

THE PARTICIPATION TROPHY

Game faces glowed for the love of the clash,
Some were scared, but they still came,
Rain didn't matter, they were just kids.
Trophies would be given.

There was thunderous noise and chest pounding,
Yelling and screaming urged them on.
Even the news reported the explosive drama,
Points were made and the crowds cheered.

Nobody kept score, it didn't matter,
Much money changed hands.
Winning was not the goal—it never was.
But every player would get a trophy.

It's true, there were no winners,
But the losers piled up; was that fair?
More money changed hands—business thrived,
Everybody got a participation trophy.

Too many brave warriors would not finish the game,
They would go home early.
More replacements would come,
To fill those empty shoes and claim their trophy.

Going home was the only real goal,
The blood, sweat and tears would be wiped away.
But even the waiting pizza would not fill the emptiness,
That trophy was proof they were there.

A yellow and red striped ribbon
Was pinned securely to my chest. My trophy!
The game was over for me,
My replacement came.

It's true—we didn't win that one, but business grew,
Profits were up and the trophies never stopped.
It was nineteen sixty-nine,
I boarded the plane and said goodbye to Vietnam.