

Soul's Tattoo

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Battalion aid station, on duty

Hot, dry, flaps up, dust every where

Highway in sight down the hill

Traffic heavy- trucks, jeeps, bikes

Sounds in the distance

Not the usual combat sounds

Closing on the entrance

"Doc, doc, got a kid here. Hurt,

Hurt bad- just a little guy."

Oh, crap- mom and dad with him?

Fear and grief battered already

Start to work, start rescue breathing

"You breathe, I'll compress." Yes sir

Smoke, dust, sweat, and taste of copper

Assault senses, forcing my breaths back

Rhythm started, what were you doing

In the road little one? You're not a truck

No answer, keep working- parent's eyes

Like grasping fingers claw at my heart

"Stay with me, Stay with me."

A gurgle? A breath? I felt it

I know I did and hope starts

Please Lord please bring it back

And we work on and on

"Don't you go, stay here to play."

Anger mixes with the desperation

"Stay you little bugger, we're giving it everything."

Closest thing to a hospital
This filthy, dusty tent, and desperate men
Traces of blood and vomit pass my lips
To be part of my body forever
And we work on and on as
Another presence is felt tugging
At the tiny body
And we wrestle on NO defeat
Both feel God's hand guide a little soul
To the angels and light
Yet we work on, both feeling the same
Eye contact on each other and not the mother
Beyond our strength, two combat hardened, helpless men
Till finally, Dr. calls it
Too exhausted for tears
I wipe the little face, smearing dust
Closing unseeing eyes, A face
That even then I know will
Walk with me through this life
The taste, the smell, the touch
The mother's face my soul's tattoo