

Watching HUE

David Freschi

They went into Hue

After bloody TET, that

Victory, that cost so much

Take it back, the task, the duty

Ancient citadel, sacred ground

Part of a country's soul

Made more sacred now with marine blood

Scarred with mass graves

Wounds of modern steel

Courtesy of the liberators till

Marines come to erase their evil

My battalion, every night on TV

Minutes of unaware stardom

On the evening news, I watched and watched

Block by bloody block they worked

Pros, scared and magnificent

Wished I was there, glad I wasn't for a minute

Then back to watching, wishing, agonizing

"Hey see that guy, right there, I know him."

That's a 1/5 corpsman, I know him

Nobody saw, too busy averting eyes from

Depressing news, avoiding, avoiding me as well

And then another and another

Some bloodied, some tired, some dead

Brothers all, moving to the gun

Ever moving to the gun

I don't bother pointing them out anymore

Pride swirls with guilt, a bitter cocktail, glass ever full

No matter my efforts to drain it

City finally cleared, another page

In their gloried history for the scribes

A victory ignored and belittled by the ungrateful

Chiseled in thousands of hearts

But I saw it and salute it still as

I sip once again, while tears freshen the glass

I see them still, street by street

Though others still don't

Never knowing they don't deserve such men

Pride and guilt, honor kept once more

A Toast to them, to us.