

This Was My Best, That Day
by: Louis G. Parrillo
(Gene Parrillo, © Copyright 1998)

FORWARD: I've had these poems and journals that *my father wrote for several years*. I never knew he was in Vietnam until after he died. *He never said a word*. I wonder what made his so ashamed? The certificate with his second Purple Heart states that he was wounded in a night defensive position in **Quang Tri Province**, South Vietnam. He served with the 1st Marine Division Alpha 1/1.

My grandmother also gave me my father's decorations, pictures, a NVA flag and some other items.

He was a very giving man, who couldn't do enough for people. He loved kids. Growing up, the kids in the neighborhood, including myself, adored him. It's funny to look back. He would be outside doing something and in twenty minutes there would be a half a dozen kids out there helping. He made everyone feel important. I remember when we moved, kids in the neighborhood brought him little gifts that they made. He use to say that only people who liked him were kids, older people and animals. He was right. He had very few friends his own age. He spent as much time with older people as he did with kids. They admired him as well. He helped organize a Senior Olympics locally that was one of the first programs of its type. I always went with him when he worked with senior citizens, and it was fun to watch how they behaved around him. It was almost like watching the neighborhood kids.

People his own age seemed to be fearful of him, as if he knew something that they didn't want to know. It took me a while to understand why this was true. People his own age sensed that he had faced his own mortality and that was something they were denying. They were fearful of that. His whole life was spent helping people. He received a lot of recognition for his efforts. I guess I'm still trying to understand why someone who did so much, was still unhappy. Anyway, thank you for reading his poems. I'm not sure what to do with them. My greatest fear is that if given to the public to read, they would judge him unfairly.

Sincerely,
Gene Parrillo



This Was My Best, That Day

by: Louis G. Parrillo

(Deceased)

L/LCPL, USMC 1/1, Vietnam 1969

submitted and © Copyright 1998 by, Gene Parrillo (son)

Dear Mom,

I held him in my arms like a father holding his newborn son, proud and afraid. I was afraid that he would die before I had a chance to tell him what he needed to hear.

He looked up at me and smiled, trusting me, believing in my strength and courage; believing that I could carry him to safety.

I lied to him. I told him fairy tales, stories I heard as a child. He looked at me and listened, his eyes filled with wonder and hope.

He was innocent and pure, a child cradled in the arms of weakness and doubt, swaddled in trembling fear and desperation.

His eyes closed slowly, and his arm slipped off my shoulder. It hung limp and lifeless at my side.

His body, draped over my arms like a green shroud, relaxed and rested, shed its bone-tired weariness and final fear.

He was asleep, peaceful, eternal sleep. He was no longer troubled by the thoughts of war --the fear of death.

I laid him on the ground in a soft

bed of blood red dirt.

I removed my flak jacket and placed it under his head for comfort.

I pulled a canteen from a pouch on my web belt, unscrewed the cap and poured some over my fingers.

I touched his eyes, hands and boots with my wet fingers; and mumbled this simple prayer:

*"I give up to You,
this innocent child, God ...
My arms are tired!
He is too heavy for me to carry ...*

Forgive this man and take him to his final resting place beside You!"

I scooped up a handful of dirt and sprinkled it over his body, burying him deep in my memory.

Like me, Mom, he is just eighteen, *alone* and frightened --and afraid of dying.

That fear is over. A voice called. I picked up my rifle and ran for cover.

This was my best that day, Mom.

Your son,

L/Cpl L. Parrillo
USMC 1/1 Vietnam 1969

Date Posted: *Wed, March 19 2008, 9:38:57*
Author: **Jared Bulette (Incredibly talented and inspiring)**
Author Host/IP: **24.113.123.56**
Subject: **Poems by Louis G. Parrillo via his son Gene**

I just wanted to briefly comment on the poems written by Louis Parrillo concerning some of his wartime experiences. First off, I am sorry to hear he felt he had no other option but to take his own life sometime ago.* It is very apparent that he had a God given talent with the poetry he wrote. He was able to verbalize many of the thoughts and feelings I'm sure many vets feel in a very descriptive yet emotional way. I was very moved by them and felt like I knew exactly how he was feeling as he wrote each one. I'm sure that these poems will be a lasting legacy for him without him ever knowing or intending them to be. I have no doubt they will have some kind of positive and therapeutic impact on other vets w/similar feelings who just don't know how to put their's into words. I'm not a Nam vet, but I was touched by this man's writing just the same! God bless.

Responding regarding Louis G. Parrillo -- Sandra (Wow), *Wed, December 13 2006, 10:40:47 (152.157.4.41)*

Well I just wanted to say that this story you wrote was really interesting. I'm a student that goes to Foster and for a project we had to research war stories and write personal reflections.

This story shocked me. I couldn't believe that as a result of Vietnam war, he did what he did. I honestly believe that the Vietnam war is extremely powerful in many ways. Mind, Body, Spirit and soul. It's good and bad. I just want to say that your doing a really good thing, keep on researching. His poems were amazing, I wished he wouldn't of destroyed some of the other ones. I understand why they called him Einstein now.

Good luck.
Sandra

*** 2018:** *The Veterans Administration reports suicide rate amongst veterans is 22 per day, and has averaged above 20 daily for years. Don Poss*



Comments to [Don Poss](#)

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