

*Joseph T. Cox*

## **First Snow Fort Wayne**

Under the wing, Fort Wayne, Indiana, white with first snow,  
thirty minutes left to go. Thirty years of memories including  
Larry, one of my soldiers in Vietnam, a father at fourteen,  
illiterate, hard working, always there to please.

Oh how he missed his dark, cold, prairie city  
how he bragged of bowling strikes, his beautiful  
wife, and the high life in Fort Wayne.

Today my son leads similar boys  
who kill illiterate boys in shattered  
desert towns, angry boys armed with resentment  
of having been under too many heels  
for too long a time. The pilot tells us  
it's right around freezing at O'Hare  
and the winds are light. On the other side  
of the world, my son is thankful for cool nights  
and his soldiers' ability to fight in the dark,  
but when he tries to sleep, his two friends  
lost to suicide bombers crowd his cot.

Larry, too, has trouble sleeping and lingers  
too long in the bowling alley where he works  
after locking up. The snow in Fort Wayne  
is early this year and heating oil at an all-time high.  
He thinks of his son who drives a truck on roads  
where angry boys carefully wire their gift of death.

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