

The following poem was preserved in a journal kept by former prisoner of war, Corman Bean, during his internment at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, Germany. The author remains anonymous, but the best we can find out is that "LIGHTNINGS IN THE SKY" was written in 1943 by a B-17 gunner in North Africa.

LIGHTNINGS IN THE SKY

**Oh, Hedy Lamarr is a beautiful gal,
And Madeleine Carroll is, too.
But you'll find if you'll query, a much different theory
Among the men of a bomber crew.
For the loveliest thing of which one could sing
(This side of the Heavenly Gates)
Is no blonde or brunette of the Hollywood set -
But an escort of P-38s.**

**Yes, in days that have passed, when the tables were massed
With glasses of Scotch or champagne,
It's quite true that the sight was a thing to delight
Us, intent upon feeling no pain.
But no longer the same, nowadays, in this game,
When we head north from Messina Straits,
Take your sparkling wine - every time just make mine
An escort of P-38s.**

**Byron, Shelley or Keats ran a dozen dead heats,
Describing the view from the hills,
Of the valleys in May when the winds gently sway
an army of bright daffodils.
Take the daffodils, Byron - the wild flowers, Shelly -
Yours is the myrtle, Friend Keats;
Just reserve me those cuties - American Beauties -
An escort of P-38s.**

**Sure, we're braver than hell; on the ground all is swell -
In the air it's a different story:
As we sweat out our track through the fighters and flak;
We're willing to split up the glory.
Well, they wouldn't reject us, so Heaven protect us
And, until all this shooting abates,
Give us courage to fight 'em and - one other item -
An escort of P-38s.**

(T/Sgt Robert H. Bryson, B-17 Radio Operator)