

Lyrics from Vietnam and beyond

A life time of poetry
by Dr. Jack Apsche

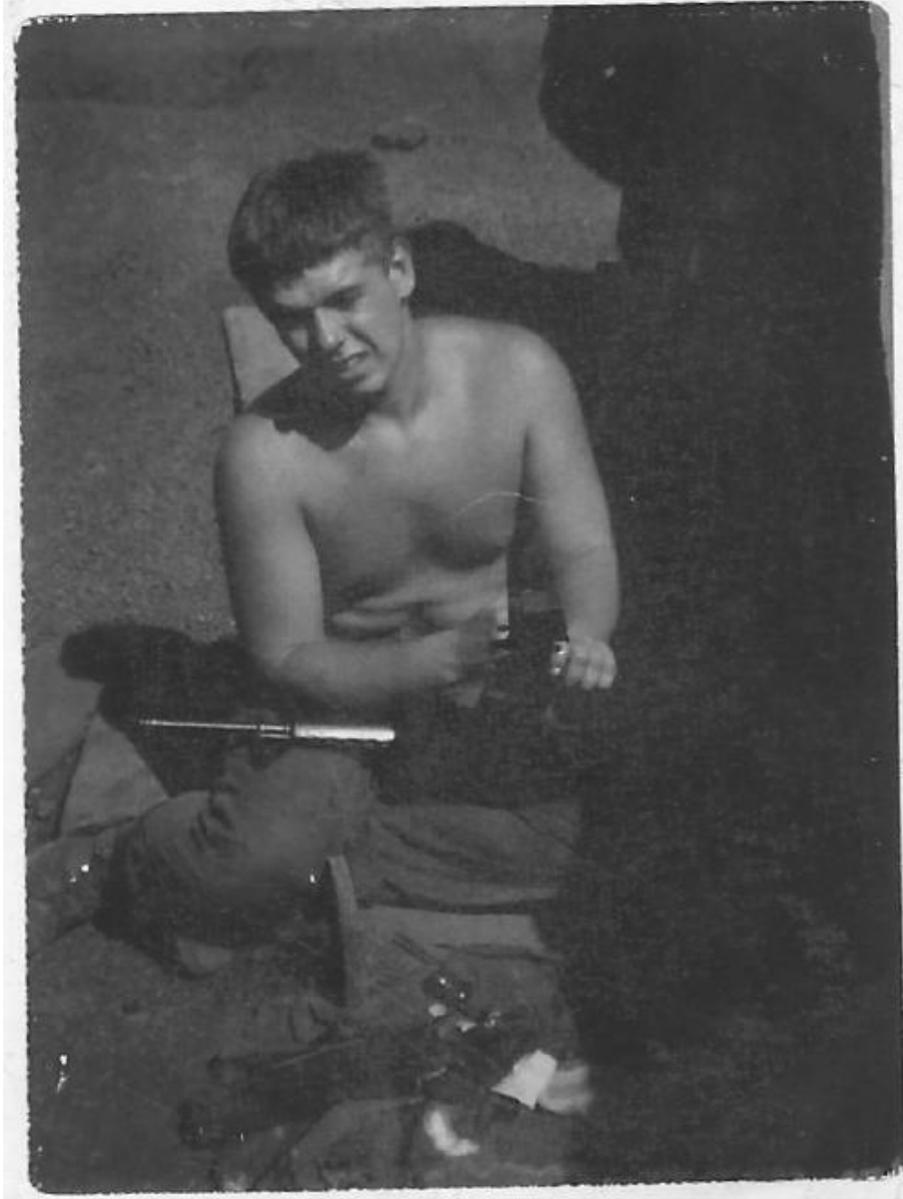
Echo's from Vietnam and beyond

By Dr. Jack Apsche

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Somewhere near Hill 837 in Vietnam the Republic of in early 1967, cleaning my M-60. I am not sure who the kid in the picture actually is, rumor has it it was me at 18.

Dedication

This book of poems is dedicated the people who have been in my life, who inspired my writing.
You know who you are and if not make something up!

