



# MORAL INJURY, WAR & RECLAIMING THE SOUL

Discussion Series  
Theater: The Warriors Art Form



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
Humanities

## **The Warrior's Path: Moral Injury, War and Reclaiming the Soul**

### **Discussion Guide for Veteran-to-Veteran Discussion Group with Feast of Crispian**

The discussion group series is purposefully designed to provide you the time and support to reflect on and discuss experiences with war and moral injury (the characters or yourself should you choose to). You will have the opportunity to develop your own stories, through writing scenes or poems to share with the public, again, only if you so choose.

**Location:** UWM Peck School of the Arts Mainstage Theater Lobby  
**Timing:** 5 discussions, 1x per week, 90 min, 30 min optional story creation  
Thursdays 6-7:30pm Oct 18-Nov 15, 2018

**Day 1:** Henry V, Act 4, scene 7 and Guard at the Binh Thuy Bridge, John Balaban (Vietnam)  
What are the consequences of facing choices where there is no moral “right choice”?

**THEME:** honor and moral injury  
(killing of porters) framing moral injury

**Day 2:** Henry V, Act 4, Scene 1 and Sadiq by Brian Turner (Iraq)  
How can a soldier afford to let in moral pain while carrying out repugnant orders?

**THEME:** moral responsibility and loyalty

**Day 3:** Henry VI part I, IV,v and Ways of Looking at an IED by Hugh Martin (Iraq)  
What is the “ultimate sacrifice”?

**THEME:** sacrifice and loyalty

**Day 4:** Henry IV, II, iii and Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen (WWI)  
What is the cost of heroism?

**THEME:** heroism and returning home

**Day 5:** Coriolanus, II, ii and Facing It by Yusef Komunyakaa (Vietnam)  
How do the characters exploit their heroism?

**THEME:** heroism and military values



## Theater: The Warrior's Artform

## Discussion circle prompts and structure

6-6:30	Feast of Crispian Scenes
6:30-7:15	Circle Discussion
7:15-7:30	Closing

### For each round:

1. Each person states name
2. Give a minute for people to write down thoughts
3. Group takes 2 breaths between each person

### Remind Everyone of the Themes of the Week

**Round 1:** What kind of emotional/physical responses did you have to the scene? **(20 min timed)**

Can you describe a personal experience (from service or civilian life) that impacts your interpretation of the scene?

### Open Conversation: **(25 min) – this is flexible**

1. Do you feel pulled in different directions or feel conflicted regarding the things we discussed today?
2. What has helped you work through these feelings?
3. Does anyone want to talk about the poem (you can have someone read it) that was paired with the scene?
4. Ask the specific question on syllabus if people are not talking

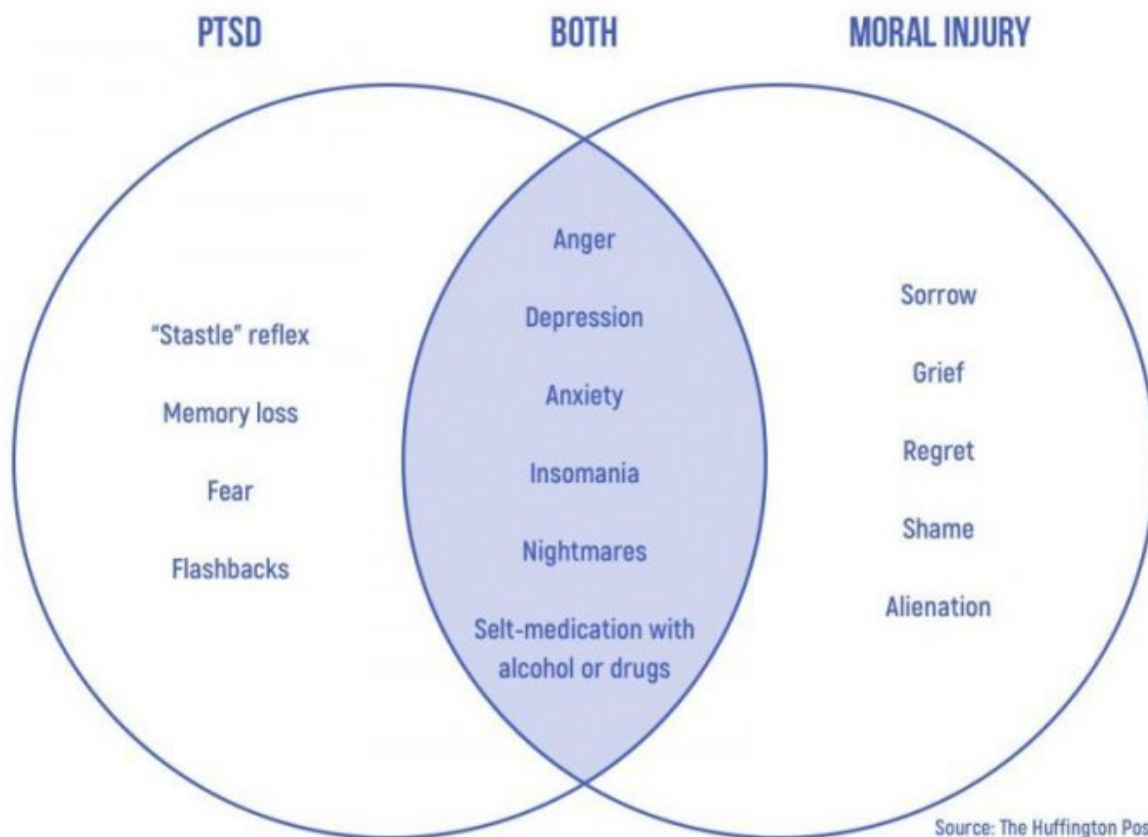
**Closing:** **(10 minutes within group and 5 minutes whole group)**

