

## FLASHBACKS

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What the hell am I doing here?  
I've never been this far from home...  
And it's just not the distance; not just the miles,  
But the isolation, and the fear of being alone.

Jesus! I'm lonely already, and the plane just landed.  
As I spend in-country, my very first night,  
I miss Rebecca, my family, my friends, my delight.

Just look at this place! Observe these poor people!  
They have nothing to die for, nor reason to fight.  
The sunset is gorgeous, and fills the evening sky...  
Fills the mind with wonder;  
Makes the spirit ask "why?"...  
Has this conflict not ended, or why it even began;  
Why the Devil has invaded and ravished  
This beautiful land.

Children want their pictures taken;  
Photos they'll never see...  
And this one barefoot angel, ran up and kissed *me!*  
Just like that! - By sweet innocence, branded!  
What else could I do but smile  
And give her the chocolate she wanted?

It's hard, still, to imagine myself here  
Amidst this pain and this war.  
I pray for peace, smoke pot,  
And drink Red Tiger beer.

And I'm torn between the loneliness,  
The helplessness, and the fear.  
Being only 19 years old; a child,  
And nobody I know, and no one I love, near.

While short-timers are packing up for 'the World',  
Leaving, to go home, finally, and at last!  
And some leave too early,  
their lives suddenly stilled;  
Loved ones home being given the news,  
That by a VC mortar, their son had been killed.

To what cause, and to what purpose  
Shall they attribute his loss?  
To what honor or glory shall his memory be tied?  
And how many others like *our* boy  
Have suffered and died?

To what God in which Heaven, their prayers should  
they bring?  
What comfort a flag-draped coffin,  
Or the medals, or the gun-salutes give?  
For the man and the boy;  
For his dream of freedom to live?

And does the sound of 'Taps' comfort his family,  
Or his best friend,  
When corrupt politicians his life ordered to end?

And with a year left to go on my tour,  
Having made the commitment and opened the door;  
Begin to fight a war within the war,  
A struggle within myself to pretend,  
That the reason for our being here,  
Was freedom to defend.

The sweet smell of incense, the bomb fires burning;  
A study in contrast in a land for peace, yearning.  
The innocence lost with nothing to gain,  
I can't solve the riddle; can't kill the pain.

I am ordered to serve like the others,  
But unlike me,  
They go to fight, and to suffer,  
And to die in the rain.

I saw what I witnessed; know what I've seen,  
'Was for the marihuana I smoked,  
It seemed just like a bad dream.

Until a pilot reported an errant target strike,  
I was safe in an underground bunker;  
Well away from the fight.

When the reports that came in, is when we knew  
well,  
Of *our* part in the trauma, of the drama in hell.  
We could not deny it; it was already done.  
Napalm hit a school house,  
and forty children were gone.

My heart reached out to those perished young ones  
And we tried undoing the wrong;  
To un-sing our part in the harmony  
Of death's ugly song.

When a child of age eight had died in my arms,  
I could do nothing to save him;  
The Lord's plan from the start.  
When the last of his life oozed into my hands,  
It was hard to stop crying, as his eyes touched my  
heart.

I could never forget, nor ever make amends,  
For the war that was started,  
And that seemed never to end.  
And the pain of that loss, I had buried, somehow,  
And I could never let go of that day, until now.

I was soon to be Stateside,  
and in my short-timer's pride,  
I had put the memory, the grieving,  
the hurt, to the side.

The pain it had caused me, I always managed to hide  
Even from those who had loved me,  
And to whom I told the stories in stride.

In my work, I excelled,  
and the DEROS dream had come true,  
For the training I had, it was Red, White, and Blue.  
'Till the traumas I carried,  
that had been long shut away  
Arose in a torrent, suddenly, one day.

The ones I loved most dearly, I hurt, and hurt badly,  
With the acts that had followed good intentions,  
sadly.  
The mystery solved, but for the unanswered question.

One day came the answer  
After thirty years that I'd been home,  
And I finally made peace with my God  
For my part in the drama that inflicted the trauma,  
And was forgiven by grace for what *I* had done.



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*"Land Of Childhood's Fears"*  
by:  
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