

A Modern Breakfast

Robert Luker

As I awoke this morning to the melodious strains of music from my clock-radio and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee in the electric coffee pot attached to the radio, I thought about you, Mr. Thoreau, and how you would feel if you could come and have breakfast with me. It would be a simple, easy-to-prepare meal. First there will be orange juice—take the can out of the freezer, add water, and it is finished. Now, we'll put the ham and eggs in the electric skillet and set the dial; the dial will regulate the heat. This will give us enough time to put two pieces of bread—"the staff of life"—into the toaster, not the oven. Now all there is to be done is to pour the coffee and juice, take the ham and eggs out of the skillet, and we are ready to eat. Yes, that is breakfast today, Mr. Thoreau. By the way, I appreciate your sense of economical values, so I am presenting you with an itemized bill for our "simple" breakfast.

1 can frozen orange juice	\$.20
4 eggs at 60c per dozen	.20
2 slices of ham	1.00
4 slices of bread	.04
4 pats of butter	.10
Total	<hr/> \$1.54

Although this sum might have fed you for weeks at Walden, in our modern age it is considered quite an inexpensive meal.

Time and Death

Robert J. Schrenker

THE time and place were August 24, 1955, and the military reservation of the First Armored Division, site of simulated combat exercises. I was a green private fresh from basic training, participating in preparatory exercise "Whirlwind," forerunner to gigantic "Exercise Sagebrush." That night a soldier was killed, ignominiously crushed into the dirt by a tank. He was a member of my company who had breathed, thought, cursed, and sweated just a moment before, but his life was snuffed out in an instant. The tank stopped, the company slowed, but the division moved on, absorbing the pause with its gelatin-like flexibility. The body was methodically removed from the field and evacuated to the rear. The tank shifted gears and the company resumed speed. In a few moments the formation was intact, with only an inert corpse in the rear to prove that it had ever been impaired. I do not even remember the name of the soldier, although we talked about him that night and again the following day. We thought of him often in the next week. We mentioned his name now and then. In a month he was