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Section One

I Believe

Steam Trails Revisited

The mist blinks thru

The deep green vegetation

The humidity from the month's monsoon

Creates steam trails

From body heat

My flesh has rotted

In every crevice

Of my skin

And I smell like

Meat left out on

The sidewalk for a

Week in July

I won't ever get dry

Unless I get wrapped

In a poncho

Tagged

And flown home

For a ceremony of

A select few
Who might attend
And
Attempt to remember
That I once was human
And dreamed
The dreams
Of
The innocent

Walter Cronkite

That's what I miss
Clean video
Tight shot's
Close-ups
Walter Cronkite
Drug related
And Vietnam
Hot cities
And Urban guerillas
Fashionable radicalism
Its long gone
Walter Cronkite's
Body count

Anonymity in number's

People dying

On the front page

Or Time

Entertainment

For the dinner meals

And empty boots lined up

After Dak To

In the Inquirer

Beat poems

Hip phrases

And

Anonymity in number's

More body counts

1 miss

Anti-war music

Hot groups

Lost hope

No dope

Kill a slope

Orange joke

Beat poems, man

Where ya been?

It's all gone now

Just like

Walter Cronkite

Hard to Find

Love poems are hard to find

These days

So I decided to write one

For you

Instead we went to bed

Made love

Rested

And again

The Group

We walk past the wall

And look at the names

Of the dead

We look far away from

Each other

As we don't know

Who would die

First

If we were

There

Again

The Village

The village was surrounded

We were in an ugly mood

Several men went down

There was no enemy

To be found

We torched the village

An old man climbed

Up on his hooch

To put out the fire

Polly butt stroked

Him across the mouth

As he lay there bleeding

My thoughts raced

But I did my job

Carried out my

M 16 diplomacy

Buried

Where did the
Simplicity of
Childhood go
Where there was
No order
Or
Right or wrong
Learning
Understanding
Kindness
Words were
Just words
Sentences complicated
Responsibilities
Of organized religion
No Jesus
Rather vague concepts
And childhood
Memories
Of wonders of
How things were before vague
Concepts of death
Or afterlife

Joe Something

I was in base camp
Black Horse for
A rest, and I
Ran into this guy
From High School
His name was Joe something
He was on shit burning
Detail
We exchange some
Bullshit stories
The stars and stripes
Reported that
A guy named Joe something
Was KIA
Vietnam

Veterans

We walk around Washington
After midnight
Feeling the eerie silence
Of the wall
A grave site
For the dead

A curiosity
For the living
Touching the name
Of someone
We loved
In our way
Of loving
Looking for our
Names on the wall
And silently
Questioning if
We ever left

Life

Living is what we do
In between

With or without
Tomorrow's expectations
Or
Death is death
Especially without
Living in yesterday
Or in between
Life

Or death

Ramp Gunner

With my feet dangling
Above the treetops
I watched the
Tracer's dance
In a white schizoid hue
Beneath my feet
I promised God
I would become
A priest
Or a
Saint
That day

After the War

After the war
We sat around,
Smoked marijuana
Got high, and

Talked of

War

We went to college

Joined groups

Got diplomas

Went back into

The world

After the war

We fell in love

Told lies

Made love

Got married

Got divorced

Had babies

Looked for

New lives

And tries

To live

Again

Plastic Men

As a child I
Had little green
Plastic men
Hidden everywhere
I was these green soldier's
Division commander
A child General Patton
I commanded the special squads
To dangerous missions
That no human could
Hope to complete
I never lost
A neighborhood
Battle
Imagination and
A child's fantasy
Made it all
So real
The little green men
Never slept
And never died
Green plastic men
Always obedient
Always vigil
Unlike the real men
Who ate
Slept and died

And came home

In green

Plastic bags

Death

Death can surprise

You

When a tracer strikes

Your heat

Prayers don't delay it

And God can't stop it

Like flying in from

The Ashau

With a chopper full

Of bodies

Nothing much

Looks human

Anymore

The wind blew a tear from my eye

As I said goodbye

And waited for

My turn

The Captain of the Chess Team

The chess team from
My high school were
Draft exempt
The captain of the team
Loved latin and
Chemistry
He showed off
His wing tip's
From Father and Son's
When running to
Class
The captain always
Talked of things
Unknown to me
He kept his pens
In a vinyl pen holder and
Wore his slide rule
In his belt
So her could figure out
His calculus
Problems anywhere
He used to run down
The halls to avoid the
Thugs who might

Break his thick
Glasses again
He never had a girlfriend
Or a fast car
He never saw an F on his
Report card
He never went to I Corps
But he understands
The chemical compounds
Of dioxin

Heroes

Flying above the tree tops
I found
No knowledge
No love
No hate
Only now
There were no
Hero's there
Only men
Who died
Trying to
Stay alive

