

THE SEVENTH WAVE *

In the aftermath of war it all swept around him.
The silence. No one mentioning where he's been.
He told a couple of people. "Korea," he said.
Both both looked blankly, then grow embarrassed.

A younger friend, from Viet Nam, said later,
"Hell, least they didn't spit on you!" He
couldn't say anything then, feeling the younger
man's pain too much to tell him silence
can be a way of spitting.

Years went by and he came to hate Veterans'
Day when "Korea" was never mentioned, or
briefly in passing. He would know then one of his
own people was speaking, nervously adding
this unmentionable war to the list of horrors.

"Did you know more people died in Korea
than in Nam? That it lasted longer?
That it hadn't ended, ever?"
People smile uncomfortably wonder why
he is dragging up that old subject again.
He wonders, too, drawn more into himself.

Trouble was, his bunch didn't organize
felt, one guy said, like ghosts drifting
around a society who lived in news bites,
had no long-term memory at all, seeing all
wars as Desert Storms, made for TV. He said

he didn't care much anyway, we're almost all dead now anyway, the Vet's Hospitals mostly closed by Reagan. "At least we get to die our own way, by ourselves, thinking of buddies who didn't get that chance. Fuck 'em," he said and walked away.

***Sealore: in a gale, all the waves are high and dangerous but the seventh wave will be a monster and wash you overboard unless you keep a weather eye open.**