

Ten-foot Elephant Grass

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As I sit here by my frozen window pane,
listening to the North wind howl its frigid
refrain. Dark and dreary be my aging mind,
late November be this saturnine time.

Thoughts of yesteryear flood my dementia,
leaving only ebony confusion, bordering on
mild madness.

Young men of war, faces forlorn forever more.
A time long past; I wonder, I ponder and I ask...
did part of me die there... I think for certain the
answer is yes!

Sounds and smells fill my ancient psyche,
shadows from long past. Black pajamas
darting in and out of bamboo walls,
elephant grass ten feet tall.

Pop flares, Constantine, and a 105 barks, then
the monsoon uncorks, red mud, bullet holes
leaking sand bags and snakes galore, "Bouncing
Betties" will take an arm, leg or a young warrior's
life for sure.

Constant noise, B-52s, 104s, choppers from shore
to shore. Cold rations, wet feet, little or no sleep.
Ten thousand miles and thoughts of home will have
to keep. Body bags quietly wait, stacked in the broiling
sun, at the flightline gate.

And some morons still have the audacity to ask...
was he in harm's way?

That time and place in that jungle war has long forever
passed, but often, late at night, this aging mind defies
time's grasp and returns to that place of shadows,
ghosts, lost souls and ten foot elephant grass.