Vietnam Diary

Another day

Bouncing betty

Won't let you

Run away, got the clap

Can't go back

Hard day, hard on, short time

Long time, any time

Smoke it, snort it, chew it

Getting high

Gonna die

Fall out

Fall in

Load up

Shoot up

Bronze star,

Purple Heart

Land mine

Anytime

AK everyday

Sainpan

Hot sand

Death bed in

Japan

Move out

Move in

Smoke up

Light up

New day

Same day, everywhere

Fuck off, fuck up

Pop off

Bare ass, smoke grass

Laid out, laid in

Die young

Smoke one

Old day, new day, all day

Everyday

Same way

You Slobs

I remember

Waving good-bye

To all the new

Dudes' comin'

In country

As I was goin' home

Right
Where everyone
Wants to know
If you killed
Somebody
Back to the world
Where
People don't
Hire doorgunners

My Father

My father died
When I was four
I knew him
For such a
Short time
Yet
He is still
With me
I can still
Feel him
The love of four
Years
Has lasted

A lifetime
He is there
Protecting
Guiding
And knowing
That i
Am part
Of him

A Man from the Heard

I met this guys who had been
In Vietnam... in some unit
They called the Heard
He could talk you out
Of suicide
You would promise him
Not to kill yourself
Just to have him shut-up
For a second
When this guy
Told me that he got a
Bronze Star
For laying down rapid and
Suppressive fire at

Dak To

I was impressed

When he told me

He got it for using an

M-60 with a broken trigger

I was more impressed

He must ne good at making

Rat-a-ta sounds

They pulled him out of his

Hole at Dak To

To pin on the Bronze Star

This dude didn't get

To say thank you

When they said,

“get back in your hole, boy”

He gave them the Vietnam salute

“fuck it cause it

Really doesn't mean nothing”

B Movie

After I came home

From Vietnam

I found my way

Out to my

Father's grave
In a moment of
B movie drama
I dropped my
Medal's on his
Grave and
Wept as I drove away

New Years Day

This new year
Brings
Promises
And resolutions
Champagne toasts
Dick Clark
Memories of
Guy Lombardo
And his royal Canadians
Endless football
New beginnings
Happy endings
Memories that
Tet follows
New years

Bodies of dead
Marines
Lying side by side
In Hue city
Waiting to be sorted
Out
And a ride home
In a sliver
Box

Happiness

Everybody's looking for happiness
Like it's some event
A Porsche
A supermodel
A drag queen
A president
Or ceo
Happiness is not
An event
Or thing
More like
Putting together
Some moments

Of joy
And not hearing
A helicopter

Delaware

Flying into the
Ashau
With a lightning storm
Or tracers from NVA
Weapons
Finding their
Mark
Choppers falling from
The sky
Like wounded
Ducks
With clipped wings
Moving troops
From the Cav and
101st
Into the darkness
Of a prehistoric valley
With moon craters
From days of

B 52 raids dropping
More tonnage
Than in Dresden
Flying in
Nothing special only teen age
Soldiers from
Working class
America
Picking them up
Later
Motionless
Wrapped in filthy
Blood soaked
Ponchos

My Generation

Sometimes I close my
Eyes
And we are all still there
My generation
Lost in the jungles
Of Southeast Asia
Wearing jungle fatigues
Ducking tracers

Bagging bodies

Some

Flying as I did

Never growing older

Whose names

Are on the wall

May still be there

Helicopters around me

That I am

No longer young

Ashau

Picking up

Troopers from

The Cav

Teenage soldiers

Skinny kids with

Bad skin

From jungle

Rot

From the

Ashau

Eyes gazed

No words

One grunt
Had a puppy
Tucked in his shirt
“What is that?”
I said
“Something is coming
Out of here, alive.”
He said.

Trust

I trusted a man
In Delaware
He promised
Support and
A career

He gained a ;pt
Of weight
To avoid the draft
How long can
This man live
Without
A bullet
In his

Head or

Ass?

