**Dragon--
The Long Night**© 2013 by Don Poss

I felt the dragons speckled breath
And grinned as he fled my glare.

Then left Vietnam that indifferent day
having played my part in war

Once scoffed I the dragon's jest ...
As his shadow of wing swept o’er

His barking sigh laughed death's
cry with booming broadsides
and slashing chords

Decades flickered like an old silent film,
Too swift, as time will do
And the shadow wing soars still
and dives like a ghost uninvited.

Gathering spirits seems dragon’s hobby
Devouring souls his skill
he scours the body,
consumes best and
leaves the mind for last.

He alighted and flapped and
screeched his taunt
And the night came
… as I knew it would

Wing-shadow, from autumn's moon
I felt the dragon's misty breath
like fog settling upon my brow…
wait! It's much too soon...
I have years due me

I cannot hide he has found my redoubt
A last fortress I will defend
Serpent’s eyes fixed on me
a jest, turned mortal quest

I did not grin…
…*I felt a hermit's chill*He did not flee
...*clouds drifting...Quiet as night*he settle to seek his prey.

If it must be so,
committed was I
He too would end before dawn.

I sensed *Now*I, before my time...
Face drained of life, and
Bound for the long night’s rest.

... The rustle of wings
Like great canvas sail's aflutter
bends forest and tears bark tiles
from cabin’s roof...

As dragon turned and flaps away.

*LEGEND: What the poem portrays:*

*Dragon symbolizes Agent Orange.
The Long Night, is the life left to Veterans
before the great dark.
The Cabin is the diminished shell of man,
and the final fortress and refuge to defend.
The dragon’s sudden turn and flight
represents the ups and downs and
battles to survive veteran’s with Agent
Orange must endure, and
begs the answer as to whether the
dragon claimed another Vietnam Veteran’s life,
or left him…to toy with another time.*