

## Charlie At the Ban

after "Casey At the Bat",  
by Keith L. Arnold, hka

It looked extremely rocky  
for the young TD that day;  
The time stood two to four,  
with yet another round to play.  
And with Straus paired with Small,  
and Ed Downs still the same,  
A pallor wreathed the features  
of the holder of the game.

A grumbling few got up to go,  
leaving there the rest,  
Groaning round three might never end.  
Quipping without jest,  
A perennial two kyu said,  
"I'll sooner be 6 Dan,  
Then see the start of round four,  
with Charlie at the ban."

For Dick Gray was paired with Charlie,  
so club pride was at stake.  
Charles entered byo yomi,  
his san ren sei still to make.  
The director had the hall till eight,  
but as the games went on,  
There seemed little chance of finishing,  
with Charlie at the ban.

But Haskell resigned early,  
to the wonderment of all,  
And the ever-careful Downs  
allowed his flag to fall.  
Now with one game remaining,  
a murmur could be heard,  
"Let's pair round four, and start,  
if a winner can be inferred."

Soon from the gathered 6 Dans,  
there came a joyous call,  
Charlie could win the game,  
and in no time at all.  
"If he simply makes this cut,  
Gray's group is simply gone."  
All eyes were fixed on Charlie  
as he sat before the ban.

There was ease in Charlie's manner,  
seemingly glued in place,  
"Budweiser" on his sweatshirt,  
and a scowl upon his face.  
He glanced at his clock calmly,  
and as the clock clicked on,  
No stranger in the crowd could doubt,  
'twas Charlie at the ban.

All players watching, you could cut  
the tension with a knife,  
Looking for the next move,  
or at least some sign of life.  
Soon every double-digit kyu,  
knew the way to play,  
A cut in sente followed by  
sure death in a hane.

And now a slow and steady hand  
reaches into the bowl,  
And Charlie selects his weapon,  
smooth and round, black as coal.  
Right over the vital point,  
his hand, a moment wandered,  
Then the stone clicked down  
10 lines away, a precious chance squandered.

From the watchers gathered 'round,  
there went up a muffled roar,  
Curious kyus questioned confused dans,  
"What'd he play that for?"  
The move was forcing, true,  
but playable any day,  
A fidgety 4 Dan frowned aloud,  
"No points, but in sente."

With a smile of ignorant bliss,  
Charlie watched Gray respond,  
Suddenly, his frown returned,  
yes, at last the problem found!  
With concentration unparalleled,  
he scans the board alertly,  
Then plays another forcing move,  
filling in his own liberty.

""No!" cried the kyu kibitzer,  
but after a second look,  
The young TD was smiling,  
despite the time Gray took,  
He knew Dick saw the crisis,  
and when his shell clicked in place,  
If Charlie did not cut now,  
Gray would win the capturing race.

Now Charlie's flag was hanging,  
it was time to meet his fate,  
He studied the crucial semeai,  
and he reached for the slate,  
And in the eye of Charlie,  
a glimmer of triumph shown,  
And now the air is shattered  
by the force of Charlie's stone.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land,  
tesujis are shining bright,  
Josekis are followed somewhere,  
and somewhere stones are light,  
And somewhere players are passing,  
wrapping up a game of Go,  
But there is no joy for the young TD,  
mighty Charlie has made Ko.