Fall

Days past

Remembering you

Holding a caterpillars

Setting it free

Together

Listening to each other's life

Scripts

Driving

In your green VW

Watching the

Leaves fall

As you drive your car

So not to run over the

Leaves

Or interrupt

Autumn

You dodge the

Leaves

Sometimes avoiding

Sometimes alone

Never

Without

Love

Thoughts of Georgia

I walked into a local bar

Sat in the corner

And sipped a beer

Minding my business

A big fat construction

Type guy was loud

Trying to make the

Painted barmaid

He grabbed her

She pushed him

Screaming something about

His little penis

I got up and asked him if he had

A problem

He punched me in the face

And my mouth split and

Poured blood
When I got up
I grabbed a full bottle
Of beer and cracked him
Across his nose
The bottle and his
Nose broke together
He fell down and I
Stomped his head some more

As I ran out the back door
The local police and the MP's
Arrived
And the barmaid was
Kneeling over his bloody
Fat unconscious body

Beat poem

River schism
Or catechism
Finding love
In a sears catalogue
While lying in a
Waterbed

And watching jeopardy

Answers

Or questions

Watergate

Watershed or

Oliver Wendle Holmes

Getting

Diagnostic surgery

Gynecologist

Finds cancer

Linda Lovelace

Porn star

Performs strange acts

While you eat

A bowl of fruit

Feeling out of place

Like a bowel movement

With no toilet

Paper

Christmas

I remember Christmas

Toy guns

And

Toy soldiers
Warriors
With guns
And swords
Until
Some
Christmas outside
Some nameless
Firebase
Too far for
Santa
And Bob Hope
The Christmas truce
Was a false promise
Amid the smell
Of gunpowder

Eyewitness

The blast blew
Chairs and concrete
Thru the bar

As I was leaving the
Club

There were people
In pieces all over
The street
There was a young guy
Who's legs were
Blown off
And beautiful women
With a cable
Tsticking out of
Her stomach

I didn't want to go
Back there
Or dancing
Ever

There is blood on
My airplane ticket
Home

The Light

Waiting for the light
The one at the end of the tunnel;
Promised until

Tet

Saigon and Hue city

In ruins

There was

No light

Only darkness

As dark

As the inside

Of the VC's

Tunnel's

And McNamara's

Promises

NVA

In the jungle rot of war

People die

Another day

There are no peace treaties

Peace symbols

Or peace

People die

It is you or him

You can't

See him

Hear him m

He is there

Waiting for you

Waiting with

His Ak-47

Pungi sticks bouncing betty

He will get you

If you don't

Get him

He doesn't care about

Slogans or

Yankee go home

Make love not war

He wants your short ass

He isn't interested in

Your flag

Your hometown or

Homeboy

Wife or

God

He wants your ass dead

Or out

He has his God

His farm

His home and

Your GI ass is standing on it

He has met your M16

Your Huey gunship's
B-52's and phantoms
And napalm
He has no 1 year tour or deros
His life is this war
And he will get
Your green ass
He has to
He has no-where
Else to go

After the War II

After the war
We were alone
No-one phoned
No-one called
After the war we did not forget
What they don't want to remember
We talked and confessed
While deaf ears grew older
Quiet and alone
Believing psychedelic prophets
Deerhunters and apocalypses
That were never real

Often lies
We listened
To somebody else's fantasies
Not mine
After the war
We never looked for
Each other
We looked for ourselves
In the lost and found
In the classified
Unclassified and
Unreal
Unwritten
Often edited
Mostly censored
Unknown
But never
Anonymous

Pittsburgh

The ice storms came
And we froze at 10 below
Waiting
For a bus on fifth avenue

Waiting to go home

Share each other

And a bed

Making love

And resting like

It was Sunday

Life

Living is what we do

In between

With or without

Tomorrow's expectations'

Or

Death is death especially without

Living in yesterday

Or in between

Life

Or death

Courage

There are times

I

Look thru the

Keyhole

And watch

The distant world

Spread out

Before me

Wondering which cloud

Might block

My view next

If I had courage

I would open

That door

But if I did

I might get

Wet?

Me

I looked for

Myself in movies

And others

And God

Never
Thought that
The ruby slippers
Were on my feet
To take me
Wherever I
Want to go
Without a
Reservations
Hesitating only
For myself
Or
Fear

The Old Man

An old man, with
A white beard, yellow skin
Slant eyes
Wearing a straw hat
Hangs over my bed
At 3am every morning
He doesn't talk
He lets me see
Him, then disappears

He has chased me
10,000 miles
For many years
And he found me
Hiding in my
Bedroom
Every night
And I wonder
If I really killed
Him
How can he
Visit me
Every night
At 3am?

