**Letters**

(c) 2013 by Don Poss

What's it really like my dear?

Is it as boring as they say?

We *are* winning…

So the news says…

But what I'm not quite sure what.

When we met in Hawaii…

You seemed not to be the same.

**Highest Mountain**(c) 2014 by Don Poss

A living mountain knows the marvelous view of the world as seen from the top...but never knows the joyous sight from the valley of its peak afloat like an island sailing on clouds. A veteran considers every other veteran as brave and deserving of honors. Yet considers himself unworthy of rewards for deeds others call worthy. Why is it so? The mountain...is worthy...the valley bathed in its shadow...neither would 'be' without each other. Don Poss Mar 10, 2014

**Dreams**(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Come and go, and sometimes not at all.

Dreams often linger in Twilight glow of haze and puzzlement.

Dreams of color stark as life melt with morning sun…like roses.

Rain, and sandman departed are as dreams spring soft,  
Or like a horny toad  
Or reliving young deaths./

Dreams can be hopeful or remorsefully replay old loses.

And there are demons in My rear view mirror.

Yet there are dreams of tomorrow…and hope.

And I look forward to Dreams chained to my past set free.

**Aborted Dreams**(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Gods come calling

Cross them not

Endless night;

Dawn shall not come for me

No glory in death

No peace in life

What then brings rebirth

Between heaven and earth?

And no one cares for the song

Of an old veteran this side

Of The Wall.

**Indifference**(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Shrapnel through forest trees; leafs falling like a heavy green snow.

Seconds of hell reduced the sapling to jagged trunk bleeding-splintered saps. Life soldiers lost.

**Minstrel**

(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Sing no ballads when we are gone

Nothing you could harmonize

Could right the wrong for

Words you cursed us as we came home,

We still Remember...

Time, words, nor sweet song can erase that day.

**Chase Omega**  
(c) 2013 by Don Poss

How infinite is God...

There at the beginning

The creation

The breath of life to Adam

The flood

Parting of the sea

And all through the eyes of the living in real time,

He watched mountains wither to valleys and depress into oceans.

Saw countless stars blaze alive and named them one by one

and flame to void.

Generations lived and died

Like brief flickers of light...a wavering vapor

Eternal is the I Am.

Not enough to live the life

Without sharing what life you are living--an eternal relationship with God.

**End of The Road***(Life's little April Fool’s joke...)*(c) April 1, 2014 by, Don Poss

Inevitable end has arrived and heart beats no more; alas, spirit has left the building.

No *near death event*, but real death and all that was now rots toward oblivion's indifference.

Seems not to be the great *'The End'* I always expected  
But something is where no-thing should be

And I'm puzzled to see what will happen.

No blinding white light  
No scorching fire  
Just the quiet of where ever whatever I am  
  
Waiting has put to rest the lie I believed

And waiting is the new fear.

Pox upon that, the waiting blight,  
And why must I endure that smell?

Who's He?

**Fading Glory**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

New guy in Nam would live forever.

Mortars came in

Bodies went out

A guy could get killed here.

Friends in body bags

Were flown away.

Letters from family's told

Of their graves.

Wounded and dead

All too near. There's no way

I will ever make it out of here.

Time passed and attacks

Got worse. Defend the Fortress...

Take a ride in a Hearst.

100 days left...I got my

Short Calendar. Just maybe...

Maybe, I'll get out of here.

Last day in Nam

I gave away my stuff

Got on the Freedom Bird

Flew out of the tough.

Home a week

No one understands

What war is like in that

Foreign Nam land.

No one

Lives

Forever.

**Dreams Can't Hurt Me**

*(My World of Dreams)*

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

True. Dreams are mostly shadows of long ago stuff.  
Why does it mattered if they are ugly and rough?

Yes I saw the bodies then,

And have touched their names in stone.

What vision does my iD seek to paint so living and painful each night?

I hear Blackie bark and know he is trying to warn me awake. Too late.

I rewrite dream's ending, and tell myself it was only a B movie,

And lie the lies my heart knows are a desperate denial once more.

If dreams are only dreams, then why have I wakened, the sight still fading upon the lenses to my soul and I set upright drenched in sweat?

Dreams can't hurt me... I reassure my reeling mind, and flip damp pillow to rest my head on something drier than the last dream, and wonder if I bought the lies.

And pray there is no sequel to this night's dream, that is not real, cannot hurt my bod,  
but can break my soul.

**◄ Isaiah 40:27 ►**  
Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens   
Who created all these?  
  
He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name because of his great power and mighty strength not one of them is missing.

**A Waste**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

They lost their lives today

Having thrown naivety away.

**The Weary Victor**(c) 2014, by Don Poss

The battlefield was cratered and scorched barren;  
nothing would grow there for a generation.  
  
The warrior lifted his eyes to the heavens in search of something not of this battle.  
A flock of birds winged lazily, indifferent to what men had wrought against men below.

