

D.F. Brown

Even the Spoon is a Weapon

for George H. Wear, Jr. Col, USAR, SS, PH 1917-2000

Let's say your chewing gum
No, let's say you read a poem called gum and
English doesn't work the way you think
You fumble through consciousness
Like it was an obstacle course
Tangled in long sentences
Knotted here in red
Words heat up
Flames appear
The story glows on
Whatever knot the sentence
The road twists back
To a low water bridge in the Ozarks
Summer's aluminum canoe
Floating a clear river
As if grace were a place
A campfire on a gravel bar
A cooler full of cokes and cookies
You reach in reading
Across the stains
And into the scars
Work meaning from the shadows
Triple canopy Kontum '69
Sit ambush above a sleeping hootch
In the last grey of daylight
Green turns black
Two boys show up from Laos
Like the war was words
A crazy fusion of glyphs and big numbers
Like chords like prayer
A history blister people bleed
In the name of the Nam
Good guys get gunned down

The same forever I know each night
The pinball heart of America
My worst dream in 81mm mortars
The battle for No Place
200 rounds in three minutes
I have to carve away so much
I carry my soul like I handle a knife
Low crawl through childhood
To reach wounded
I want to talk base ball
Or tell stories
About the four barrel carb
How to burn down the street
In Chevy's new three ninety-six
As close as words get
Stitched in the paddies
Ankle deep in death
Which is not capitalized
And snatches things.

D.F. Brown was born and raised in the Missouri Ozarks, served as a combat medic with the 4th Infantry Division, RVN, 1969-70. Brown holds an M.A. from San Francisco State and authored *Returning Fire*, a sequence of poems about our war in South East Asia. Brown lives in Houston with the ceramic sculptor Tracye Wear and teaches writing to 7th graders.