

From Here to There and Back Again: Some Notes From the Journey

By Jim Carlton

A Soldier, a Sailor, and a Store Clerk

I don't really remember it,
not as a vision or anything like that.
It's just a feeling in there somewhere
deep down at the very essence of me.

It tells me I've been many things at
various times in numerous places on this earth.
I've sailed the seven seas as a pirate on a ship,
pilfering and taking, just for the adventure of it.

I was a soldier and a sailor, a tailor and a store clerk.
A priest needing souls to help, a sinner seeking a priest.
I have killed and destroyed in one time, yet elsewhere
brought new life into this world as a mother in pain.

And the last time I died on earth was in 1941
at Pearl Harbor entombed in the bowels of the USS Arizona.
This haunting memory sometimes still awakens me
from sleep by a nightmare of slowly smothering to death.

Bio

Jim Carlton has participated in the Veteran's Writers Group in Lincoln, Nebraska, since its inception in 2014.

Jim is an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Navy where he served onboard the aircraft carrier USS Ticonderoga, which was involved in Naval combat operations off the coast of Vietnam and in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War.

Jim is retired and lives in Lincoln with his wife and dog, Maggie. He has written these poems over a span of years. They have all been presented at the VA Writer's Group and have been edited and rewritten based on feedback and suggestions from the group.