

THE PLAIN OF JARS

What havoc exploded
Monstrous caverns like inverted caverns
Gaping wounds, carved sinister grimaces
Onslaughts of B52's bound for the Ho Chi Ming Trail.
The plane circles over hundreds of massive jars,
Time and purpose lost in communal silence.

The plane lands, I face an awesome jar who speaks,
"Reverberations of the bombs still echo within,
I bear the retched earth upon my shoulders,
See the bullet holes, the fissures of my torso"?
Other jars join in intiphonal chorus,
"I listened to the swishing robes of the enlightened,
Watched caravans of silk, tributes for palaces of Cathay,
Craftsmen of porcelain captured for the conquerors".

"I felt the earth tremor with thundering hoofbeats,
Savage clashing swords, Burmese and Thai,
"I glimpsed a princess swaying in the golden palanquin,
A peace offering to the Kingdom of the Kymers,
I pled with the brothers, a nationalist, a communist,
Charging their armies in bloody fratricide.

"Avarice, jealousy, power, intrigue,
I have witnessed all the base emotions of man,
Zooming planes, bursting napalm, exploding CBU's
Cries of the anguished, terrors of children,
Faltering weak, raspings of the dying."

Man who raised the temple towers,
Tamed the angry rushing waters,
Bridged the mountains, burrowed tunnels,
Painted treasures, scribed pages of wisdom.
Man who walked upon the moon,
Split the atom, computerized chips.

Man endowed with the supreme gift of creation,
Made in the likeness of his Maker,
Why, Oh why are you once again destroying?
Are MX, Star Wars, life but playthings?
Only you can will and change,
Walls into dialogues,
Swords into plowshares,
Holocaust into peace.

The jars fell silent.