

## WHY?

"Why?" called loudly and ringing, a cool daring voice of youth. "Why?" echoed in open alto tones from the hillside; crowned in living alders, maples and cottonwood, which shook themselves in non-committal green, not respecting the demanding call. Echoes spread and grew long ridges in the hay field, until sweeping waves rounded it into an uneasy sea of dissent, which muttered constantly without raising a word in direct answer.

The boy stood still and naked at the edge of the field. A roadway gravelled deep into his feet – his brown, skinny body shaking in tension; hands clenched tightly to his sides, afraid to loosen. The fists jerked forwards in a spasm that vaulted his body towards the grasses, to drown in the tumultuous sweep. He raced the waves in ungainly fits of leaping and stumbling, through waist high grasses. The cool wind bathed his ears and neck while his fair hair twisted back and lost itself from his face.

Half way through the stretch of almost wilderness, he froze - chest heaving, shoulders rising and falling in quick time. He gathered all remaining breath towards a tight shrill scream which vomited from his mouth like a battle cry; "Why?"

Dark eyes spun towards grey sky demons, which bore ominously down upon the sun, to collapse it into sudden shade. Goose pimples collected upon him with a shuddering clasp. The far horizon, which topped the near hillside, captured his darting glance. Mountains that once had lain pasted clear on a blue sky, were shrunken under the heaviness of clouds and faded to a blue-grey

The hayfield heaved and retched in the strengthening wind, and he ran again – chasing a dead sun, which filled his head with burning dreams until his thoughts expanded to explode him into air. In a long moment, exhaustion claimed him. He fell panting upon the cool bedding, his head throbbing wildly.

His ears, neck, arms and belly echoed his heartbeats. Staring upwards at the thickening masses in the sky, he sensed a deep and distant rolling that curled out of its centre to cut the pounding behind his eyes. It sliced the drumming in his ears with two words that shook the fields and hills in a rapid crescendo, to end in cold silence.

The succession of stillness terrified him no less than the thundering voice that had directed itself so powerfully into him – claiming him.

As he laid there, words repeated and gathered in his throbbing vessels and the tears of his eyes - "*WHY NOT?*"