lie,

I watched you fly away into the sunshine.
You left me with a sad tone I will never forget,
That summer I lost my little mocking bird with nothing but regret.
I hold our memories close to my heart
Nothing, no one can ever tear that apart.
Years later and I still listen for your chime,
Every breath, every whisper, every breeze I know I'll hear it in due time.
The song you gave to me I'll pass on through the line.
My Grandfathers mocking bird will always come back and shine.
-Gabrielle Glocker

"All The Fear That's In Me"

I fear that I won't be able to find happiness without you,

That love will never find me again—

That I'll spend the rest of my days alone,

Alone with my fears and self-doubt.

I'm afraid of the unknown and the uncertain—

Terrified of what the future will bring.

I fear the dark water closing over me,

Submerging my head in icy darkness—

Choking and drowning beneath the waves,

My body lost without a trace.

I fear busy, crowded highways,

Where cars whiz by on every side,

So close that one slip of the wheel could be my demise.

I am afraid of change and what it may bring,

But I am also afraid to stay the same.

I'm fearful of the truth hidden behind your lies,

Too scared to hear what you really want to say.

But most of all,

I'm afraid of falling for someone like you again—

I think that's what I fear the most.

- Shelby Carlton

“Time Is No Friend Of Mine”

Woke up late again,
Rushing, rushing, rushing—
Gotta get ready for work.
Time is running out,
The clock is ticking—
Counting down the seconds and minutes.
Late for work again,
Time is against me—
It flies by faster every day.
The alarm sounds,
Gotta get ready for church—
Don't be late!
Hurry, hurry, hurry—
The clock is ticking too fast—
Time is already up.
Late for church again,
Time is no friend of mine.
Wake up, wake up—
Gotta get ready for a wedding.

Put on a dress and a smile,
Look pretty for the pictures—
The clock is ticking,
The wedding is already over—
A new day has arrived.
Time marches on—
Gotta get ready for a funeral.
The seconds and minutes fly by,
Tick, tick, tick—
Faster, faster, faster.
Another day is already here,
Another life gone,
Another life begins—
Time is running out,
Counting down the days—
I fear the end is near—
Time is no friend of mine.

- Shelby Carlton

“Unchanging”

Still stuck in the same old rut,
Thinking of you when I shouldn't be—
Lost without a map.
I'm looking for something I cannot find,
Haunted by dreams I can't remember—
Trapped in old familiar places,
Filled with memories I can never seem to forget.
I can't escape the memory of your presence,
Still stuck here in this same old place.
It seems I'll always be missing you—
Some things never change.
I don't know what I'm still looking for,
But I know I haven't found it yet.
I think I'll probably be searching forever,
Stuck in this same old rut—
Lingering here in this place,
Filled with familiar faces I can never seem to forget.
Haunted by dreams I can't remember,

Thinking of you at the wrong time—

Lost without a map to guide me.

It seems I'll always be missing you—

Some things never change.

- Shelby Carlton

“Wise’s Gardeners” Save Petersburg: June 15, 1864

Conclusion

By Ben Carlton

Union General William “Baldy” Smith saw Battery 5 as key to breaching the Confederate defenses. An imposing redan, this earthwork formed a salient 600 yards in advance of the main line of trenches to provide enfilade fire on attacking infantry. This was exactly what the Virginia battery of Captain Nat Sturdivant had been doing throughout the interminably long day of 15 June, raking the field with his four guns. Smith’s Corps struck Batteries 5, 6, 7, and also Battery 11 farther down the line, simultaneously. Battery 5, the most imposing earthwork, was the first to fall as the 117th New York Volunteers charged through an undefended ravine that Smith had discovered during his reconnaissance, and made their way to the rear of the battery. At first, in the gathering darkness, the Rebels thought their long-awaited reinforcements had arrived and held their fire. Realizing their mistake, Companies A and G of the 26th Virginia Infantry fired a volley that momentarily staggered the New Yorkers. But when the 117th recovered and returned a sharp volley of their own into the rear of the earthwork, Lieutenant Colonel James Council rushed out to surrender his sword to the nearest Yankee officer, and the Rebel defenders threw down their arms.

