Civil War references

for “The Portent” -- John Brown (May 9, 1800 – December 2, 1859) was an American abolitionist who played a major part in the history of slavery in the United States leading up to the American Civil War. Brown took part in the violence during the Bleeding Kansas crisis, but his most famous action was his leadership of the raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (in modern-day West Virginia). He planned to arm local slaves, and then head South, hoping an all-out revolution would follow. The killings that followed, Brown's subsequent capture by Robert E. Lee, his trial, and execution by hanging are generally considered an important part of the origins of the Civil War.

for “Apathy and Enthusiasm” – Sumter: Fort Sumter, located in Charleston, South Carolina, harbor, was named after General Thomas Sumter. However, the fort is best known as the site where the shots initiating the American Civil War were fired, at the Battle of Fort Sumter.

for “The March into Virginia” -- Battle at Manassas (First and Second): The First Battle of Bull Run, referred to as the First Battle of Manassas in the South, (July 21, 1861), was the first major land battle of the American Civil War. (The difference in the two names results from the difference in naming conventions used by each side in the war. Confederates named battles for the nearest town or city; the Union named battles for the nearest river or body of water.) The battle resulted in a humiliating rout of Union forces and a disorderly retreat, bringing the battle to a halt. The elite of nearby Washington, D.C., expecting an easy Union victory, had come out to watch the battle and picnic. When the Union Army was driven back, the roads back to Washington were blocked by panicked civilians attempting to flee in their carriages. Further confusion ensued when an artillery shell fell on a carriage, blocking the main road north. Although the Confederates would probably have won the war had they marched on Washington during the rout, they were too exhausted to follow through with a pursuit of the enemy.

for “Ball’s Bluff” -- Battle of Ball’s Bluff, also known as the Battle of Harrison’s Landing or the Battle of Leesburg, took place on October 21, 1861, in Loudoun County, Virginia, as part of Major General George B. McClellan's operations in northern Virginia during the American Civil War. It was the second largest battle of the Eastern Theater in 1861. Although a relatively small battle, it was another badly organized, embarrassing loss for the North – soldiers were sent to attack a Confederate encampment which turned out not to be there; when a company from Mississippi did show up they managed to shoot or drive many of the Union soldiers over the steep bank (the “bluff” in question). A sitting senator (Colonel Baker) was killed, and some of the dead bodies floated as far downriver as Washington.

for “A Utilitarian View” -- USS Monitor was an ironclad warship of the United States Navy. She is most famous for her participation in the first-ever naval battle between two ironclad warships, the Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862 during the American Civil War, in which Monitor fought the ironclad Virginia of the Confederate States Navy. Before her, nearly all warships were made primarily of wood. After the battle of Hampton Roads, the design of ships and the nature of naval warfare changed dramatically. Virginia attacked the Union blockading squadron in Hampton Roads, Virginia, on March 8, 1862, destroying USS Cumberland and USS Congress and forcing USS Minnesota aground before withdrawing. That
night, Monitor, under command of Lt. John L. Worden, arrived under tow from Brooklyn. When Virginia returned the next day, March 9, 1862, to finish off Minnesota and the rest of the U.S. fleet, Monitor sailed forth to stop her. The ironclads fought for about four hours, neither one sinking or seriously damaging the other. Although the battle was essentially a draw, it was a tactical victory for Monitor. Virginia had failed in her mission to destroy the U.S. fleet and raise the blockade, while Monitor succeeded in defending the fleet. The ironclads never again fought each other.

For “Stonewall Jackson” – The Battle of Chancellorsville: The Battle of Chancellorsville was a major battle of the American Civil War in 1863. Called "Lee's perfect battle," it pitted U.S. Major General Joseph Hooker's Army of the Potomac against an army half its size, Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Lee's audacity and Hooker's timid performance in combat combined to result in a significant and embarrassing Union defeat. The Chancellorsville campaign began with the crossing of the Rappahannock River by the Union army on the morning of April 27, 1863. Heavy fighting began on May 1 and did not end until the Union forces retreated across the river on the night of May 5–6. About 30,000 men died.

For “The House-top” – the New York City Draft Riots: In July 1863, the Federal Government instituted a draft to replenish the Union forces, shrunken from high casualities and desertions. Because black men weren’t yet considered “citizens,” they were not part of the draft, and wealthy white men could avoid it by paying a fee or hiring a substitute. So the brunt of the draft fell on white working class men, and in many cities in the North attempts to conduct the draft were met with mob violence. This was true in New York City, where the rioting began as resistance to the draft but turned into a determined attempt to exterminate black New Yorkers (they were blamed for the draft’s existence). Over four days in July, it was the worst riot in American history, and it killed at least 108 people. The riot ended only when Federal troops, fresh from fighting the Battle of Gettysburg, were called into New York and put a stop to the violence. Melville lived in Brooklyn at the time and watch from across the river on a roof-top.

The Battle of Shiloh, also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, was a major battle in the American Civil War, fought April 6–7, 1862, in southwestern Tennessee. The two day battle of Shiloh, the costliest in U.S. history up to that time, resulted in the defeat of the Confederate army force and frustration of Johnston's plans to prevent the joining of the two Union armies in Tennessee. A total of 23,746 men were killed, wounded, captured, or missing, including the irreplaceable Johnston himself. Both sides were shocked at the carnage. Little did they know that three more years of such bloodshed remained in the war and that eight larger and bloodier battles were yet to come.

other references
Erebus: According to Greek mythology, is a primordial god, personification of darkness, offspring of Chaos alone. According to some later legends, Erebus was part of Hades, the underworld. It was where the dead had to pass immediately after dying. After Charon ferried them across the river Acheron, they entered Tartarus, the underworld proper. Erebus was often used as a synonym for Hades, the god.
**Moloch**: representing Hebrew מֹלֹך mlk is either the name of a god or the name of a particular kind of sacrifice associated historically with Phoenician and related cultures in north Africa and the Levant.

**reverie**: A loose or irregular train of thought occurring in musing or mediation; deep musing; daydream. "Rapt in nameless reveries." --Tennyson.

**requiem**: A mass said or sung for the repose of a departed soul.

**Sirius**: is the brightest star in the nighttime sky and is located in the constellation Canis Major. It is often nicknamed the "Dog Star".

**Draco**: was the first law scribe of ancient Athens, Greece. The laws, transcribed in 621 BC when he was archon eponymous, were particularly harsh, as the death penalty was the punishment for even minor offenses. Hence expressions such as "draconian punishment" or "draconian laws", and more generally, "draconian measures" (far-reaching). Draco was first to codify Athenian law; contrary to popular belief, however, he was not the creator of these laws.