

On Hallowed Wing  
by Linda O'Connell

He roared out of the Midwest in a rusted Pinto,  
egged on by a hole in his muffler, an ache in his Semper Fi soul.  
Divorce and Nam -- two incessant buzzards -- ripped  
at his craw, stripping his corpse clean.

He headed toward the setting sun, skidded to a halt  
in a pile of sagebrush, quenched his thirst  
with a gulp of crisp Montana air; satiated  
his hunger with a riveting gaze.

Stomped gravel 'neath his snake skin boots, branded  
the mountain with his footprints, and at the apex,  
he captured his own flag.  
Liberated at the summit - his own DMZ.

Cast his worries to the firmament, took fancy-flight  
on eagle's wings. Dipped, dived. Dropped.  
Dead from a massive coronary  
fifty-six days into his 47th year.

At open grave, his eldest wailed and yearned  
for one last hug, a whiff, a word.  
Her mourning plea droned  
out the preacher's solemn dirge.

A lone bald eagle skimmed the trees, flew whisper-close;  
snatched Jen's breath, plucked her pain and agony,  
eased her wounded heart onto its wings  
then soared.

Slack-jawed, Jen eyed it till just a speck  
of longing graced the sky.  
She wiped a tear. Saluted.  
"Peace, at last cowboy. I love you Dad. Good-bye."

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