

# Tsunami Conflict

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from a beach in Vietnam  
a young soldier plucked a shell—  
the remains of a white shell—  
a spiraled—nautilus—breast-shaped—round—shell  
that he carried back to the jungle  
of night's death, surreality of rotting flesh—  
a camaraderie of confusion.

the soldier's thumb  
fits into the underside of curves and topical ridges  
an inverted nipple  
a confluence of politics  
a paradox of ethics  
that he carries in his rucksack  
and M-16.

an old man—an old woman—  
the soldier—the shell—  
children—gains—losses  
washing across beaches  
his thumb still in the shell  
still tracing  
the topography of survival.