

DIANA LYNN FESKO

1968 Windsor Hotel Bangkok Death Valley

It's a fact more Vietnam veterans have died since the war by their own hands, drugs and disease than were actually killed in Vietnam. After my brother died of a fall on Christmas day 2011 at the age of 67, a decorated Vietnam soldier, after exposure to agent orange, severe depression, addiction, diabetes and the loss of his colon, I began to wonder just how many years he really did give to his country and the answer was simple; all his remaining life.

—for Sgt. William J. Fesko, 82nd Airborne Vietnam
1967-1969

Already the strippers are drunk on rice wine.
Men raise their glasses and howl like wolves,
soft empty eyes long for a quick clean death.

Outside, a dark continent of acid rain falls.
Carvings on the bar; *Billy Boy Mortar Shell 1967*,
Saigon sniper 68, *Suicide Nelson 1966*.

I think of his first drink at the Windsor,
I think of his last. Almost without grief,
I remember the order I had to give,

not as a soldier but as a sister.
I remember the click of the
machine being turned off;

I take it with me into every day.

DIANA LYNN FESKO'S poems have been published in several print and online publications including, *Banyan Review*, *The Potomac*, and *Boston Review*.