

**Stuff**

**David F. Freschi**

**Opened the drawer, fumbled a cloth away**

**A briar pipe, dad's gift**

**Bought before I left, roughly**

**Placed in my hand, "break it in right."**

**A bonding in that smoke, eyes glassy**

**Hadn't seen that shine before**

**Stem, tooth scarred, useless now**

**Incoming will do that**

**Just another pucker factor**

**The lighter, little map of 'Nam engraved**

**Hue, Da Nang, Saigon. DMZ**

**Still shiny, still works, flick a spark**

**Carried so many boring**

**Blood filled, terror striking, foot aching miles**

**Flak jacket pocket stuffed with**

**A New Testament, 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm marked**

**Still read, still a comfort**

**All the rowdy variations shadows in my mind**

**Sweat stained, it rode, heart close in**

**Multi pocketed jungle fatigues**

**Sgt. Stripes and a corpsman badge**

**Black coating worn now to dull brass**

**Collar tabs, a great aiming point**

**An ID card, red cross on the back**

**"Hold that up Doc, they'll stop shooting**

**Yeah it's in the rules" Hold it up and kiss**

**Your butt good bye.”**

**Each still has the power to start**

**A movie trailer, always fresh sound and perfect color**

**Years later the smells return**

**These lifetimes past, admission paid**

**But the credits never play.**