

**This Was My Best, That Day**

by: **Louis G. Parrillo**

(Deceased)

**L/LCPL, USMC 1/1,**

**Vietnam 1969**

submitted by, **Gene Parrillo** (son)

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**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 him so ashamed? The certificate with his second Purple Heart states that he was wound 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 help 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**

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**This Was My Best, That Day**

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 theraputic impact on other vets w/ similar feelings who just don't know how to put there'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 storie you wrote was really interesting. Im 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 couldnt believe that as a result of vietnam war, he did what he did. I honestly believe that the vietnam war is extremly powerful in many ways. Mind, Body, Spirit and soul. Its good and bad. I just want to say that your doing a really good thing, keep on researching. Hes poems were amazing, i wished he wouldnt of destroyed some of the other ones. I understand why they called him Einstein now.

Good luck.  
Sandra



Comments to [Don Poss](#)

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