

Old Veterans' Poems and Stolen Years

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Can old veterans' poetic words still paint drifting clouds,
and form prose of leafs and swaying palms, or pen
ancient oak word-trees with branches combing forest breeze,
or must they now sing of mushroom-fire and agent O?

Can words still surf the sea, days beyond land,
or launch from ski slope airborne on caressing wind-words
of soaring wings where anything-is-possible, or meander and spiral
within chimes of tinkling frost and share such happiness with all who care to read?

Can words survive war in distant lands until broken spirit wafts from
quill's tip of spilt fear and loss, and scribbled tales of wounds of heart and
fallen soul are all that's left? Will that pestilence infectious epidemic of
war-remembered ever end, and life return as it was, when Freedom Bird tucks
wheels beneath wings and like an arrow flings away from that diseased shore?

And if not...

if not...

What words can one old veteran cast smoldering on
fading parchment that bears not the monotonous ping of pity,
and dagger's sting of the everlasting remorseful question: 'why?'
Might his words and poems yet return to youthful shadow-self of
years gone by of gentle languor not yet gone mad with greed, body counts,
bomb damage assessments, or incoming rockets-rockets-rockets.

Shall old veteran's words heal like a poultice salve of pleasant thoughts, masking
ailments with distractions, like brittle maple leafs drifting down cool snow-melt
mountain spring, babbling gleefully over eon-smoothed stones...and day's only care
begs dodging twigs and sparkling sunlight? Or must they scour the mind, like cold-slaw
on napalm burns?

Pray old veterans' poetry rings true and reeks not of moldering lies that all is well, war
is fun, or bores another silly rhyme of time, slim, or clown-mines. May his words cause
one to pause and ponder, or later think upon what was read, and not perish an
indifferent death at last stanza's period, but nod in agreement: *that's how it was*.