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The Veteran

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The Veteran

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Author Bio

Geoff Calver was born June 14, 1985 in Fribourg, Switzerland to two Canadian parents, thus making him a true maple-leaf toting Canuck. He fell in love with writing at the age of six when he read *The Art of War*. At age nine he befriended fellow French Canadian Jack Kerouac, as well as Allen Ginsberg, and Neal Cassady, subsequently he got himself into some trouble in Haight- Ashbury. In 2004 he began attending Gettysburg College. He is majoring in Writing the Narrative, a self-created major, and is a proud editor of the Mercury fiction section, he is also a frequent editorial writer for the Gettysburgian in the gonzo tradition of the late Hunter S. Thompson. He hopes to someday meet Ryan Adams and would like to travel the world, taste many exotic foods, and write about his experiences.

The Veteran

He sat down with trembling hands and tore open a paper sealed together many years before – he held a hand to his mouth – silence, drifting through the room like smoke trailing upwards and across the sky, a million different fixtures of light – and he through and through – thought to himself – and he paused and closed his eyes and relaxed a bit, and his hands fell to the green stucco chair arms, stumbling, taken victim by an unkind world and the terror that was gravity as it were – and overhead, in the dark sky a plane flew its course – and a man held a scotch on the rocks to his lips – and tasted sweet sin – and with it resigned his heart – and a thousand miles high a satellite, foreign metals and bright shining crystals, beamed images into a home – where a lady was sitting with her son in her lap, and his mouth smacked open and shut - open and shut - as he chewed on gum obscenely – and in the big black box with the flat screen the face of a man who seemed only half real related tragedy and horror and depravity and starving and the alcoholics and the homeless and the bums and the greedy corporations and the wars and the bombs and everything forever plaguing anything at all to the families in their rooms – and the woman threw half a steak, and bread, and a salad - untouched - into the garbage – and she picked her whites with a toothpick that came from the forests in some country where the jungle grew thick as ants on a warm summer's sidewalk in a town on a shore of a lake that stretches into the mountains with snow-covered hills – and all around was land – a land with beautiful mountains and aching hills, and flat plains that stretched on for miles – and somewhere, highway 95, a young man drove to Boston in a jalopy and parked in front of the recruiting station, where they moved men through in a hurry where out they left with pride-filled faces – and onto a boat where they sailed across an ocean to a land with accents and old churches and old houses and old cobblestone streets and fog and mist and celtic legends – where they met young women and drank in pubs and sailed across the channel – where they sat in a u-boat and shot their lives to hell – where shells went off all around and water splashed high and rocked the boats – and as the doors opened and bullets whizzed past his friend fell to the bottom of the sea – and they plowed through the countryside, with dead houses, and dead trees, and dead soldiers floating in flooded fields, parachutes still strapped to their backs – to a land where the sun never shone – and it was covered in soot from the flames and the bombings – where tommy's put holes in the enemies shirts and a red flag waved on a building – and to home they went and saw their girls and everyone smiled real happy – and his wife was in the kitchen fixing a meal – and listening to a voice on the radio saying this and that about Iraq and the way that everyone opposed it – and a voice full of southern, laid back drawl and indifference spoke aloud about how he was a man of the people and that he never paid attention to polls and he told men to be good sports and carry on their daddies traditions – and so the men lined up at the recruiting stations, rain pouring on their heads – and they frowned at each

other and lit cigarettes and dreaded to be pushed through – and when they came out it was into blinding sun and sand in their eyes – and a boy wakes up and realizes he's a man – and a bullet strikes his heart and he drops dead – and the man looked up from his green stucco chair and muttered holy hell – and a tear dripped from his tired eye as he read the letter written in '45 by a man he had known as Sarge – and his hands wept and his eyes they cried and he covered his hands with his face – and he sat sad and lonely and depressed and his wife hummed and hawed in the kitchen and he gave up – and he detests the southern president talking on the big black box and the way that he stands for nothing and far away in another land an American flag is burning.

MOLLY MASICH

A Poem

There are no answers to fill in the spaces between mind and soul.

Sometimes, Darling, I think of you

I get so excited and I can't get a word in

Though I am all alone

Somewhere a memory of your voice has grown.