

Rolling Thunder

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I still hear the rolling thunder,
I still feel the melting heat
I still smell the flesh and fire,
Feel the pain of soul's defeat.
I still feel the distant rumble,
Flashes, roaring, rain-dark night
Smell wet stench of rotting jungle,
Sweat-stung eyes squint from flare-light.
I still hear the rolling thunder,
See the green, the brown, the red
That drape the mangled mannequins,
Hear the songs of those now dead.
I still hear the rolling thunder,
Speak the chant of sing-song names
See the faces in "rock" blared bar-rooms,
That fade in the crack of lightning flames.
I still am the rolling thunder,
I still am the living dead
And still walk the mire and rice fields,
Where youth and blood were shed.
I still feel the rolling thunder,
See the pocked and naked land
Hear the roar of rolling thunder,
But not of crowd nor marching band.
I still see the sand-bagged trenches,
Feel the pain of fear-burned mind
I still hear the rolling thunder,
But no cheers from those behind.
I yet hear the rolling thunder,
From the clouds and cloudless sky
Raining death on bamboo huts,
And still ask the question. . . . Why?