

John Gilgun

War Economy

There's a corner of the universe
where it's December 1944 forever,
and bags of Aroostook potatoes
piled on the platform
of a train station on Broadway
in Malden, Massachusetts,
and a green Model A Ford
rattling over the railroad tracks
with an A sticker on the windshield,
because gasoline is rationed
along with butter and rubber.
And in a diner shaped like a streetcar
a woman in blue coveralls (my mother)
eating a Western sandwich—
fried egg with onion on Bond bread with mayo—
and bacon grease bubbling on the grill
and the smell of potent black coffee
and *The Java Jive* on the juke box
and the window misted over
and Devil Dogs and Scrap the Jap
And Don't Talk Chum, Chew Topp's Gum.
And *Follow the Boys* at the Orpheum
With George Raft, Vera Zorina and Sophie Tucker.

And the bodies of broken soldiers
piled up behind a bombed church in Bastogne,
covered with a tarpaulin which flaps in the wind,
frost on fingers, eyes, lips, hair, toes,
all in leather combat boots because this
was not meant to be a winter campaign.

And a green Model A Ford rattling over the tracks
with an A sticker on the windshield
because gas is rationed.

John Gilgun is the author of five books: *Everything That Has Been Shall Be Again*, *The Dooley Poems*, *Music I Never Dreamed Of*, *From The Inside Out*, and *Your Buddy Misses You*.