

It was HOT.

If it is not hot
it is not Vietnam they're talking about
or else, they worked in an air conditioned office.

When it is hot, even now,
I think about it
Like I always think about it.
The Hot was different
 than here.
Hot, wet, dirty, but different.

In many ways I loved it.
It was life, heightened, like
 never before, or since.
In less than 365
 to spend so much time
 being bored, doing nothing,
and still to do so much
 building, walking, sleeping
 in paddies, drinking, screwing,
 flying, shooting, and getting
 shot, watching the dead and wounded unloaded, saddling up
 to ride, walk, dig. Tired like
 never, carousing, collapsing, dreaming,
 owning hammers, bullets, fragmentation
 devices and wounds. Hustling, trading,
 stealing from each other and burning their
 little hamlets, shooting their ducks, and
 them. It was war to make color TV old fashioned.

I don't know if I would want
 someone I loved
 to go.
They would never be the same.
But we would share something
 others don't.

It was my biggest year.
All other life and death is so so.
It would have been my greatest
If only
 We had not died
 And replaced the parts
 We left behind
With something we cannot explain.

Allen Hinman
August 1985
allenhinman@aol.com

For All Dead Soldiers
(Memorial Day 1986)

My war is over now.

Some soldiers in my unit
and some in theirs
Died that day.
None of us were old enough
or learned enough
To understand about governments
and causes.

Some of us needed the money.
Some of us believed.
Most of us were drafted.
All of us learned fear.
All of us were hot and tired and dirty.
Most of us did our best.
Some of us were killed.

Rambo was not there.
Neither were most Senators.
Or Presidents. Generals flew above.
War does not come with movie soundtracks.
Flags are left at home.
Where we wanted to return.

Some of us died.
Young.
Pray for us.

Allen Hinman
allenhinman@aol.com

War Story

If we had met tomorrow,
 Pregnant Gook Lady
Or maybe yesterday
Maybe we would be giving you C rations
 Treating your infections
 or helping you deliver.

But tonight,
 Pregnant Gook Lady
Somebody shot at us
from near you.
We shot back
 And while others wail you will bleed
 to death
 Pregnant Gook Lady.

Because nobody is
 going in the dark
 to get shot
 where you are bleeding.

That's War.
 Dead Gook Lady.

Allen Hinman
February 1989
allenhinman@aol.com

Old Soldier

It is comforting
to see someone and feel
“he too got shot at in Vietnam.”

There is a look
 detached
 hungry
 all knowing
 understanding the senselessness of it all.

But, most curious,
we old soldiers
of decades ago
 may be bald
 grey
 worn
 and lined
and yet, most curious,
there is a youth
that is settled into those
who were shot at.

Allen Hinman
June 1987
Allenhinman@aol.com

The Awesome, The Awful, and The Ugly

Bullets are reality
Not bar fight
and gas station stickup
bullets
But automatic weapon's
rifle company's
and even a good squad's
Bullets are reality
That cut through all other bullshit.

Mines and booby traps
are not as real
Unless, you feel their percussion
and fragments
near you
As they turn someone else inside out.

I do not know about artillery or bombs
Never being in their incoming.

But bullets
impacting left, right, in front
and behind you
are the awesome, awful, and ugly reality.

Allen Hinman
Veteran's Day 1985
Allenhinman@aol.com