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5/6/13

Period 8

Documentary Poetry: Excerpts from an Interview with a Cameraman at My Lai

No one really explained the mission
Suspected Viet Cong sympathizers
Outlying area
I came in on the second lift
I heard gunfire
Women and children included
They were no Viet Cong
The GIs just opened up
Gunfire
Bones were flying in the air
I couldn't believe what I was seeing
Holding a small child in one arm
They were pleading
No reaction on the guy doing the shooting
They were trying to run
I don't know how many got out
Pleading
Just let them lie
The looks on their faces, the mothers were crying, they were trembling
Women and children
A GI knelt beside me and shot the little kid
Clumps of bodies
As many as 100 killed
Done very businesslike
They were no Viet Cong
Just poor, innocent, illiterate peasants
Businesslike
No one really explained the mission

Poem: *Reconciliation*

the two countries are discussing upgrading their strategic relationship
common interests aside, the relationship with the United States is complicated
sick civilians and wounded soldiers died buried
the scariest stories, to me, are always about what we can bear
they look to a younger generation epitomized by Foreign Minister Minh
hearing one abbreviation throughout my childhood: "Nam."

the entrance to the tunnels had been dilated for our large, Western bodies
schools and hospitals operated sunlessly
Vietnam is treated differently than the colossus China
Vietnam wants a U.S. presence for economic reasons and as a balance to China
in inverted funerals, their bodies had to be put aboveground
today Cu Chi is a theme park
Somewhere back in the sun, I assented to enter this nightmare
bamboo spikes that looked like old lion's teeth grinned at us
the hells we construct and endure
crackdowns on the news media are routine
stifles the entrepreneurial spirit
anyone who has been on a roller coaster when it grinds to a halt midflight knows this terror
we were going to... try not to entomb ourselves
younger leaders like the foreign minister face daunting challenges

progress has been made
we did make it out of the tunnel, gulping at a blue sky

- Gowri Buddiga