At the same time the New York troops were pouring through the breach in the rear of the works, a handful of the 13th New Hampshire Infantry were scrambling up the steep slope that formed the front of Battery 5, pulling themselves up by grabbing onto handfuls of grass. Planting the national colors on the parapet, the Yankees demanded the surrender of the battery. Sturdivant had held his fire as Federal skirmishers swarmed forward, saving his ammunition for an attack by the main battle line that never came. He is said to have exclaimed, “Here are my guns double-shotted for infantry, and all of us captured by a _____ Yankee skirmish line!”

Just as a nearly three-mile wide section of the Confederate line gave way to the Federal onslaught, General Beauregard arrived on the field from his Swift Creek headquarters to take command of the crumbling defenses. He would write after the battle, “Thinned out and exhausted as they were, General Wise’s heroic forces resisted still....” In fact, over on the Rebel left, some of Wise’s men still clung tenaciously to Batteries 1 and 2. Lieutenant Smith, an artilleryman stationed at Battery 3, wrote that when the line gave way to his right, “We fell back to Battery No. 2 where we halted and held the enemy in check.... I had a very narrow escape from the explosion of a shell after I left the Battery.”

Many of the casualties in Wise's Brigade "were shot through the head, being entrenched in the ditch, their heads the only part of the body exposed." The Colonel of the 34th Virginia, Randolph Harrison, was severely wounded in the neck and carried to the rear. Some of Wise's men were killed, allegedly after they tried to surrender. A Federal soldier of the 117th New York described how the African American troops of Hinks' command had charged the Rebels yelling, "Remember Fort Pillow!", and had to be restrained from killing the prisoners. Chaplain Wiatt recorded in his diary, "Some of our men were knocked in the head and bayoneted in the rifle pits it is reported, and by Negroes too." Private James Fleming of the 26th regiment remembered that the "foreign," German-speaking Yankee soldier who captured him "was beastly drunk and killed a man by my side after he had surrendered."

With casualties mounting, total disaster was about to descend upon the Confederates when the arrival of the 59th Virginia of Wise's Brigade from their former position north of the Appomattox River served to "arrest the retreat of the line on the left." As darkness fell, the vanguard of Hoke's Division also arrived, hopping off the cars at the station to form up in the streets of Petersburg, where they witnessed some of Wise's demoralized men "pouring into the town...some hatless, some shoeless, and nearly all without guns."

With the arrival of reinforcements, Beauregard began to establish a new line along Harrison's Creek, a short distance from the captured section of earthworks. The rebels spent the remainder of the night of 15 – 16 June entrenching, many using only "bayonets, tin cans and plates" to dig in. Beauregard later conceded that at this critical juncture in the fighting – it was 9:00 pm – Petersburg was at the mercy of the Unionists. A wide section of the original Confederate line was breached, and General Hancock's II Corps had just arrived to bolster Smith's exhausted command. But General Smith did not want to hazard a night attack over unfamiliar terrain, despite a bright full moon. Smith decided to wait until the light of day to renew his assault, confident that having carried a large section of the earthworks, he already held the key to Petersburg.

Although the federals still held a great numerical advantage over the Confederates, Smith's opportunity was lost. For the next two days, the defenders would grimly hold on until General Lee's battle-hardened veterans would finally arrive to man the trenches on 18 June, and the opportunity to take Petersburg by storm was lost.

Back on 15 June Private Russell had predicted "that our Batteries would fall by night." Batteries 3 through 7 had indeed been overrun by the Federals, but Wise's Brigade had fought with uncommon stubbornness despite a disparity in numbers fully seven to one. Wise's men continued to fight desperately on 17 and 18 June, sustaining serious casualties that included Colonel Page, mortally wounded through the body as he rode down the line to give an order. Field command of the brigade passed to Colonel Goode of the 34th Virginia.

The much-maligned General Wise had performed admirably on 15 June, riding from one threatened sector to another to encourage his men, until relieved by General Beauregard and sent into Petersburg to orchestrate the arrival and placement of reinforcements. Standing and fighting alone on 15 June 1864, Wise's Brigade had extended the life of the Confederacy another ten months. Surely, Wise's Brigade no longer deserved to be called, "Wise's Gardeners."

Just Write

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