

Siren Song of War

PTSD

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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 of men of war, 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 matter that as military honor guard for bodies returned from that land, I fired the vollies, folded the flags, saw them lowered—forever, into ground—and compassion for the family.

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 a sucking wound of pink froth—and he 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...
Your blood still in my mouth.

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 coppery metallic blood—I cannot rinse it away—
I must have killed you by not doing it right...
Tell me, please tell me if I did right or wrong; grant me this favor ... and lasting peace from the burdens of my torchered mind—I would do the same for you.