Khaki Line

Rose Marie Edie*

*Iowa State College

Copyright ©1944 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
Khaki Line

Rose Marie Edie

Abstract

I push open the heavy door of the A.S.T.P. kitchen- Bacon crackles in fat, Kettles bang, I smell bread browning. A sharp buzz— The weary crew armed with spatulas and spoons Awaits the swaying line of khaki...
Khaki Line
Rose Marie Edie

I push open the heavy door of the A.S.T.P. kitchen—
Bacon crackles in fat,
Kettles bang,
I smell bread browning.
A sharp buzz—
The weary crew armed with spatulas and spoons
Awaits the swaying line of khaki.

I stab each pat of butter from tinkling ice water.
Khaki and aluminum trays . . .
Aluminum trays and khaki . . .
"Hello, sunshine . . ."
Faces . . . people . . .
"Wish me good luck, I've got a Physics test today."
Clinking milk bottles . . .
Khaki and aluminum trays . . .
Aluminum trays and khaki . . .

I watch Karen pour steaming "cream of wheat"
Into squares of whiteness and sparkle.
Dip . . . pour . . . like white sand running through an hour glass
Her arms go up . . . down . . . up
In rhythm with the aluminum trays sliding past.
Her faded blue eyes watch each dipper gush cereal.
She stands as stiffly as her starched white apron.
Her lips are still as the line moves.

"No butter this morning, thanks."

Khaki and aluminum trays . . .
Aluminum trays and khaki . . .

"How about a smile to build up the morale?"
Shuffling feet . . . chatter . . .
I watch the tall Captain—he stands erect by the door . . .
“I see you’ve abolished your isolationist stand.” (to the boy who
had scarlet fever a week ago).
He smiles, there is a twinkle in his eye.
“Oh, yes, sir,” the boy laughs and moves on with the surging
khaki.

To another . . .
“How is your calculus coming by now, Davis?”
“Just fine, sir, just fine.”

Aluminum trays and khaki . . .
Khaki and aluminum trays . . .

To another . . .
“Johnson, you’re not eating much this morning—what’s up?”
“I don’t feel so good, sir.”

A call “AT EASE!”
The roar of voices,
Clanging of silver and dishes stops
As the Captain walks into the dining room.
He snaps off a list of men to report to him, then . . .
“AT REST, men!”
Once more,
Cups knocking on the table,
Voices, silver banging against aluminum . . .

Closed Gate
Vera Cook

Dull eyes, vacant.
Blue, gray, brown.
Crossed.
Rolling.
Twitching.