Pa Turnpike

Endless drives together
From Philly to Pittsburgh
On the turnpike
Passing the shell
That used to be
J&L Steele
Winding our way
Through the dark

Thick air
Until we saw
The Cathedral
The air smelled like
Sulphur
As the Hare Krishna's
Danced and
Passed out incense
That smelled
Sweet
Then
As we learned from people
With degrees
To believe
In other's
Sometimes
In ourselves

The Lesbian

I remember talking to a woman in a bar in 1969
She wasn't real friendly
But she sure was excited about the
Space landing on the moon
On the tv above the bar I could hear

David Brinkley talking about the technical skill
It took to land on the moon
“the lunar landing ship is down
on the surface, with four legs evenly touching.”
The woman cheered

All I could think of
Was who died in my old unit today
And how this excited woman
Doesn't understand
And I put those feelings
Away and I said
“It is hard for me to be excited
About the moon...when 152 people died
this week in Vietnam.”
She said “that's their fault
For going there.”
And I decided that she must be a lesbian
Cause I ain't picking her up.

Fiftytwo

52 feels like
28 physically
Still bench press

325

Run far

Almost forever

Ache more

No drugs

No caffeine

Drinking bottled

Water

While aging

Gracefully physically

Seeking wisdom

Yet still

The same

asshole

With no answers

That I was

30 years

Ago

Trooper

The incoming didn't give

Me any rest

As the darkness was light by

A light show of high explosives

And tracers
It has been 72 hours straight
And the rules of engagement
Seem like a wet dream from
Adolescence
We smell the oil
Burning outside of Bagdad
And their mech units are no match
As the approach to their
Capital is littered with corpses
A litter of burned human remains
Announce that
Your liberators
Are here

Tourists

Nightclub full
Of tourists
Dressed in their
Latest cruise wear
Or silk and polyester
Blends
Trendy dancing
And drinks of

Fruits juices
With bamboo umbrellas
And decorative red maraschino
Cherries
As read as their
Sunburned skin
That seemed painful
Until
The jihad
Bomb exploded
Ending
Their
Vacation

Forth of July

Parades
And fireworks
Celebrate Americas
Birthday
People who
Weren't marching
When we
Derosed
To no welcome

And the parades
Were marches
Telling us
How wrong we were

Lichenstein

We walked to the princes' palace
Looked over the alp's
To Switzerland
We drove our VW
Up the mountain
On a long one-car
Road
The higher we
Climber the smaller
The Rhein looked
The highway looked
Like a small picket fence
We finally reached the snow
I forgot my jacket
As we walked up the
Icy muddy road
Past mountain cattle and
Wooden cabins and

Mountain people in their
Warm gray clothes
We snapped a role of pictures
With our instamatic...
And left
Cold.

Waiting for Movement

Sitting on my patio
On a warm summer evening
Looking across the field
That spread out
Behind my house
Alertly
I am waiting for movement
A bush rustling
From a stray dog
A bird flapping
Its wings
In a tree
Frozen
Waiting for movement
That hasn't come
In decades

This Guy Al

When I got
Back from Vietnam
I needed some clothes
Cause nothing fit
And I was 2 years
Out of style
I found this
Hip store in
The Levittown
Shopping Center
With a hip name
Mally's
And there was a hip guy working in there
This guy named Al
He told me that he was a writer and
Had applied to be
A conscientious objector
I told him that was
A good idea
Because he couldn't
Write if he got his head or ass
Blown off

Perfume

Flying into the sunset
Enforcing curfew
Over the perfume river
“fire em up” the
Pilot yelled
And I watched a family
Treading water
Bobbing in the water
Like and empty
Can of coke
I watched their
Heads explode
Into crimson
Mist
The bodies of red
Blended the river water
Into the sunset

Economy

The murder
Rate is
Rising
And there is
More bad
News for
The economy
AR 15's are about
500 bucks
And with ammo
You can but
It with your
Next unemployment
check

Atomic Vet

The atomic vet was
Denied benefits
And joined
The agent orange
Vets
And the chemical vets
As a
List of bills

Due for
America
That go
Unpaid
Like my health
Insurance

Money

Money cant
Buy you
Love but
It can pay
For
Viagra
And a long
Delayed
Orgasm
With or
Without
Intimacy

Section Two

I Believe

**To read the rest of
"Echo's from Vietnam and beyond"
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About the Author

Jack Apsche is an artist, poet of some sort and a Psychologist. He is a husband to Joanne, a father to Melissa, Amy, Joe Francis Albert, Pepsi, Berk the Turk and has a two Grandogs Mini Mitzi and Boscow.

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