

ROCKET ATTACK--DA NANG, 1971

WHUMP-----WHUMP, WHUMP

Tuesday, 3:27 a.m., SIREN, LOUDSPEAKER BLARING,  
“DANANG IS UNDER ATTACK, DANANG IS UNDER ATTACK,  
TAKE COVER, TAKE COVER, DANANG IS UNDER ATTACK.”

Drop to the ground,  
Press face into the hard pack of the road,  
Hair rigid on back of neck.

*“Our Father which art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.”*

Somewhere sweaty, resolute men in  
cone-shaped hats go about their dreadful  
and deadly work in the darkness blinded jungle.

Cover head with arms. They are more  
expendable than brain and face.  
Groin to the ground. Don't lose that,  
Heels sticking up---flatten them. Even  
heels are needed for walking.

*“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in Heaven.”*

Press into the asphalt.  
Belly to the ground. Melt into it.  
See the blue, white flash out of the corner  
of your eye.  
Blood looks black in the green light.  
Don't look, squeeze them, lids tight.  
Become part of the road.  
Make love to it.

*“Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”*

WHUMP, WHUMP----WHUMP, WHUMP, WHUMP.

Where is the whistling warning like in the movies?

Eyes tight, stomach is a ball of pain.

*“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

There is no whistling, only the boom  
of fear and death;

This is not a movie. This is real.

Where is the glory?

There is no glory in war.

John Wayne, you have killed us all.

*“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever.”*

What is she doing at this moment?

Will she want me burned and scarred?

Why am I here?

I'm just a kid from the Indiana,

This can't be real.

*“Please, God, let me see home again.*

*I'm only twenty-one.”*

Tuesday, 3: 31 a.m.; Loudspeaker blaring,

“DANANG IS ALL CLEAR,

REPEAT, DANANG IS ALL CLEAR.”

*“Thank you, God.”*

Another four minutes of terror gone.

Attack number 36---stop counting.

One hundred and eighty-three days to the world.