*Oh to be a bird...and wing away from forever memories of this day,* the weary victor prayed.  
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**Fifty Years Ago Today**  
(c) July 2015, by Don Poss

I landed in Vietnam  
Fifty years ago today.  
To think I volunteered for this dung hole in the sun.

At certain hours of the day,  
I'll admit there was beauty

The enemy made their noise; each side killed their due  
We had H&I (harassment & interdiction)   
They had H&H (heat & humidity)  
  
The good things were the bonds made in war  
The bad was everything else  
And when it was time to leave  
I kicked Vietnam's dust from my feet.

When I think of Nam today  
There are new roads, buildings,  
And bridges. Our airbases are their international airports.  
Forced reeducation was many South Vietnamese’s fate.  
Failing to fight for freedom  
Was their pearly gate.  
And now...It's too late.

Fifty years have passed  
This very day  
The cost was too high  
58,000 graves

I have touched friends' names  
On the black marble wall  
I hope somehow they  
Are waiting for us all.

**Homecoming Home**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Twenty days till deros then I'm coming home, but Charlie tossed a metal bone and ruined my day, my soul to roam.

Fiancée that will never be,

Babies never conceived,

No grand kids,

No future?

My world took an altered course.

I wonder how it

Might have been,

Laughter, joy, trials, life,

If I had the homecoming and

Lived to see the victory day

Outside this box of tin?

**Scrambled Eggs**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

I write about things I could not change.

The worst did not happen to me, as it did to JB.  
True they tried more than once, and more than once came real close.

Why does it matter...most are long dead ghosts  
And when I lay myself down to sleep,  
Memories of that year too often repeat.

By morning the last flare gutters out…

And the long night ...  
twilight sleep at best, has stolen away the little hope for some rest.

Jun 2014. DP  
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**Somewhere Over There**

(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Shrapnel through forest trees; leafs falling like a heavy green snow.

Seconds of hell reduced the sapling to jagged trunk bleeding sap

**Mirage**

(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Rank bodies quietly drifting with current on narrowing waters dark brown from mountain's descent. Tangle brush and foliage stand as dark gauntlets in warning and as silent witnesses.   
Banyan roots dip to drink from black stained still-inlets of goo...and  
water-spiders skate drunkenly, skittering a predator's dance upon insect morsels mummified**.  
Blood-sucking** leeches gorge themselves black in unexpected blood-rich waters, ignorant of approaching waterfall.  
Four legged beasts padded silently along the root-knotted shore, hoping to join the feast no one was invited to.  
None of the guests wondered who had provided the banquet, which ideology or offense had placed them on the wrong end of the food-chain.

**Mind Games**

(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Dreamscome and go

And sometimes not at all

Dreams often linger in

Twilight glow of

Haze and puzzlement

Dreams of color

Stark as life

Melt with morning sun

Like roses. Rain, and sandman departed

Dreams can be soft

Or like a horny toad

Or reliving young deaths

Dreams can be hopeful

Or replaying old loses

And there are demons in

My rear view mirror

Yet there are dreams of

Tomorrow

And I look forward to

Dreams chained to my past

set free

**Still There**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

I have known The Lord as my Savior since age eleven. I will soon be 70. I am grateful for His presence in my life, and for the doors He has opened and closed to me. I have four brothers: one in Florida, one in Idaho, one in Las Vegas, and one in heaven. All of us living on earth are veterans; two of us still fighting the night war from Vietnam.  
I wonder if there are some things that “Sorry” won’t cut it with God.

**Fade Away**

Haight-Ashbury; heart of unquenchable darkness

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Sing no ballads when we veterans are gone

Nothing you could harmonize

Could right the wrongs, for

Words you cursed we still

Remember...

Neither time nor lyrical words can wish away  
the ugly caustic biting-hate you hurtled—the  
day I returned home from Vietnam.

**Shadows of Light**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

A living mountain knows the marvelous view of the world as seen from the top...but never knows the joyous sight from the sight from the valley of its peak afloat like an island sailing on clouds.

A veteran considers every other veteran as brave and deserving of honors. Yet considers himself unworthy of rewards for deeds others call worthy.

Why is it so? The mountain...is worthy...the valley bathed in its shadow...neither would 'be' without each other.

Don Poss

Mar 10, 2014

**Homecoming Home**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Twenty days till deros then I'm coming home, but Charlie tossed a metal bone And ruined my day Destroyed my life

Fiancée that will never be mine

Babies never conceived

No grand kids

No future

The world took an altered

Course

I wonder how it

Might have been

If I had the homecoming and

Lived to see the victory day

Outside this box of tin?

**Dream a Little Sole Dream of Me**

(c) 2014 by, Don Poss

I think of you...dream of you...

Back in the world...on the other side.

It is day time where you are

And night time where I am

If you looked down through 8,000 miles with X-ray blue eyes you would think the string of flares firing the low clouds meant I am in upside down hell...

You would be right

I 'see' you walking...and I take a step... my soles against yours...the pressure inviting.