Check in and see how people are doing/Comments



Agreements	Redirect Prompts
<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Agreements</p> <p>Use 'I statements', I won't speak for a whole group</p> <p>Avoid generalizations: connect beliefs to specific experiences in my life</p> <p>Don't criticize, judge, or persuade others: work to understand, be respectful</p> <p>Share airtime, don't interrupt unless I can't hear</p> <p>Pass if not ready, come back to me</p> <p>In discussing outside of circle, I WILL NOT CONNECT NAMES or identifying info to comments,</p> <p>not share on social media w/out permission.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use Agreements to Redirect</p> <p>Step 1: I want to PAUSE the conversation for a second                      Step 2: I'm HEARING...                      Step 3: I'd like to REMIND the group of the agreement...                      Step 4: I INVITE you to (relate to agreement)...</p> <p><i>To cut people off: I don't want to disrespect you but in respect of the group I have to stop you, there will be more time in open conversation...</i></p>





<http://sunrisedocumentary.com/impact-campaign/moral-injury/>

## VETERANS

Veterans carry moral injuries with them because often they are too ashamed to tell anyone. One of the most healing things Veterans can do is share these experiences with other Veterans that have similar stories. Receiving acknowledgement from other Veterans is important to know they are not alone in their moral conflicts. Sharing with a trusted loved one can also be comforting and relieve some of the burden.

## Henry V, SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

*Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER*

**FLUELLEN**

Kill the boys and the luggage! 'tis expressly against the law of arms: 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offer't; in your conscience, now, is it not?

**GOWER**

'Tis certain there's not a boy left alive; and the cowardly rascals that ran from the battle ha' done this slaughter: besides, they have burned and carried away all that was in the king's tent; wherefore the king, most worthily, hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O, 'tis a gallant king!

**FLUELLEN**

Ay, he was born at Monmouth, Captain Gower. What call you the town's name where Alexander the Pig was born!

**GOWER**

Alexander the Great.

**FLUELLEN**

Why, I pray you, is not pig great? the pig, or the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings, save the phrase is a little variations.

**GOWER**

I think Alexander the Great was born in Macedon; his father was called Philip of Macedon, as I take it.

**FLUELLEN**

I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is born. I tell you, captain, If you mark Alexander's life well, Harry of Monmouth's life is come after it indifferent well; for there is figures in all things. Alexander, God knows, and you know, in his rages, and his furies, and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods, and his displeasures, and his indignations, and also being a little intoxicates in his brains, did, in his ales and his angers, look you, kill his best friend, Cleitus.

**GOWER**

Our king is not like him in that: he never killed any of his friends.

**FLUELLEN**

I speak  
but in the figures and comparisons of it: as Alexander killed his friend Cleitus, being in his ales and his cups; so also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his good judgments, turned away the fat knight with the great belly-doublet: he was full of jests, and gibes, and knaveries, and mocks; I have forgot his name.

**GOWER**

Sir John Falstaff.

**FLUELLEN**

That is he: I'll tell you there is good men born at Monmouth.

**GOWER**

Here comes his majesty.

