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**Ambrose Bierce – “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (page 582)**

Ambrose Bierce…

* Nicknamed “Bitter Bierce”; full of scorn for the illusions of human beings
* Was fascinated by warfare and the cruel joke it plays on humanity
* Disappeared in Mexico in 1913 after going there to fight in the Mexican Revolution; left a note saying “If you hear of my being stood up against a Mexican stone wall and shot to rags please know that I think it a pretty good way to depart this life. It beats old age, disease, or falling down the cellar stairs.”
* Famous for writing *The Devil’s Dictionary*, a collection of cynical definitions to common words:
  + war, a by-product of the arts of peace
  + peace, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting
  + cynic, a person who sees things as they are, not as they ought to be
  + cat, a [creature] provided by nature to be kicked when things go wrong
  + dog, a kind of … Diety designed to catch the overflow … of the world’s worship
  + dentist, a [magician] who, while putting metal in your mouth, pulls coins out of your pocket

**“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (582)**

1. Where and when does the story take place?

2. What other people are with the man? What are they doing?

3. What is happening to the man?

4. On page 585, what does the protagonist hear that sounds like “a blacksmith’s hammer upon the anvil”?

5. In Part II of the story, we learn how Farquhar ended up in his situation. What happened?

6. How does Farquhar get rid of the noose?

7. How does he feel while in the water?

8. In what ways are his sense more acute (keenly aware) of his surroundings?

9. What is Farquhar’s destination?

10. Once you have finished the story, reread the last two paragraphs. What are Farquhar’s physical symptoms in lines 261-266? What has happened?