Silly...but somehow comforting... This nightmare's game of you

One hundred days a wake up.

**Alpha**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

How infinite is God...

There at the beginning

The creation

The breath of life to Adam

The flood

Parting of the sea

And all through the eyes of the living in real time, He watched mountains wither to valleys and depress into oceans.

Saw countless stars blaze alive and named them one by one.

Generations lived and died

Like brief flickers of light...a wavering vapor

Eternal is the I Am.

Not enough to live the life

Without sharing what life you are living--an eternal relationship with God awaits the few...

Judgment is his jest.

Earthly death His passion.  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Brother against Brother**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

So great the carnage of our civil war.., Nearly two centuries would pass before such reckless thoughts could not summarily be dismissed for our future.

Pray it not be so.

Pray we will be a nation of one once more.

**Firelight**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Burning Clouds, aglow night long.

Like northern lights dancing their song... a fearsome carouseled ring-around-the-Rosie -- snatch the golden ring if you can -- orbiting the air base.

A necklace of fired Pearl-light...

White-hot, blood-red. like

the face of a monster clock:

At 0100, the brilliant go-to-the-light that erases all else at end of life ...

At 2300... the faintest crackling sparks of life fade forever in wispy gray cinders, ghosting along.

Angry fire demons skate amuck

With blade tracks of fire sparking amber and red-yellow like talons raking within heavy clouds.

Roiling black catapulted balls of white light upward and fire a momentary universal big-bang-flare that nova blinding scars, like a welder's arc without mask, and zig a jagged zag toward earth and imprint an image on your soul.

A light mirage... flare light shimmering life's distortions before the fortress's pearly gates...

and judgment.

**Lights Out**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

A New Dream:

Vietnam

Agent Orange

Blind and

Deaf

Locked in the Endless Void

Where dreams of Vietnam

Play out unending reality

Of light shadows of memories

Without ceasefire.

And forty years have passed

No day nor night a Viking heaven loops to Warriors daily battle unto death and Victors feast the night All reborn at mind's dawn to hack And slay till enemies are vanquished...Valhalla.

Reality before blindness is

Now the dream

Reality before deafness

Now the ghost-songs and wind-voices of

Who, What,

When and Where.

Then Alzheimer melts the brain

He does not know who he was or is

And does not care

Nor remember the insanity of the last Valhalla's dreams only to replay it anew into eon

Like an eyeless fish wafting tail

Gliding in the black bottomless trench of the deepest abyss

Not wondering...

Just existing the moment

Cumulatively, this veteran's

Existence foretells a play of madness amok and hidden fear there will never be a merciful lights out Nor coin amongst the crumbled dust of a forgotten grave.

**Where are You Son?**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Family searched the fertile field where strangers told their son was buried.

Weathered wooden stakes, askew from trampling feet and those still unburied awaiting eternal rest.

Still, they plodded trying to decipher scratches of tattered paper

Praying for a few remaining letters of his name...to no avail.

Where are you son? Lord tell us that we might take him home....

A gust sept a wisp of dust across the field. Silence ruled the moment.

**Yesterday’s Shadow**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Aging veteran. One hand on cane the other on tombstone.

Too old to knell or do other than salute, he remembered his youthful comrade.

His mind's eye as fading as his eyesight in his twilight Yet he could not forget what happened, T'was like yesterday

He could not speak for fear the tears would forever flow and prayed a silent prayer

Hallowed earth reclaim the dust that once was young and alive...

His soul summoned away these many decades ago.   
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**Yesterday's Dreams**

(Recycled)

(c) 2014 Don Poss

Fifty years of yesterday's dreams

Why are they still so real?

Sharp

Colorful

Violent

Subtle

Deceptive

Alternate-realities

As it was

As it is.

Replay after replay

Recycled-reruns

Same-same

Yet different

Uncertainty is all that remains:

Then, Warriors' shadows dancing

Now, Shadows' warriors jousting in my mind.

However it plays out it

Plays out the same.

A single night without dreaming

Is that too much to ask?

Is it crazy to dream dreams of

A distant past? Or is it only crazy if they last and last?

No one understood

Asking questions and

Checking boxes,

No one really cared

They could never understand

My difference, thinking it was merely... indifference

Indifferent dreams strong enough

To last

The reality of an over powerful

Past,

Seeking refuge in wake of day...

Why am I so angry? Will it ever pass?

Forgive the warriors. no longer enemies.

**Another Life**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

A parallel universe ago

In another life

Another world

Young men went to war

Young men died, and killed

This life

Decades removed

Old men dream dreams

Of that younger life

Pain is a wonderful thing

Tells doctors what's wrong

With the body

Dreams like pain

Are windows to the brain.  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Sugarplum Dreams**and Dragon Tales  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
I Mourn for innocent youthful Dreams lost,  
Unencumbered by lies,  
Unscarred by rewritten history,  
Unbound by wretched lingering memories that did not die with those perished in war and gleefully ruminate and regurgitate shadows of my past torment and distress with revealed secrets once safely boxed away now fled from empty chambers through opened wounds, and plague-havoc desiring to wreck my sovereign mind.

