



11-15-2004

My Boy at Shiloh

J. Chester Johnson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

 Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Johnson, J. Chester (2004) "My Boy at Shiloh," *Westview*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 12.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol24/iss1/12>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.



My Boy at Shiloh

by J. Chester Johnson

*(our visit to Hardin County four
generations after the battle of 1862)*

A light flickers, and down into the boy
A photo darkens and casts a shade
On a May field in Tennessee.

For into sunken fables a diluvial echo
Takes the boy, hardly posed on print
Against a stone fence at Shiloh.

It wasn't for uniforms or famous killings
That conceit rang so loudly, but rather
One memory he couldn't own.

"I just wish to plot a crime I didn't see,"
As he stood on legends plowing deep,
The dead keeping secret the story.

"My family broken by it, a town pinched."
But he'll do better, for a survivor puts
Distance between bouts of pain.

Still, I fear, 'til he sees dead flesh mulch
Or his dank grip upon a dread shiv,
The shade gladly stays his own.

