

Homeless Veteran

(c) 2021 Oct 13, by Don Poss

A thin gaunt frame he squats to the ground,
his bedroll is his thighs... with
head draped over knees.

A shopping cart snug beside him;
leans tight to his living room wall, another
lick of a food wrapper, bearing nothing at all.
and remembers the old C-rats he'd tossed in Vietnam,
and the countless nameless who fell.

Looks up as shoppers pass by,
seeing him not at all.
Watching shopper's exit, someone hands him a five—
He nods without emotion—
no, *God bless you ma'am*—

Not begging... just preparing his bunker
for the coming night, and
fearful for what it might bring.

Mostly safe in this very public place...
a wind-blocking jag of cinder block wall,
A dinghy gray worn camouflaged jacket a
reminder of another life,
before Saigon's fall.