I fear the night more than ever, and mourn the loss of fading child dreams and slumber.  
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**Flatbed Truck**(c) 2014, by Don Poss

In the mid 80' we lived in Mira Loma and had horses. Usually I would drive to the feed and grain and pick up several bales of hay, but for some reason I called to have the truck deliver hay one day.

The driver drove through the double gate in to the backyard and paddock area and dropped off the hay. When he was done I told him I would get the gate for him so he could drive on through. He drove through the back which was like a dirt road and went through the gate. As he passed I could see into the truck bed which had wooden slats and bales of hay in the back and I looked down and there was a heavy line of leaked oil and I just burst into tears. The driver was watching in his mirror and thought he had ran over my foot or something and stopped. I couldn't speak and wasn't sure what was wrong with me and then it just clicked about the gate and trucks and bodies at Da Nang. I never had hay delivered again.  
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**My Lie to Me Worked**  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss

My helmet and uniform I last wore in Vietnam hangs ready in my closet.

When dreams permission comes I can switch posts with JB. Things will be different then.

**Out of Darkness**(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Flies the might of the abyss

Consumes the light of peace

Without remorse

Politicians decide when other men will die, and when to walk away at their whim.  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Out of Gas**(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Last January I was gassing up my wife's car and had just removed the nozzle from the tank when a man suddenly walked up to me and thrust a flyer in my face with a photo of a child and he said the girl was dead and he asked me for money to pay for her funeral. I lost it and jabbed the nozzle at him and screamed at him to get the F away from me. He ran. My heart was hammering and I got into my car and just started crying. I was furious and didn't know why. Then in my mind it was like seeing the dead baby in Vietnam as if it were happening along with the man and his dead girl photo at the same time. Someone was rapping on my car window and asking if I was okay. I'm not sure what the thought was happening. I drove off and went home and sat in the car in the garage for some time, until Kathy opened the car door and asked if I was okay, I didn't tell her what happened. I just went in the house and went to bed. I was okay in the morning, and it scared me to think about my reaction and what it meant and if I might be losing my mind. Months later I told my friend John Webster who told me I needed to talk to someone at the VA. This was the second time something like this happened.  
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**Ambushed**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

I lay still as if dead

Behind the rice paddy berm

Praying they would believe I was a goner.

Hours had passed

When I heard them at last

Whispering in their gibberish.

They poked and prodded

Jabbed and kicked but I

lay face down I'm the water.

I hoped they would buy it

Through a long straw I did breath

Counting on their not wanting to get slimy.

It's true I was convincing

In my own pool of blood

And I would have believed my own con.

But there's always one own didn't get the memo, and I heard him splashing my way.

He flipped me face up and there I bobbed with that straw in my mouth like a hick.

Nice try I thought...an A for effort,

But that commie weren't born yesterday.

He pinched my nose till I opened my eyes and index-fingered a Shush.

With a wink he departed with my gold ring, and he left someone's Zippo in my pocket.

I rolled over

Hoping no one was looking

and as I thought I might live,

Felt bayonet in my back

and too quickly I did sink.

Well I gave it a try

No time left to cry

Night falls faster when

you're dying.  
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**Neighborhood Assassin**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

I lay in wait for that special date

When I will hasten you to your maker.

Pain free it'll be,

Me, you'll never see.

Your head will explode

Your guts will implode

And your bowls will make quite a mess like a colostomy bag air burst

Your hotdog lunch will provide a great brunch for a cockroach family of three.

Have a nice Day...

Well, morning at least :)

PS:  *Sorry'bout the mess...*  
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Shadows  
© 2014, by Don Poss

Young once

And brave

And life was an adventure before us

Do you remember

No fat

No fear

No concerns for each other

Mortars and Rockets

We no longer ran from

Just another day

And then it wasn't

The first nightmare

Endless FIGMO countdown

The welcome home

That didn't come

The healing yet to be

Politicians betrayed us

And walked away

It was only 58,000 sent to

An early grave.

And we

Old before our time

And youth a lost memory  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**No Time To Cry**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Time to weep has come and gone

Tears no longer flow

Glory

Morals

Honor and

Mercy

Amongst the first to go

Hard is war

Courage ebbs and flows like the tide.

A hero one moment

Pissed pants the next

Courage a word for fools

Coward a word before first-battle

Life is worthless as a

Wisp of smoke that dissipates in

A gale.

No time to rest

No time to flee

No time to bury your brothers

Charging in to battle singing…

Lies of old men crowing for votes

Prayers murmured on the run

Mostly for yourself or

For morning's haste or

The fall of night

Wordless retreat

Voice lost in terror

I'll run till the carnage is silent

Fields of valor soon left behind

For now there's no time to cry.  
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**Before I Wake**

(c) 2914, by Don Poss

Fields of Rose

Clouds of White

Starry host twinkles reborn

This very night.