*Alarum. Enter KING HENRY, and forces; WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, EXETER, and others*

**KING HENRY V**

I was not angry since I came to France  
Until this instant. Take a trumpet, herald;  
Ride thou unto the horsemen on yon hill:  
If they will fight with us, bid them come down,  
Or void the field; they do offend our sight:  
If they'll do neither, we will come to them,  
And make them skirr away, as swift as stones  
Enforced from the old Assyrian slings:  
Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have,  
And not a man of them that we shall take  
Shall taste our mercy. Go and tell them so.

## **HENRY V Act 4 Scene 1**

### **KING HENRY V**

methinks I could not die any where so contented as in the king's company; his cause being just and his quarrel honourable.

### **WILLIAMS**

That's more than we know.

### **BATES**

Ay, or more than we should seek after; for we know enough, if we know we are the king's subjects: if his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us.

### **WILLIAMS**

But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in battle, shall join together at the latter day and cry all 'We died at such a place;' some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of any thing, when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it; whom to disobey were against all proportion of subjection.

### **KING HENRY V**

So, if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness by your rule, should be imposed upon his father that sent him: but this is not so: the king is not bound to answer the particular endings of his soldiers, the father of his son, for they purpose not their death, when they purpose their services. Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own.



**WILLIAMS**

'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon  
his own head, the king is not to answer it.

**BATES**

But I do not desire he should answer for me; and  
yet I determine to fight lustily for him.

## Henry VI part 1 – Act 4 scene 5 –RE-CUT VERSION

*[Enter TALBOT and JOHN his son]*

- **Lord Talbot** O young John Talbot! I did send for thee
- To tutor thee in stratagems of war,
- But, O malignant and ill-boding stars!
- Now thou art come unto a feast of death,
- A terrible and unavoyded danger:
- Therefore, dear boy, mount on my swiftest horse;
- And I'll direct thee how thou shalt escape
- By sudden flight: come, dally not, be gone.
  
- **Young Talbot** Is my name Talbot? and am I your son?
- And shall I fly? O if you love my mother,
- Dishonour not her honourable name,
- To make a bastard and a slave of me!
- The world will say, he is not Talbot's blood,
- That basely fled when noble Talbot stood.
  
- **Lord Talbot.** Fly, to revenge my death, if I be slain.
  
- **Young Talbot.** He that flies so will ne'er return again.
  
- **Lord Talbot.** If we both stay, we both are sure to die.
  
- **Young Talbot** . Then let me stay; and, father, do you fly:
- Flight cannot stain the honour you have won;
- But mine it will, that no exploit have done:
- You fled for vantage, everyone will swear;
- But, if I bow, they'll say it was for fear.
- There is no hope that ever I will stay,
- If the first hour I shrink and run away.
  
- **Lord Talbot** . Shall all thy mother's hopes lie in one tomb?
  
- **Young Talbot** . Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's womb.
  
- **Lord Talbot** . Upon my blessing, I command thee go.

- **Young Talbot** . To fight I will, but not to fly the foe.
- **Lord Talbot** . Part of thy father may be saved in thee.
- **Young Talbot** . No part of him but will be shame in me.  
If death be so apparent, then both fly.
- **Lord Talbot** . And leave my followers here to fight and die?  
My age was never tainted with such shame.
- **Young Talbot** . And shall my youth be guilty of such blame?  
No more can I be sever'd from your side,  
Than can yourself yourself in twain divide:
  - Stay, go, do what you will, the like do I;
  - For live I will not, if my father die.
- **Lord Talbot** Then here I take my leave of thee, fair son,
  - Born to eclipse thy life this afternoon.
  - Come, side by side together live and die.
  - And soul with soul from France to heaven fly.

## HENRY IV pt 1

### SCENE III. Warkworth castle

*Enter HOTSPUR, solus, reading a letter*

#### HOTSPUR

*'But for mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your house.'* He could be contented: why is he not, then? In respect of the love he bears our house: he shows in this, he loves his own barn better than he loves our house. Let me see some more. *'The purpose you undertake is dangerous;'*--why, that's certain: 'tis dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. *'The purpose you undertake is dangerous; the friends you have named uncertain; the time itself unsorted; and your whole plot too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition.'* Say you so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow cowardly hind, and you lie. What a lack-brain is this! By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant: a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation; an excellent plot, very good friends. What a pagan rascal is this! an infidel! Ha! you shall see now in very sincerity of fear and cold heart, will he to the king and lay open all our proceedings. Hang him! let him tell the king: we are prepared. I will set forward to-night.

*Enter LADY PERCY*

How now, Kate! I must leave you within these two hours.

