

A SHOWER OF FROGS: A WORLD WAR II MEMOIR

William Jaspar Stigall, Jr. © 2001 Vantage Press, New York 269 p.

A Shower of Frogs is about a soldier who volunteered for the Army of the United States in 1942. Shakespeare, Aeschylus, and Stephen Vincent Benét lightened the ugliness of southern camps, North African bivouacs, and Italian beaches. An Irish girl in English uniform brightened days in Ballymena, Leicester and London while he trained, retrained, and prepared for landings in Normandy and Holland. Three fellow prisoners in German stalags helped to keep hope alive in spite of hunger, cold, and hatreds. Fifty-five years after V-E Day, he does not talk about his war. He does not forget. Nor does the reader.

As we were driving back from Kairouan one afternoon, a dark cloud came over the camp and it rained water and hundreds of tadpoles, which squirmed around on the hood and floor of my jeep. We thought it very odd, being pelted by small living forms from the sky, each about half the size of the head of a pencil. By then we were so used to the strange sights of Tunisia that only later, when my honesty was questioned, when it was thought that there was upon me "the spell of Arabia" or that I had a Moses complex, only then did I search for the scientific explanation for this "plague" of frogs. Water, in being blown up from the ponds, also sucked the infinitely small tadpole. Fierce winds, common in Tunisia, blew both water and tadpoles some distance and eventually dropped the living matter with the rain. – page 29