**Horses. Dogs. and Veterans**

(War's End)

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Horses served our horse soldier veterans, like majestic steeds of the wind.

War Dogs saved thousands in battle...for the love of their handler friend.

Wars end in victory or defeat, where amnesty delays the next round.

The vets came home and the animals were betrayed, while waiting for a kind hand.

They shot the horses and killed the dogs, rather than bring them back.

Veterans are loathed or despised by some Presidents, respected and loved by others. But nothing changes at war's end...

Old veterans are denied promised benefits, till most are dead or aging. Then nothing is too good and help re-promised, if old hands can grab the ring.

Veterans, like the animals,

are soon battered and discarded.

Promises, horses, dogs and veterans...all are soon forgotten.

For the spirits of veterans and noble war beasts, America has much to atone.

**The Good Old Days**  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
We went to war  
John Wayne as a role model in a snazzy beret.  
  
We were Young and Fearless,  
When first in-country,  
and life was an adventure before us  
  
But no one needed rescued and everyone had a hand out  
  
Do you remember   
No fear  
No fat  
No dying allowed  
John Wayne in black & white,  
Zulu in Technicolor, and  
Godzilla invited Japanese for dinner.  
  
Elvis was drafted and so was Cassius Clay who refused to serve, embraced the Nation of Islam, said he was Muhammad Ali, and betrayed America.  
  
Our war was Cinemascope with killer 3D and   
Mortars and Rockets aplenty  
so common  
We no longer ran from the tube...  
Just another day.  
  
And then it wasn't.  
  
The first nightmare,  
Endless FIGMO countdown,  
Stateside BS that always fell  
away for lack of interest,  
Friends DEROS’d in a box  
Jane Fonda on Radio Hanoi  
Stars & Stripes printing between the lines.  
  
Freedom Bird aloft.  
  
The welcome home  
That didn't come  
The healing yet to be  
  
Politicians betrayed us pointing fingers and never to  
Blame,  
They hated the war  
They hated us   
They hated not getting re-elected.  
Johnson bugged out  
Nixon's Plan wasn't   
Washington failed America  
And walked away...sending  
58,000 to early graves.   
Kissinger’s [In]Decent Interval bought Jimmy Carter time to silly-putty the nation's wounds with 17% inflation and Welcomed Home the Draft Dodger Cowards who died a thousand deaths before deserting their country and slithering to Canada.  
Everyone loathed the military so the VA remained on the back burner...  
G.I.s were betrayed, per government custom, like war-dogs and horses...abandoned to twist ever so slowly in the wind.  
  
And we,  
Old before our time,  
Our youth but a lost memory  
Never more to be the good old days before  
Vietnam.

**Before The Dawn**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Before The Dawn

The other side of the river awaits.

The stars chase the night.

Those who lived slink away.

The mind records it all.

Sound: was that a whisper.

Silhoiuete: enemy or innocent.

Scent: something is dead.

Touch: eye stinging sweat.

The mad-minute is coming

and judgment’s sword is raised.

**Night Sweats**

(c) 2014 Don Poss

Imprisoned thoughts restrained within my inner darkness, a place I do not linger, spills forth, at times, into outer darkness, and threatens madness.

Mortars Krump.

Artillery booms.

The earth quakes from distant bombing.

The night glows Amber from drifting sizzling flares.

Green and red dots crisscross in the night, silently; someone else's war.

There are fewer of us in the quiet.

I awake with a start; my wife pats my hand.

I go into the kitchen for coffee, leaving the house dark, and listen for danger until it is safe. The doors and windows are secure. I set with my coffee, on the couch, eyes adjusted to street lights' glow through windows. Hours 'til dawn, I cannot sleep.

I do not want to sleep.

The hallway is black, and I look away slightly so my peripheral vision can see movement, if it is there. and the walls hue a dark black-orange which seems to drift casting shadows from potential threats.

I wonder if I am dreaming.

Poem - Something to Cheer For

…

Poem

Fog fills every valley of my muddled mind

and drapes a what's-that lingering yonder unspoken question

I tell no one of the sunrise

treasured in my heart

**It's Snowing in Vietnam**

Ashes of shadows

Of battles past long faded

**Homeward Bound**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

The reunion is over...

Memories, like sustaining pleasant shadows, will last another year. Some friends will not be there when next we meet as comrades, just as once many did not return home, and will never more to stand back to back.

The puddle-hopper jet rolls smoothly into takeoff rocketing ever faster; runway markers blurring by and I think of Blackie padding along near the dangerous runway and sheltering from the typhoon winds and rains lashing indifferent to the wants of good or evil. And some thirty yards from asphalt's edge is a dark oval shape and instantly I remember the K-9 fighting-hole like bunker we covered in. When mortars rain down, the water-filled shelter was not a concern.

Wings gliding on decades of memories, as sunlight bounces across serpent streams and terraced fields of multi hues of green light and dark.

Wings of steel skip dappled clouds, as tossed memories plain rippled waters of long past dreams.