#### LADY PERCY

O, my good lord, why are you thus alone?  
For what offence have I this fortnight been  
A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?  
Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee  
Thy stomach, pleasure and thy golden sleep?  
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,  
And start so often when thou sit'st alone?  
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks;

And given my treasures and my rights of thee  
To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?  
In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,  
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars;  
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed;  
Cry 'Courage! to the field!' And thou hast talk'd  
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,  
Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,  
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,  
Of prisoners' ransom and of soldiers slain,  
And all the currents of a heady fight.

Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war  
And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,  
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow  
Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream;  
And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,  
Such as we see when men restrain their breath  
On some great sudden hest. O, what portents are these?  
Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,  
And I must know it, else he loves me not.

### **CORIOLANUS Act 2 scene 3**

#### **MENENIUS**

O sir, you are not right: have you not known  
The worthiest men have done't?

#### **CORIOLANUS**

What must I say?  
'I Pray, sir'--Plague upon't! I cannot bring  
My tongue to such a pace:--'Look, sir, my wounds!  
I got them in my country's service, when  
Some certain of your brethren roar'd and ran  
From the noise of our own drums.'

#### **MENENIUS**

O me, the gods!  
You must not speak of that: you must desire them  
To think upon you.

#### **CORIOLANUS**

Think upon me! hang 'em!  
I would they would forget me, like the virtues  
Which our divines lose by 'em.

#### **MENENIUS**

You'll mar all:  
I'll leave you: pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,  
In wholesome manner.

*Exit*

#### **CORIOLANUS**

Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your  
voices that I may be consul, I have here the  
customary gown.

#### **First Citizen**

You have deserved nobly of your country, and you  
have not deserved nobly.

#### **CORIOLANUS**

Your enigma?

#### **First Citizen**

You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not indeed loved the common people.

**CORIO LANUS**

You should account me the more virtuous that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle: and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul.

**First Citizen**

You have received many wounds for your country.

**CORIO LANUS**

I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

## Paired Poems for the Feast of Crispian Discussions

**Sadiq** by Brian Turner, ca. 2005

It should make you shake and sweat,  
nightmare you, strand you in a desert  
of irrevocable desolation, the consequences  
seared into the vein, no matter what adrenaline  
feeds the muscle its courage, no matter  
what god shines down on you, no matter  
what crackling pain and anger  
you carry in your fists, my friend.  
It should break your heart to kill.

*Brian Turner served in the U.S. Army in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq before receiving his MFA from the University of Oregon. Winner of the Beatrice Hawley Award for 2005, *Here, Bullet* is a remarkable twenty-first century collection of poems written during wartime. What makes Turner's poetry so unusual and striking is his attention to language, his knowledge of Iraq's history and its themes (which his poems become a part of), and his ability to let his poems just hang off the edge of their own cliffs.*

*"Sadiq" is one of the shorter poems in *Here, Bullet*, but it stands out to me in its raw power and directness. It's a poem that begins almost at the end of a thought or an argument or a last breath. It is interesting to think about who the speaker is talking to in this poem, a particular "friend" or any reader who happens to be reading this poem at any given moment. Also, the use of "should" complicates these short lines in a number of ways.*



**The Guard at the Binh Thuy Bridge** by John Balaban ca. 1974

How Still he stands as mists begin to move,  
as morning, curling, billows creep across  
his cooplake, concrete sentry perched mid-ridge  
over mid-muddy river.

Stares at bush green banks which bristle rifles, mortars, men—perhaps.  
No convoys shake the timers No sound but water slapping oat side, bank sides, pilings.  
He's slung his carbine barrel down to keep the boring dry, and two banana-clips instead of  
one are taped to make, now, forty rounds instead of twenty.

Droplets bead from stock to sight; they bulb, then strike his boot.  
He scrapes his heel, and sees no box bombs floating towards his bridge.

Anchored in red morning mist a narrow junk rocks its weight  
A woman kneels on deck staring at lapping water.

Wets her face.

Idly the thick Rach Binh Thuy slides by.  
He aims. At her. Then drops his aim. Idly.

