**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.*