

2NDLT. PARVIN ZELMER, USMC

The reason he died?
He and the platoon came upon
three Vietnamese children, ages 3, 5 and 8
who were playing with some tied-together pieces
of nice, shiny plastic that they had found in the grass.
The Lieutenant stood still
but ordered the rest of the platoon to fall back.
Then he asked the kids to put their toy,
a double boobytrap, down gently,
but they did not understand
and pitched it to him,
and it bounced once and went boom,
gutting all four of them to shredded death.
A Congressman, upon hearing of the incident
from a news reporter,
asked the reporter one question:
"Was the boobytrap theirs or ours?"
And his question was the answer.



PFC. BROOKS MORGANSTEIN, USMC



Her remembered frailty had strengthened his.
His soul was alive for her.
What kept him going
when he would bag and tag bodies
or when out on a search and destroy
were her eyes as soft as breasts.
He wanted to write his wife naked words
that would have been more naked when read.
He had chosen the goal of his groin
and it was to grieve
for his want of her was like pain.
His loneliness and lust were his and he theirs
during every second of these 13 months.
He only knew as he held his rifle
during a sweeping operation
that next year he would hold her,
and when he kissed her,
his tongue would touch hers
and she would feel
as though a piece of the sun
was in her mouth.
When someone in his platoon
was sent back in pieces, alive or dead,
he tried not to despair of heaven,
but sometimes he had faith only in flesh
and would think of her thighs
and remember God.
The heat of the jungle
had pared him thin as peace.
His head was shaven squabbly bald.
His uniform clung to him like a huge wet sock;
and he stank of leeches and mud and malaria and fear.

Yet he was all he had,
and his heart would leave him, and long to her heart,
she who had been shy to yield, but had yielded.
The sun in the boonies gloomed everything
with its yellowed heat for air,
but he breathed her fingers.
And her young woman's youngest breasts
suckled his terror,
while her mouth held off boredom
from shattering him insane.
Under a rocket barrage at Khe Sanh,
he once dreamed of her lying open as a wound,
and raw,
and he had salved and bandaged her
with his mouth and fingers.
During the bad times,
such as when his platoon was ordered to torch a village,
he would feel his rage deepening,
without bottoming out,
and he would be shaking with fear and shame and ecstasy
that he was still alive.
He would make himself think of her,
and with the thirst that comes from drinking of it,
his lust would grow and become exalted
like a great tree,
and he knew if he made it back
she could climb his body
and that he with branches would cover her with himself
and they would be unable to tell
how much of him was him
and how much of him was her.

NETEL GRANGE PRESENTS



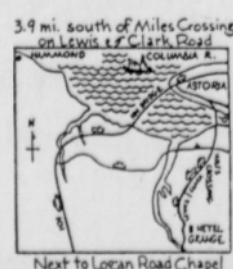
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