

OPPORTUNITY

*This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.*

*A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword or keener steel -
That blue blade that the king's son bears - but this
Blunt thing!" - he snapped and flung it from his hand.
And lowering crept away and left the field.*

*Then came the king's son, wounded, sore beset,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout*

*Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.*

by Edward R. Sill