

The Day Vietnam Died to Me

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The day I died I did not go to heaven—
rockets rained down and spread their steel.
Others had felt the sting and adrenalin that masked the pain.

Some were already dead...some dying.
Someone was painfully screaming.
Rockets hit all around—shrapnel whizzed the air.
Perimeter bunkers firing 50's and 60's—sounded like hell was on hand.
Some still untouched by shrapnel...one just sat and stared—blood in his hair.

I felt the weakness and numbness to life; my blood pulsing slowly away.
Tired.
Sleepy.
Scared...but not.
Someone shouting.
Another held something high.
Someone fell dead...I wondered why.
Rockets still falling.

Wind was beating...is there a storm?
The sky spun round 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—*I'm must be dead.*

The sleep.

A nurse 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—
And no one who knew the answers was here.

I never saw any of them again.

Some doctor said I would live, as he turned to walk... and I was going home
because of the day I died.

Today, I read their names on The Wall.