**100% PTSD**

(c) 6 Oct 2014, by Don Poss

Max dinky dau, but not set free.

Dreams still rerunning as fast as they can.

Night hours snake by riding silent strands of cirrus memories,

TJ is dead

JB is dead plus, five others

TB is dead

PN is dead

MP is in a rubber room

GE is AO'd and memories fading like whispers of his laughter mingled in Da Nang's ancient soil...still soaked with defenders' blood.

Is there no end to Vietnam's revenge?

**Still Night**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

It is a still night

The enemy is out there

His enemy is here

And we both are looking for

Someone to Kill

Blood to spill

and the night has just begun

I am locked in my own soul--

the killing has begun, and I laugh as spirits depart.

Raindrops drum upon my helmet

Souls fly away in silence looking back as their lives fade to a waste.

The battle has waned.

Dead men lay mostly covered

Others gather pools of warm rain in ghastly wounds...indifferent to any misery at all.

Where now is the enemy?

Did we win?

**I Have Seen The Rain**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

CCR nailed Vietnam when they sang mind-salvation songs.

They asked the questions we still pray for answers to, and prosed them to God.

Have You Ever Seen The Rain? And sausages words of gold... strumming strings with a pick of been-there done-that.

Wandering round within a heart of pain.

I have seen the rain...

and wonder if it will ever stop.

Off to the VA for yet another talk and merrily try to force my round head into a square check-box,

and wonder if the chosen one is there who can answer

Who'll Stop My Rain.

**Home from Nam**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Everything I touch gets busted.

All I worry ‘bout is back in the Nam.

Real friends are still humping

Not feeling close, a world away

Too many have stumbled into an early grave...like Angels that never got off the ground.

PSA...higher than a mountain.

PTSD...like a chain-gang uncuffed.

Life...just another dream of Rocket City...

A looping funeral where nobody came...rifles fired just the same.

Setting in a meadow in a box in my mind...wondering what the ghosts are doing, back in the Nam.

A firefly...swinging light bulb...string of flares fizzling in the night...

Another day down to deros back in the Nam.  
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**Forty Years and holding**

(c) 2914, by Don Poss

I called him on the phone

the rotor-dial spun slowly,

Thrilled to find the number

of a long lost I Corps friend,

Six rings...seven...

And he picked up the phone,

Hello, he said softly.

His voice older but same-same

I called his name, and said my own and asked if he remembered...

A pause so long I thought he'd hung up,

then he whispered…

Too soon...

Too soon...

and was gone.

I held the receiver to my ear,

pondering his last-words,

and lowered it into the cradle

Was it true,

What he had proclaimed?

Was it really, really,

Too soon?

How long will

Vietnam's deadly grip

Clutch the lives

of those

who served?

**Barricade**  
PTSD

(c) 2014 by Don Piss

PTSD. like a roadblock gate to life, an descends at its own choosing. Invulnerable. Indestructible. Insurmountable.

Vietnam veterans who can:

Climb over it;

Those strong enough,

crash through it;

Those still with hope,

crawl under it;

The desperate,

tunnel under;

The overwhelmed,

are defeated;

The crushed,

are still in Nam

with no hope for R&R,

Drowning in dreams of

a troubled spirit

Lost,

Lost...

And forgotten

**Cheshire Vietvet**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Tomorrow's agenda's planned

out to the second.

They want to keep me busy...

You know...idle hands and all that stuff.

I procrastinate and am always

Late...I think it drives them fruitcake.

All the shrinks think I'm the crazy,

but the janitor knows...

I'm just lazy :)

**Before The Dawn**  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
Before The Dawn, The other side of the river awaits.  
The stars chase the night.  
Those who lived slink away.  
  
The mind records it all.  
Sound: *was that a whisper?*Silhouette: enemy or innocent?  
Scent:  something is dead.  
Touch:  eye stinging sweat.  
  
The mad-minute is coming  
and judgment’s sword is raised.  
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**Before I Wake**  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
Fields of Wild Roses,  
Clouds of wispy mares  
Starry host twinkles reborn   
This very night.

And I awake…

Today is a good day ☺

**Young once  
© 2014, by Don Poss**  
  
Young once  
And brave  
And life was an adventure before us  
  
Do you remember   
No fat  
No fear  
No concerns for each other   
  
Mortars and Rockets  
We no longer ran from  
Just another day  
  
And then it wasn't  
  
The first nightmare  
Endless FIGMO countdown  
  
The welcome home  
That didn't come  
The healing yet to be  
  
Politicians betrayed us  
And walked away  
It was only 58,000 sent to  
An early grave.  
And we  
Old before our time  
And youth a lost memory  
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**No Time To Cry**  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
Time to weep has come and gone  
Tears no longer flow  
  
Glory  
Morals  
Honor and  
Mercy  
Amongst the first to go  
  
Hard is war  
Courage ebbs and flows like the tide.  
  
