

WHITE ROOM

The Old Wound Now Forgotten

I am not a number
 though I carry one with me always
I am a survivor
 of the most inhumane atrocities
 one man can inflict upon another

I survived the Japanese
 the Germans
I survived the North Koreans
 the Iraqis
I survived the African warlords
 the Mid-East madmen
But I did not survive intact

We were beaten
 tortured
 beheaded
 experimented upon
Because we no longer mattered

We died by the hundreds
 packed like sardines in a hellship
We died unknowingly
 at the hands of comrades
We died knowingly
 to save the life of a brother
You cannot look upon that
 and not be scarred

I have tried to remember the dead
 to discern why they died
Often I cannot speak
Often I cannot stop speaking

Time cannot heal such wounds
 only hide them
 until they materialize
 in the shimmering pool
 of the bottle.

I drink to forget
 that I can never forget

I am a charter member of the brotherhood
of the thousand yard stare
A name in the tragic lineage
of the book of the dead
A reminder to all
of what we lose
when we forget
the evil truth

I am a prisoner
of the madness of men
who have relinquished their souls

In this Place Where the Sun Never Shines

There is a quiet here
A stillness more pervasive than the grave
A haunting vacuum created by
the sighs of those who have known
loss
abuse
ridicule
injustice
loneliness

It is the silent emptiness
of lives whose dreams were let slip by
of lips on the deathbed that whisper
“If only...If only...”

It is the place we all visit
from time to time
Life, by its nature, is not without its silences
It is a place from which some never escape
for its pull is often stronger than the will
and we slide down its banks
without even recognizing
that we are moving

Yes, there is an eternal quiet here
that lies waiting knowing patient
for it has nothing but time

When the Shadows Run from Themselves

By the time you finish reading this
my mind will be gone

It is the most insidious of diseases
A cancer that eats away at your identity
until you are but a shell
staring at a sea
yet no longer a part of it

What is the worst
is that you are not taken blissfully
all at once
but are carved up
piece by piece
until the final peace

I know I was a child once
since we all begin as one
I must have had parents
who loved me
were there at graduations
birthdays
weddings
funerals

But
There is no place in my mind where those memories reside
no movie of my life I can replay
for warm comfort on dark nights

Someone had to have put me here
abandoned me in this place of nameless faces
sitting in this wheelchair
wasting away
staring out an opaque window

How strong must have been their emotions
How hideous must have been my decline
for them to have left me here

The night is stealing over me
a fog upon troubled waters
I release myself to it
embrace my dissolution

I shall awaken tomorrow
and read these final words

“I **remember** you”