

## DEATH IN THE JUNGLE

*Sanford Sternlicht*

So long ago,  
the small, khaki-clad man,  
his crooked piston-calves  
pumping madly,  
jumped through the hoop of fire  
that framed the smoke-filled cave,  
and stumbled blindly in  
the charred and trampled grass.  
He wore a cloak of flame  
and a crown of burning hair.  
A bird-like screech escaped  
the half-face and the piece of lip,  
winding around my body  
like a coil of barbwire.  
Mechanically, my young  
and well-taught arms  
raised the carbine shoulder high  
and squeezed a drop of death  
into the tropic air.  
My brown fantastic fell  
into a pile of smoking suet,  
and from the time  
I stepped over that burning lump of fat  
till now,  
I never asked the simple question,  
why?