

# Vietnam

## PURPLE HEART ROW

by Paul Woods (Sgt)

366 SPS K9

DANANG AB, RVN

12/29/66 – 12/29/67

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### *PURPLE HEART ROW*

*FOR GARY FULLER*

*366 SPS K9*

*DANANG AB, RVN*

Our purple heart slipped away one night,  
When our backs were turned and filled with fear.  
Curled around mystic rings of delirium,  
I heard the rumble of bombing in a dream war.

We lay there like children, counting the seconds  
Between the flash and thunder.  
And felt the old familiar panic  
When the sirens went off.

The alarm spread like bad news; but we seemed frozen  
In time, as the heart lay dying in a burnt out field.  
The fences went down and the jungle opened up  
Like the jaws of a great shark, spilling out

Blood and shadows, bent over,  
Explosives strapped to their backs.  
The sky lit up with flares, like miniature suns.  
Armies floating in the dreamy straits of Panama red.

Laughing at jokes we made up to pretend  
What happened was imagined—a dream.  
But the missing heart would not forget;  
Though we tried to banish our ghosts.

So when you ask: “Did you do your duty?  
Were you strong; were you brave enough?”  
We could say: “Yes, we did. We served our  
Country. We defended your freedom.”

But in the dream, none were free because  
The heart, you see, lay bleeding  
In burnt out scenes that keep haunting us.  
Ghosts that walk the battlefields keep bumping into

Ghosts from other wars. Old friends left behind.  
Ghosts still wrestling with guilt—regret;  
All trying to find some peace of mind.  
On purple heart row, you see the ghosts

Drifting in and out of the shadows,  
Still trying to make some sense of it.  
On purple heart row, you hear the heart beating—  
Somewhere...everywhere.

Dreaming or not,  
I hear it beating under my pillow.

*FROM "When You Can't See The Trees For The Wood"*  
*BY PAUL WOODS c. 2009*

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*We Take Care of Our Own*

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