*During the Vietnam War, Balaban was a conscientious objector; He went to Vietnam with the International Volunteer Services where he taught at a university until it was bombed in the Tet Offensive. He was wounded in the shoulder by shrapnel and evacuated; after his recovery, he worked to save burned and injured children from the war. He left Vietnam in 1969, but returned in 1971 to work on Ca Dao Viet Nam, a collection of poems in the Ca Dao folk tradition. Balaban's first published collection of verse, *After Our War* (1974), was a Lamont Poetry Selection of the Academy of American Poets.*

## Ways of Looking at an IED by Hugh Martin ca. 2012

*Notice that in both photographs of the artillery shells there is a wire leading from the bag. Also notice that the plastic bag had sand thrown on top of it to make it look more like roadside trash.*

*--1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Soldier's Handbook to Iraq*

1

Beside the field of potato rows  
Sumey sees an alarm clock

taped to a two-liter bottle. We create  
a perimeter, back up the trucks, flatten

the potatoes under tires.  
The Explosive Ordnance Disposal team

isn't sure; when they're not sure,  
they blow it up.

2

*Why don't you walk over there, Spoon says,  
and get yourself a Purple Heart.*

3

With a broom, a woman beats a rug  
draped over a clothesline. LT waves her away, *Bomb,*

*bomb*, he says, but she shakes her head,  
turns her hips to swing again.

4

Spoon is awarded  
the Purple Heart in June

when the shrapnel misses his head,  
but the bricks that hide the bomb

knock him unconscious.

5

When the shell detonates beside our truck,  
the sound is too loud to hear; the wind wraps us  
with shrapnel, bricks, smoke; the ballistic windshield  
shatters; glass on Kenson's cheek—

blood like smeared lipstick.

6

For three hours we clear the neighborhood  
because of a black plastic bag.

The staff sergeant in the bomb suit  
orders everyone to *back the fuck up* even further.

In the bag he finds six ripe tomatoes.

7

Sergeant Sumey says he almost vomits  
turning I the turret

to see our truck vanish  
inside smoke. *Thought you were all dead.*

8

We avoid trash, disturbed soil, animal carcasses.  
We arrest men

who dig beside the road.  
We hate the ground.

9

Outside the city: rocks stacked  
like our children's building blocks.

Sergeant Kenson won't wait for EOD. *It's nothing,*  
he yells, and no one can stop him

when he starts to walk;  
even LT tries to restrain him, but he walks,

and all four of us in the truck shout,  
but it's no use. When he lifts his leg

to kick the pile,  
we look down. We close our eyes.

*Hugh Martin is a veteran of the Iraq War and the author of The Stick Soldiers (BOA Editions, Ltd., 2013) and So, How Was the War (Kent State UP, 2010). He teaches at Gettysburg College.*

**“Dulce et Decorum Est”** by Wilfred Owen, ca. 1917

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
o tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,  
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime. . .  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.  
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et Decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

*Wilfred Owen was born in England in 1893. By 1915, Owen had become increasingly interested in World War I and enlisted in the Artists’ Rifles group. After training in England, Owen was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He was wounded in combat in 1917 and evacuated a hospital near Edinburgh after being diagnosed with shell shock. It was at this time Owen wrote many of his most important poems, including “Anthem for Doomed Youth” and “Dulce et Decorum Est.” His poetry often graphically illustrated the horrors of warfare, the physical landscapes that surrounded him, and the human body in relation to those landscapes. His verses stand in stark contrast to the patriotic poems of war written by earlier poets of Great Britain, such as Rupert Brooke. Owen rejoined his regiment in Scarborough in June 1918, and in August, he returned to France. He was awarded the Military Cross for bravery at Amiens. He was killed on November 4 of that year while attempting to lead his men across the Sambre-Oise canal at Ors. He was 25 years old.*

**Facing It** by Yudef Komunyakaa, 1993

My black face fades,  
hiding inside the black granite.  
I said I wouldn't,  
dammit: no tears.  
I'm stone. I'm flesh.  
My clouded reflection eyes me  
like a bird of prey, the profile of night  
slanted against morning. I turn  
this way—the stone lets me go.  
I turn that way—I'm inside  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
again, depending on the light  
to make a difference.  
I go down the 48,022 names,  
half-expecting to find  
my own in letters like smoke.  
I touch the name Andrew Johnson;  
I see the booby trap's white flash.  
Names shimmer on a woman's blouse  
but when she walks away  
the names stay on the wall.  
Brushstrokes flash, a red bird's  
wings cutting across my stare.  
The sky. A plane in the sky.  
A white vet's image floats  
closer to me, then his pale eyes  
look through mine. I'm a window.  
He's lost his right arm  
inside the stone. In the black mirror  
a woman's trying to erase names:  
No, she's brushing a boy's hair.

*Komunyakaa served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970, during which time he wrote for army newspaper Southern Cross earning him a Bronze Star. Komunyakaa is a recipient of the 1994 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, for Neon Vernacular and the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.*