Vietnam Memorial: Mirror of Life and Death

Mary Ellen Durbin
College of DuPage

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Available at: http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol22/iss2/21

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Vietnam Memorial: Mirror of Life and Death

by Mary Ellen Durbin

Looking up
I walk
dontdown
dontdown
downto the valley of death
dontdown
dontdown
Bearing the yoke of our grief
I walk
dontdown
dontdown
downto the well of our loss
  the loss of our certainty
  the loss of our innocence
  the loss of our youth

Looking up
in the book of loss
I take down the names of our most personal loss:
  Kent Erickson  William Madsen
  1968       1969

Looking up
I scan
the granite landscape and I find Kent
  no longer blonde and eager to carry his M-16
  just his name, frozen in granite
  rock-hardened in our memory at 19
  "He’d be 53 now,” I say

Looking up
I see myself in the mirror of life and death
  connecting us across
  the chasm that can never be bridged.

Looking up
I see my redemption
  in remembering
  in forgiving

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