

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

By Jim Carlton

## **Home from Vietnam**

Arriving home from the Vietnam War my body unscathed,  
hoping to put the haunting memories of combat far away.  
Let my hair grow long, left my beard unshaved  
after I came home to America where I thought I'd stay.

Searching and searching for the welcoming bands,  
looking even harder for my friends who had refused to go.  
All I could see was the blood on my trembling hands  
and the terrified faces of my buddies dying in a row.

Knowing it would be hard when I went to Vietnam,  
thinking I'd get used to death, suffering and strife.  
Reckoning I'd be able to forgive and forget some  
just as soon as I got back home to my civilian life.

Being home now from Vietnam for 50 some years,  
going to college, making a successful career from my BA degree.  
Retired now from working, I sometimes awaken with haunting fears  
from the visions of blood and death, unable to really be set free.

## **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.**