

New Poetry by Ben White: “Cleaning the M60 – 39 Years and January 26, 1984”

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New Poetry by Kat Raido: “Blood Goggles”

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New Poetry from Scott Janssen: “Bottle Tree”



VIETNAM DID I / *image by Amalie Flynn*

On my first visit I asked
A stock question about
Whether you'd been in the military.

Marines, nineteen sixty-six, you said,
A hint of menace in your eyes.
I never talk about it.

On my way out the door
I asked your wife about a
Tree in the front yard,

Its branches capped with
Blue and green and pink

Bottles made of glass.

It's a bottle tree, she said.
Pointing at a cobalt blue bottle
Glinting with sunlight,

She told me it had
Special power to lure in
Ghosts and lurking spirits.

They get trapped in there, she said.
Then sunlight burns them up
So they can't haunt us anymore.

Eight months later
You could no longer walk.
I rolled your wheelchair

Onto the warbled porch
Where we sat and talked
About how rough life is.

I never told you about
Vietnam, did I? You whispered.
I shook my head.

As you spoke,
Your eyes averted,
I looked at that cobalt blue bottle

And imagined it slowly filling
With blood and shrieks
And grief and the sound of

Rotor blades and the smell
Of burning flesh and the
Taste of splattered gore

And the sensation of
Adrenaline pulsing and

Memories of home and

Buddies who were killed
And of fear and rage and
betrayal and weeping

That lodge in your throat
Before you swallow
It all down

Into your belly.
Don't ever tell anyone
About this, you said,

Your hands trembling,
Jaw shivering.
I asked if there was

Anything else.
You started to say something
But stopped yourself.

No, you said.

**New Poetry from Chad
Corrigan: "Hidden Mountain
Tops"**



SMOKE CLOUDS / *image by Amalie Flynn*

The top of the mountain is hidden.

It looks like a cloud of smoke.

But it's a snow filled cloud.

*The map says it's thirty-seven hundred
and sixty-nine feet.*

The clouds must be about thirty-four hundred.

From their helicopter cockpits

they still look up

dwarfed by the mountain

and ceiling.

Small against the storm.

New Poem from Olivia Garard:

“Hurry Up”

Hurry up

—

Halt. And quiet,
Marines sleep.

—

Covers askew
necks cocked
weighted by
the waiting.
Dozing softly
in dark down-
time flutters by.



U.S. Army Soldiers from the 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, in support of Talisman Saber 2013. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Zachary Wolf)

—
Sweet & sour
breath bellows,
flickering life.
Bellies swell &
roll heaving
hearts into a
billowing pyre.

—
Ares kisses each
Achilles slowly.
From his lips—
welding dry ice—
wafts the incense
of men burning
in god's slag.

—
Still in sleep—
mouths *agape*.

New Poetry from Paul Lomax

Faces

oak branches reach
through villages veiled
beneath nuoc mam frowns, —
enlightened cracks creak
above unwilling spills

crucifying Charlie
rebuking Snoopy
backsliding Lucy

& tomorrow

before a billion points of aortic lights

cast across a face-less velvet canvass

twirling

with 7 spleens ducking & diving

whirling

eye watch Mars

salute every Corporal

yelling

with

every

breath

eye followed my orders...!



Thomas Cole. "The Course of Empire: Desolation," 1836. New York Historical Society Collection.

Silent as Impression Made by Stone

Silent as an impression made by stone
Black onyx flamed with writings to go gentle in the
night

So it is that I am a Mysterious
Traveler walk this way alone

In this silence I sit on the side of
the dirt bone

Waiting at the edge of the black line of the
farthest woods

Silent as an impression made by stone

Where all who believe this
sarcophagus sown
Well into the hands of Osiris and Ra
as mummies

So it is that I am a Mysterious
Traveler walk this way alone

All but a water lily speaks in the shadow
of a lotus tone

I go formless shadowing-less across wading
waters tarrying

Silent as an impression made by stone

Delivered on parchment paper
to a mass of one

This message driven from essence long since gone

So it is that I am a Mysterious
Traveler walk this way alone

In my will take this much without loan
Paint me crate

me canvas this I say

So it is that I am a Mysterious
Traveler walk this way alone

The Blood of Rain

Drowning in meadow-spoken roots, I reach for heartfelt songs, once, so rich with oxygenated virtues, twice, so free from an unforgiving life. Songs gleaned from salvific tomatoes, flowing sweet the Nile. Voyages imprised as a glint refracted without blink, without smile, messages to splat against something, anything – life-supporting droplets passed with grass concern, lawn pity. What was there: a bed of crabs to obscure the analgesic dirt, the antiperspirant stench, the grandeur embodying a crimson stance. Like knuckles half-curved tapping on the drum of a shack, shadow of a room existing as a postal address with but one letter in the box, this song of rain continues to pour dry. Behind closed mores, I lick deliberate snowfalls, wrangled after birth. What did this mean? From where does this floodwater spring? My cup remains half filled, cracks lining its bottom have laid their webs. I watch reminiscent musings of pellets fall, nerve endings teleconference heme & beryl-blues & female & globin & woman & man & child, all raced by fashionable weather, as I drown, listening to the pulsations of torrential veils.

Why am I so thirsty?

New Poetry from Randy Brown

victory conditions

My father taught me
to say *I love you*
every time
you stood in the door

left for school

went to work
flew off to war

it became a habit
a good one
like checking the tires
or clicking your seat belt

but now
every conversation feels
like a movement to contact

we took the same vows
we swore the same oaths
we wore the same uniform
we see the same news

I raise my kids
like he did his
and have the same hopes for them

How is it that we now live
in two countries?

three more tanka from Des Moines, Iowa

1.

The leafblower drone
buzzes into consciousness—
fast cicada hum.
I wave to the new police,
before I close the window.

2.

Yellow Little Bird
hovers near high-voltage lines

conducting repairs
outside my bedroom window,
but I am miles away.

3.

Thunder and popcorn;
a remembered joke about
the "sound of freedom."
In rain, I stand listening
as rifles prepare for war.

a future space force marine writes haiku

1.

This drop won't kill you—
terminal velocity
varies by planet.

2.

We spiral dirt-ward,
samaras in early fall,
sowing destruction.

3.

Reconnaissance drones
orbit our squad's position:
Expanding beachhead.

4.

"Almost" only counts
in horseshoes and hand grenades.
Go toss them a nuke.

5.

If war is still hell,
at least my bounding mech suit
is air-conditioned.



“An American pineapple, of the kind the Axis finds hard to digest, is ready to leave the hand of an infantryman in training at Fort Belvoir, Va, 1944. American soldiers make good grenade throwers.”

This is just to Say All Again After ...

after William Carlos Williams' "This is Just to Say"

I have expended
the “pineapples”
that were in
the ammo box

and which
you were probably
saving
for final protective fires

Forgive me
they were explosive
so frag
and so bold

**Most Likely /
Most Dangerous Enemy Courses of Action**

what most
threatens my children

social media /
unending war

the rat race /
the daily grind

half-baked policies /
global warming

a lack of hope /
a lack of justice

my constant distraction /
my constant distraction

the stand

if you can't stand injustice
take a knee

if you pray for others

take a knee

if you believe in freedom, not fabric
let others see

you practice
what you preach