



## DRAGON

THE LONG NIGHT

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AGENT  
*Dragon-*  
*The Long Night*  
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*Dragon--The Long Night*  
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I felt the dragon's speckled breath and grinned as he  
fled my glare. Then left Vietnam that indifferent day  
having played my part in war.

Once scoffed I  
the dragon's jest...  
As shadow of wing swept o'er.

His barking sigh laughed death's cry with booming  
broadships and slashing swords.

Decades flickered like an old silent film, too swift,  
as time will do. The shadow of wings soars at will,  
and dives like a ghost uninvited.

Gathering spirits seems dragon's hobby...  
devouring thousands his skill.

Dragon scours the body...  
Consumes all else with glee, and  
savors the mind for last.  
He alights and flaps a raging screech that taunts  
the earth be still.  
This night had come--as I knew it would--  
the dragon stalks his kill.

Having driven away all those I love,  
a pale moon covering behind dark clouds,  
set I here now awaiting beast's return.  
I cannot hide--he has found my lair--  
this fortress I vow to defend.  
He did not know I lay in wait  
and by oath had sworn to fight.

Winged-shadow, by autumn's moon  
crossed o'er--an eclipse of dark things to come.

He settled--wrapped silently in leathery wings,  
cloaked in blackest night--drooling, savoring  
thoughts of prey--  
Eyes like beacons searched the night, engulfing my domain.

Dragon's fetid breath crept in.  
I felt his humid sigh ozz through cabin's wood,  
invading my earthly-mansion like a steamy dew--  
settling upon my brow--festering bones to the marrow.

I sensed it was *Now ... well* before my time...  
My face, to drain of life and thus bound for the long night's  
rest? If it must be so...I vow: *Dragon too will end this night.*

A rustling of wings...  
unfolding like great canvas sails athunder.  
Wings raised high above, tip-to-tip, snap mightily,  
roiling heaven's clouds, quivering forest pines, and  
flinging cabin's shingles asunder.

I gape trembling through dark rafters,  
weapon in hand, and  
Serpent's eyes fixed my stare...  
a foul jest, turned mortal quest.

I did not grin...*but felt a hermit's chill.*  
He did not flee...*clouds drifting...quiet as the deaf.*  
And...see how Dragon flaps gracefully away.

Silence stings my ears.  
Dragon has *let me be*, another day, another night.  
How strange...  
*I had longed for an end* to this Dragon, and The Long Night.

*Dragon--The Long Night*, portrays:

- \* *Dragon* symbolizes Agent Orange.
- \* *The Long Night*, is the declining quality of life left to Veterans before the great dark.
- \* *The Cabin* is the diminished shell of man, the final fortress and refuge to defend.
- \* *The dragon's sudden turn and flight* represents the ups and downs and battles to survive that veteran's with Agent Orange must endure.
- \* Dragon's flight, begs the answer whether or not to claim another Vietnam Veteran's life, or let him be...to toy with another time.
- \* "*I had longed for an end to this Dragon, and The Long Night...*" it the veteran gathering the will to continue to medical treatments and beat the orange-dragon.

*We Take Care of Our Own*

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From: [Steve Grace](#)

In reply to: Don Poss 's message, "[New Story posted from homepage: Agent Orange and the Dragon](#)"

This is an amazing poem, very impacting, very deep touching in to the soul of those who survived the war. At least the war over there, only to discover 40 years later it is not over there.

God bless

Steve Grace CRB 69/70

From: [Terry Sasek BT 68-69 LM#687](#)

In reply to: Don Poss 's message, "[New Story posted from homepage: Agent Orange and the Dragon](#)"

My words in response to this amazing poem that you have written here could never possibly tell you how much this poem has captured the feelings and the never ending fear that we all have faced or are still facing every day and night from our own medical issues that we are dealing with from our own heavy exposure to Agent Orange during our own tour of duty in Nam. This is a deep and a heartfelt poem Don thanks for sharing it with us. Terry Sasek BT 68-69 LM#687

From: [Randy Albertson LM#800 56th SPS, NKP, 74-75](#)

In reply to: Don Poss 's message, "[New Story posted from homepage: Agent Orange and the Dragon](#)"

Once again Don your words and art blend beautifully! My prayer is that the Dragon will one day be defeated and that God will watch over every brave soul who was exposed!

Randy Albertson LM#800

From: [Jackie R. Kays](#)

In reply to: Don Poss 's message, "[New Story posted from homepage: Agent Orange and the Dragon](#)"

Don, the poem is well conceived and written, as well as being mesmerizing. I think the Dragon has two heads, Agent Orange and late night fright, both debilitating. I especially appreciated the explanation footnote.

Jackie Kays

Don Poss [mailto:dposs@dposs.com]

From: [Larry Eley](#)

In reply to: Don Poss 's message, "[New Story posted from homepage: Agent Orange and the Dragon](#)"

The Dragon Poem is tremendous. I spoke to [my friend] Ray Kastner today and we discussed the Agent Orange issue. Your writing has spoken for thousands of us. I am one of the lucky ones. One only need go to a VA hospital or clinic to see what the *Dragon* has done or is doing to so many. My stories are just that—*stories*—this poem [*Dragon*] is about the haunting feelings and the fear and the battle [to survive]. It's an enemy that is hard to get in your sights.

Thank you,

Larry T. Eley

To: Larry Eley,

Actually, your story [Patches](#) inspired me to write [Dragon—The Long Night](#). I know *Dragon* it does not fit your circumstances to a *T*, but it certainly does apply to the many I've talked with over the years. Two of my tent mates at Da Nang AB died horrible deaths from AO. Tom Baker, for one, was a great dog handler and a genuine good-guy that you instantly smiled when you encountered him. So the story was a composite of many, but the enemy was and is the same.

[Don Poss](#)