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Sitting On Cannon Square When Young

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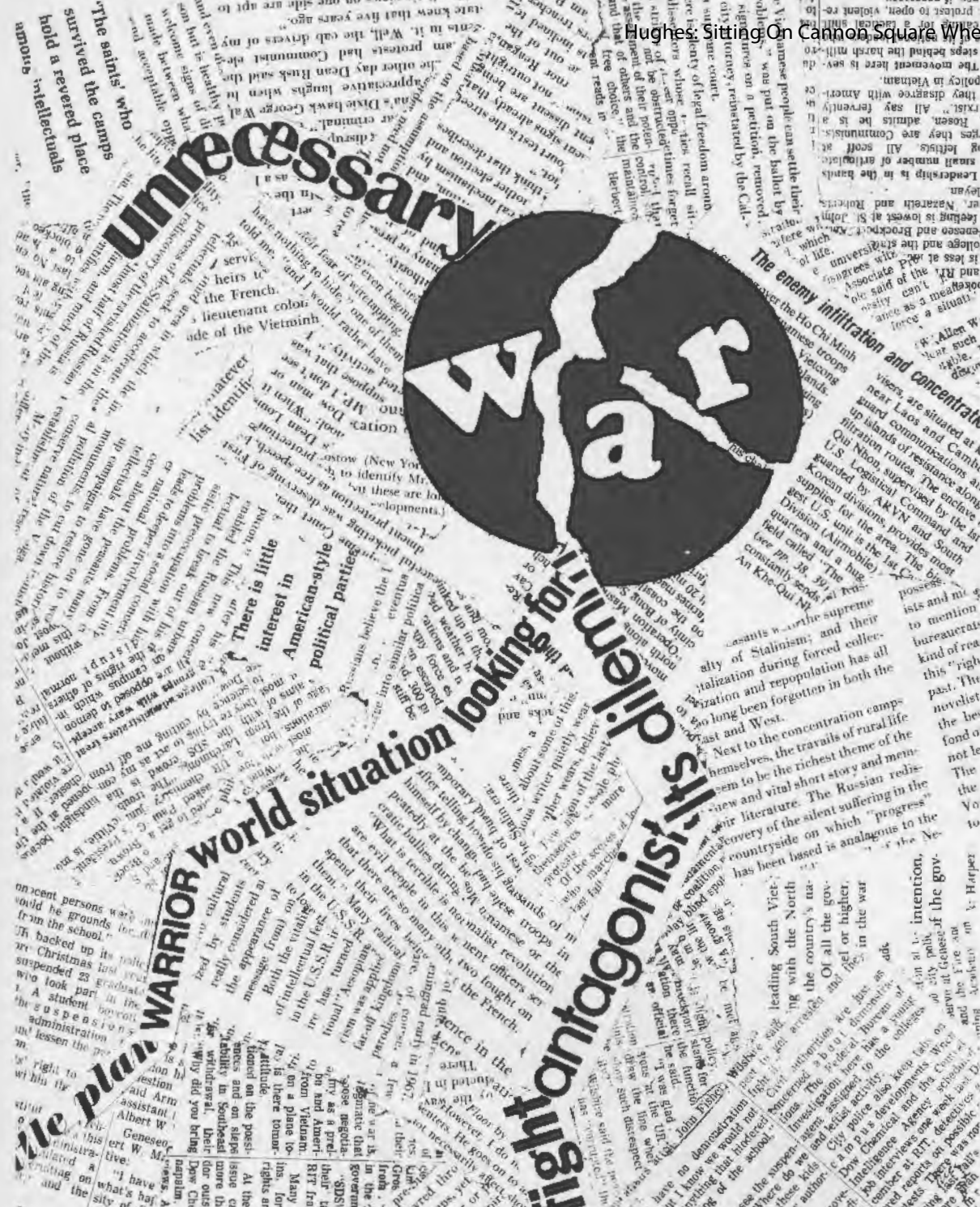
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Sitting On Cannon Square When Young

Cover Page Footnote

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SITTING ON CANNON SQUARE WHEN YOUNG

We are all turning khaki green
from washing our clothes in red cross puddles
from sitting on cannon square when young
and smashing scientific pacemakers
with memorial mounds of chocolate cement

We are all turning khaki green
from cutting naked army mess lines
from playing taps on civilian coat hangers
and thinking soldiers are only stunt men
in summer reruns of gunsmoke

We are all turning khaki green
from an undeclared state of kill
from an uncashed G I bill
and sweating alcoholic history
in antiseptic volumes of suburban libraries

We are all turning khaki green
from pulling dead toes of coagulated votes
from singeing the ganglion of conscience
and cooling our tired feet
in a bucket of programed poker cards

We warm our hands in our armpits
waking up stung from a wet dream of peace
asking with our dark eyes
to the G I Joe
when his black hand will freeze the air

We warm our hands in our armpits
staring in horror through reflecting windows
asking with our dark eyes
to the G I Joe
when he will send his soggy package of care

We warm our hands in our armpits
we gather our shrinking skin
we wait
we wait on the complacent rattle of natural causes
we wait for the homecoming of a wasted generation
we wait for generals to melt their stars
and recast a cannon plaque to
: his reign was mild
All war hero museums
should be treated as jealous concubines
and drowned in ten cent comic books

THOMAS HUGHES



JOE RUFFINO

FOR TOM WAY

KILLED VIETNAM, OCTOBER '67

JIM MAYS

The spoken
and unspoken "whys"
will not be answered . . .

To men
death is never *timely* . . .

In battle . . . and violent . . .
and paling the full flush of youth,
it abhors the sensitive,
ridicules the statesman
oppresses the philosopher
strains the theologian
confounds the scientist,
mocks the smiling promise
of a youthtime given to lights,
stifles with all-engulfing darkness
a youthtime given to lights
. . . and joy . . . and hope

And yet
how better bear
the burden of penultimate despair
than summon Him
whose death seized ultimate hope,
whose symbols all
proclaim
that death's not all
nor life . . . here . . .

To Him
death is never
untimely!