

1973

Belgium

Ann Reddig

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope>



Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

Reddig, Ann (1973) "Belgium," *Calliope (1954-2001)*: Vol. 1973 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol1973/iss1/10>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Calliope (1954-2001) by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.

Ann Reddig

BELGIUM

Mama and Papa watched us from the house
while we played in limited space.
Papa, his beret pushed back on his
balding wrinkled head, smoked
with his thumb and forefinger
quickly inhaling
forcing his arm downward.
Mama, all floured white from daily
bread, played ahead of each
of our moves with jerking movements
and worried looks.
Kept silent by window barriers.

Wartime evenings passed on in bed.
Saving wax and candles.
Canceling wartime talk.

We in a bed upstairs next to Grandmama,
played silent army.
Helped by sound from near-by Ghent.
Army sounds belting us to sleep

Glass ate us awake as the floor caved in
and the roof flew and we saw but couldn't hear.
I knew I cried.
I knew I screamed till mama found me underneath
a rafter and a wall.
And Brother sat in the middle of the floor staring
and Papa lay on top of what should have been Grandmama,
and we should have been inside
but we could see
Ghent burning.

Our farmlands grew army tents, green trucks and men.
We learned to speak English
begging for rides and for chewing gum.
Our wine given freely, all the food we could spare,

and they gave us cigarettes.
Protection.
And
orphans.