

There's A Stranger In Your Bed, And You're Not Alone!

(ODE TO WIVES OF VIETNAM VETS)

Susan Pennington - 1987

There he stands, big, strong,
A splendid specimen,
At least to you, you're in love.
He's deserving and proud.

He hides behind a mask of smiles, radiating out to you.
Desiring to love, care, and adore you as much
As you do him.
But, he cannot.

For he is a Vietnam vet.
He's tough, mean, cruel, and impossible to please.

As you exchange vows, promising to love, honor, and cherish,
Little do you know what lies ahead?
With each passing day, each hour, he will change,
Without warning, without even a hint,
The man you fell in love with, is suddenly gone.
So, it seems.

Shame, for in his mind, where once lived tenderness and
compassion, there is now confusion, anger, fear, and weakness
Causing him to forget who he really is.
But you, must not!

Though for the time he is miserable and painful to live with, it
Isn't you or him; it's "THEM."

"THEM" - Noises in the dark.
"THEM" - Damp, rainy nights.
"THEM" - Silent moments, bringing even the
Strongest man to his knees.
"THEM" - Old men and young women at home -
They would not pose a threat.

DON'T TAKE CHANCES, KILL - KILL

What a terrible life for anyone, especially a young boy,
Fresh from his High School prom.
What would his life be now if he hadn't answered the call,
Perhaps, ran instead.

But, now he is yours - and he needs you.
He needs your strength to override his weaknesses.
He needs your courage to understand his own fears.
He needs your stability of caring, to clear his confusion.
And more - he needs your love,
to still the anger so deep within.

So, stand by him in his madness,
And try to understand.
(Though he believes no one can)
I believe you can!
Be there for him, when he cannot be there
for himself.

Be true to this volcano of a man, who erupts
Day or night, for no apparent reason.
He has reasons!

He answered his nation's call.
He performed his duty.
He did things, saw things that no one should have to do or see.
Respect? A pat on the back?
NO!
A back turned?
YES!

He has memories of times he wants to forget.
His country has forgotten times it should remember!

So, give him the time - he will come back
Give him the patience - he will come back
Give him the respect - he will come back
Give him the understanding - he will return unto himself.
But more, give him your love, and he will come home.

Remind him of the good times shared - and he'll return.
Remind him also, to believe in the four things on which he
always can depend:

God
His family
The brotherhood of veterans
And most of all - himself.

For once he was a man,
Built of iron and steel.
A Hell of a man,
Who got a raw deal.

