

By James Collins.

Death stalks us every day.

Only God keeps death away.

November duck hunt before sunrise.

Frank and I walked the bank of a river.

No boat, no dog, we did it all.

Lifejacket worn in memory of riptide

that washed me out to sea.

Full-length waders, shotgun, six decoys,

knapsack, three boxes of shells, thermos bottle.

Plus camouflage jacket equals 40 pounds of gear.

"Don't walk on different colored ground," said Frank.

Words they say come from God: I promptly forgot.

I walked 300 yards , stepped on a yellow patch.

The ground opened and swallowed me.

Surprise! Death sprung a trap

Laughter from Frank but not from me as I sank in quicksand.

It felt like death had my legs in his arms and was pulling me down.

I kicked in response, and sank quickly.

Threw the empty gun to the side. Shrugged off the knapsack.

Threw the six decoys to the side and sank further.

Then the lifejacket kicked in and added buoyancy.

I was up to my chest in water and sand, but stopped sinking.

Frank looked for poles or branches; nothing on the riverbank.

Each decoy had a 10 foot rope ending in a 2 pound anchor.

Frank threw the anchors one at a time while he held the decoys.

Six ropes twisted, I held; Frank pulled; the quicksand resisted.

I outweighed Frank by 50 pounds but he was strong.

As he pulled, I lay back, the lifejacket supported me.

My feet slowly rose. We overcame the sinking.

A sucking sound announced release of the vacuum holding the waders.

Woosssh, a sound never to be forgotten.

I slipped out of the hole on my back and side.

The quicksand receded in the six-foot hole. A placid puddle remained.

If not for the lifejacket and Frank, the only remnant would have been

my broad brimmed camouflage hat floating on the quicksand

God smiled, gave me another day.

Death shrugged and walked away

Twenty six times Death has attacked

Death keeps trying. God keeps denying.

Death is patient, but so am I

However, he will finally win for we all must die.

THE END (EVENTUALLY)