A hero one moment  
Wet pants the next  
Courage a word for fools  
Coward a word before first-battle  
  
Life is worthless as a  
Wisp of smoke that dissipates in  
A gale.  
  
No time to rest  
No time to flee  
No time to bury your brothers  
  
Charging in to battle singing  
Lies of old men crowing for votes  
  
Prayers murmured on the run  
Mostly for yourself or  
For morning's haste or  
The fall of night  
  
Wordless retreat  
Voice lost in terror  
I'll run till the carnage is silent  
  
Fields of valor soon left behind  
For now there's  
No time to cry.  
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**Neighborhood Assassin**(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
I lay in wait for that special date  
When I will hasten you to your maker.  
  
Pain free it'll be,  
Me, you'll never see.  
  
Your head will explode  
Your guts will implode  
And your bowls will make quite   
A site.  
  
Your hotdog lunch will provide a very nice brunch for a cockroach family of three.  
  
Have a nice Day...  
Well, morning at least :)  
  
PS:  Sorry'bout the mess...  
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**Ambushed**  
(c) 2014, by Don Poss  
  
I lay still as if dead  
Behind the rice paddy berm  
Praying they would believe I was a goner.  
  
Hours had passed  
When I heard them at last  
Whispering in their gibberish.  
  
They poked and prodded  
Jabbed and kicked but I   
lay face down I'm the water.  
  
I hoped they would buy it  
Through a long straw I did breath  
Counting on their not wanting to get slimy.  
  
It's true I was convincing  
In my own pool of blood  
And I would have believed my own con.  
  
But there's always one own didn't get the memo, and I heard him splashing my way.  
  
He flipped me face up and there I bobbed with that straw in my mouth like a hick.  
  
Nice try I thought...an A for effort,  
But that commie weren't  born yesterday.   
  
He pinched my nose till I opened my eyes and index-fingered a shush.    
  
With a wink he departed with my gold ring, and he left someone's Zippo in my pocket.  
  
I rolled over  
Hoping no one was looking  
and as I thought I might live,  
Felt bayonet in my back  
and too quickly I did sink.  
  
Well I gave it a try  
No time left to cry  
Night falls faster when  
you're dying.  
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**The Day I Died**

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

The day I died I did not go to heaven--mortars only fall upon hell.

Mortars rained down and spread their joys of steel. Others to, felt the sting and adrenalin that masks the pain; sometimes.

Some were already dead.

Some were dying.

Someone was screaming.

Some were firing...but sounded like snapping fingers.

Some were even untouched by shrapnel or tears.

One just sat and stared.

I felt the weakness and numbness to life; my blood was pulsing ever slowly away. Why is it dark so early.

Tired.

Sleepy.

Scared...but not.

Someone was shouting.

Another held something high.

Someone fell dead...I wondered why.

Wind was beating...is there a storm? And the sky spun round and bright-not-bright swirled as a merry-go-round; why are boots sticking from that poncho? Why is it beside me?

Running. What is he holding up like that? Why is he chasing me?

People bouncing me. Poking. Shouting at me. What did I do wrong. Leave me alone!

The sleep.

A nurse...why did he have to be a man...told me I was in Japan. Why...how? What happened...are they alright?

He told me what he had heard. No one I knew was there. No one who knew the answers was here.

I never saw any of them again.

He said I would live, as he walked away. I was going home...

because of the day I died.

I read their names on The Wall.

**Take My Dreams Away**  
© 2014 by, Don Poss

Other side of my world, wings that drag me through the dark

Crazy as a loony.  
Knuckle sandwich.  
I remember before

Chained to the past,  
Tail on fire,  
Sweet misery of light

Pull its wings off and fry him in a can

Brain in a jar.

Stuffed in his chest of drawers.

Farewell party and back into the bush

Give my brain a bath  
It was good enough for Jesus

Welcome to my mourning

Front toward enemy  
Open season

No bed no breakfast and the view sucks.  
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**Howls in the Night**PTSD

(c) 2014, by Don Poss

Another early morn; I lay awake

Another screaming night has passed.

My wife will sleep if I quietly stalk to the living room. It is dark, and the Dawn's yet to paint first brush of twilight on windows' shades.

The couch,

as lumpy as exposed brains, fills dark walls with images five decades removed: High Definition; 1080 pps, smell-orama; four-demon-sions; sounds muffled by tangle brush trolls competing for nibbles; birds of steel falling from the stars like falcons hunting wounded prey, as airborne beast's contrails swirled clouds glowing from super moon above; casting vague gliding silhouette-shadows that undulates over hills and black meadows, in friended search of its maker.

Dawn cleaves the night, casting living shadows of inanimate vivid memories only I can see in the dark light of the empty boxes where fright escapes roiling, and I cannot avoid. Contents littered throughout my head...waking colors too familiar, discomforting, lingering, monotonous thieves of courage...all at once taunting threats to howl another screaming night.

I wonder what the numb day will bring as I walk amongst the living?

Indifference

Intolerance

Anger from the deep, and

Scorn without cause?

