

The Kiss

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That's all it was, a kiss

Didn't mean anything

Pulling out the next day- big op up

Young man, nervous, scared, ready

Half an hour left till the gates closed

Shutting little runaway pleasures down

Time would become the ritual

Of packing and unpacking over and over

Morphine counted, enough dressings

Got to be able to stuff a few more someplace

Luck pieces packed, corpsman's personal tools

Rush down a dusty street, the only one

Ville emptying of green men in baggy pants

Saw Missy Lan, saw the smile

Stopped and bought a coke, almost cool

There she was, only a space away

"You going to the valley"

How'd she know? I hadn't heard yet

A coldness rumbles my gut

We always lose some in the valley

Up on tiptoes, she brushes a feathery touch

Smell of Jasmine and cooking fire

"Be safe Bacsi, be safe"

And she disappears and a young man/boy

Confused and grateful for the touch of warmth

That pushes the cold back for just a moment,

**A few precious moments, trudging
Back through the gate, a lightness in my step
Before tomorrow's walk
To meet other young men and clash
In the valley that always mauls with fire and pain
No touch, no embrace
Just a kiss that's all it was
Didn't mean anything, nothing. Move on.**