

When Great Dogs Fight
Melvin B. Tolson

He came from a dead-end world of under breed,
A mongrel in his look and in his deed.

His head sagged lower than his spine, his jaws
Spooned wretchedly, his timid little claws
Were gnarls. A fear lurked in his rheumy eye,
When dwarfing pedigrees paraded by.

Often he saw the bulldog, arrogant and grim,
Beside the formidable mastiff; and sight of them
Devouring chunks of meat with juices red
Needled pangs of hunger in his belly and head.

Sometimes he whimpered at the ponderous gate
Until regal growls shook the estate;
Then he would scurry up the avenue,
Singeing the hedges with his buttercup hue.

The spool of luckless days unwound, and then
The izzard cur, accurst of dogs and men,
Heard yelps of rage beyond the iron fence
And saw the jaws and claws of violence.

He padded through the gate that leaned ajar,
Maneuvered toward the slashing arcs of war,
Then pounced upon the bone; and winging feet
Bore him into the refuge of the street.

A sphinx haunts every day and every zone:
When great dogs fight, the small dog gets the bone.

Success Is Counted Sweetest
By Emily Dickinson

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host
Who took the Flag today
Can tell the definition
So clear of victory

As he defeated – dying –
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Burst agonized and clear!