

ignem et mortem

never will I say how our end came to be,
 above our heads, birds no longer sing their own songs.
 startled by jets, the f-4 phantom fades from sight
 as charlie's head dropped to take cover. the trees
 and grass dance feverishly while those ghosts jettison
 napalm canisters tumbling like dandelion spores

 meant for stubborn charlie, a determined weed
 amongst the grass, for orange has proven to be a double agent.
 the dragon's breath will root him out of those
 bunkers and trees, his ambushing thoughts
with the drop on us, air cavalry trying to ride to our rescue.

 punji keeps us from covering fast ground, our progress mined by tripwire
 as sweating fingers lose positions on the trigger,
 and we wait for the blinding orange flash.
 charlie killed along with jungle-burned memories

 as the heat washes over us, the sun suffocates our faces,
then all is quiet as birds sing again, no flesh carries the message.