American Modernism largely began with World War I; it was unlike any previous war, and it resulted in a rebirth of American literature with Ezra Pound’s call to “make it new.” The war experience permeated literature; anxiety, fear, and death are common themes found in Modernism. The Influenza epidemic, The Great Depression, WWII, and atomic warfare also defined this new era. Life could not return to the way it was, and the literature of the time captured this despair. Modern authors embraced Pound’s challenge to revise literature to fit this age of destruction. The new modernist style needed to be created because the traditional literary structures could not express the modern sensibility. Pound’s means for “making it new” was through a movement he coined as Imagism. Imagism strove to only present concrete images to the reader without offering explicit interpretation, thus giving the reader the chance to derive his/her own meaning. Traditional formats for poetry and prose would no longer suffice; no author commentary should interrupt the concrete visual. Yet modern authors believed that they had a message that could help save humanity from the despair of this age; they presented this message in the format of images. Modernists used precise visuals to persuade readers to embrace their solution to modern angst, and this solution was altruism – showing kindness to others out of an acceptance of one’s own personal responsibility and accountability in tumultuous times. It was altruism that would provide meaning to the modern sense of nothingness. Repeatedly, modernists reveal images of altruism – the presented image is portrayed in such a way that it becomes a searing visual for the reader. Many times modern authors led readers up to this visual with the portrayal of countless violent, despairing, or indifferent images, so that the one glaring visual of altruism stands forth as a lasting, persuasive message for the reader. The modern alternative to violence and desolation offered reminds readers of their own responsibility towards others even today. The memorable images of modern altruism still persuade.