Count on it.

A mind game truce...

Could that work?

To see if my sleepless addled brain would figure it out;  
as lame a quest as LBJ's impotent best efforts.

Oh look...

So soon the night approaches

No time to ruminate further,

Nor play the mind games of distraction with goal to derail the thoughts of last night's war...ready or not....

There be howls in the night and absence of light, where amber flares gutter and drool rivulets of white-hot intrusive-thought-cinders that wink out their surreal dancing parts of twilight dreams from that long ago haunting life...

that will not leave me be: a drifting mind; desperate to forget…struggling to recall…resisting sleep, cast upon meandering black-currents of huddled-umbrella shrapnel-memories...tangled...intertwined...and worst of all, a gorged-belly-roll of laughter choked by acid reflux of rotting-stress, long buried.  
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**Storms of the Night**

(c) 2014 by Don Poss

Monsoons and typhoons

And dreams of man-made storms.

At least the war has not

Denied my love of

Gentle rains and ..

There for the glory

No need to worry

The war was bigger than I.

Healing happens

For some I'm told.

PTSD is not for the weak

My wounds lay dormant

At times of its choosing

And erupt in gentle violence or ranging storms, A command performance I alone can see.

The last dream

At my last breath

The long sleep

At last.

**Ready on The Right…**

(c) 2013 by Don Poss

Nothing uglier than civil war

And war is never civil.

Shoulder to shoulder,  
their friends not abandoned

They lost their lives today

Having thrown naivety away.

**Falling Down**

Keep moving. The wolves of war are feeding tonight.

**PTSD Happily Ever Afte**r  
(c) 2015 by Don Poss  
  
PTSD will never go away; One could sooner change his DNA.

Must we forever ride the same rides; run the same gauntlets  
In life--receiving blows of tormented memories--each time knowing where the ride will plummet;  
brittle-cruel shadows of the past--intrusive...unwanted...and unable to dispel?

Yes.

Sudden unreasonable anger against those who love you...recognizing the pain caused others, but  
unable to change or stop it in mid stride: stuck in that moment again.

Daydreams...stark nightmares...scattered thoughts of decades past; as clear as yesterday...pain  
electric; a surreal-nether-world of prancing what-ifs painted in white-light and darkness: an endless overwhelming loop of sleeplessness.

Seeing their young faces...remembering snatches of conversations: sometimes, smiling...oft times not; plays out afresh in the scarred and wounded mind of this old man.

Lord, I am exhausted...broken...save me from this fright...spare me the dangers of the abyss I cannot climb out of;  
or take me home.

**Hallowed Fields of Languor**  
(c) 2015, by Don Poss

Oh distant fields where perfect meadows slumber, as battlefields in waiting. Sentinel pine trees stand guard from pasture's edge to yonder distant rolling hilltops; scent of forest on balmy breeze combs treetops where eagles survey their domain, as azure skies spill liquid amber light through lazy  
checkered cotton ball clouds, casting dappled shadows o'er gentle swaying dandelion fields dancing  
a game of tag with scampering deer to nature's song of tranquility.

Pray the battle come another day, another year. Let nature cry joy o'er this field of life...and no one  
ever apply Lincoln's immortal words to this peaceful valley: "The world will little remember what we  
say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

Let war find another field to whittle names on wooden crosses...and there be nothing for the world to remember, save this sacred valley of soft fragrant green grass...white and yellow flowers...where  
peace abides...mortal spirits are renewed...and seeds of distress never sowed nor reaped in dreadful harvest.

Heart of Darkness, Flags of Glory  
B-57 Canberra crash  
Da Nang AB,  
12 January 1966

Innocence through darkness  
and decades in between.

Forty-nine years today have passed  
and the war is more than just a dream.

I can see the bomber sliding and scraping on its nose, till the bombs blew and changed everything.

Two men died that day  
And many thought they too were goners.

All who saw it happen cannot forget, and on this date each year say a prayer for their families.

**Siren Song of War**  
PTSD (c) 2015, by Don Poss

A young man heeds the siren song of war as no other; stronger than the mating song.

My father and WWII uncles told me in war there is no adventure, glory, singing while marching,  
as movies claim: only boredom...terror...broken spirits and men...and death, and nothing is ever the same. They did not tell me not to heed the call.

I put away my toy soldiers, enlisted, and volunteered for Vietnam; it didn't mattered that as honor  
guard for bodies returned from that land I saw them lowered, forever, into ground.

I saw you take a round and fall;  
someone dragged you to cover and yelled for help.  
He knew what to do and started pumping your chest; blood gushed;  
and told me to breath deep breaths into your mouth; blood-air spouted from your wound.

The enemy fled  
And then you were dead  
My breath still in your lungs.

I watched the medevac fly you away...  
I'll never forget till my dying day.

Forty years later I wake in the night  
still tasting your coppery metallic blood and  
Wondering if I killed you by not doing it right;  
Tell me, please tell me if I did right or wrong,  
That I might sleep one restful night.