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# What I Lost in the War

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## *What I Lost in the War*

Small things: pocketknife with three blades,  
a good knife, although I'd broken one of the blades.

Cassette of the second Blood, Sweat & Tears  
album, purchased on R&R in Sydney—almost  
worn out anyway, so not a great loss, and  
I could hear “Sometimes in Winter” in my head  
anytime I wanted.

Socks. A poncho liner. Packet of pre-rolled joints  
I bought from a mama-san on a road near Phu Bai,  
but I think they were stolen by Stephenson, that  
pothead, so they probably don't count.

Larger things: 35mm camera purchased through  
the PX. Bought another camera, but ten years later  
lost all the photos I'd taken in Vietnam when my office  
burned during a summer fire that swept down  
the San Bernardino hills, a brief, hot exhalation  
that left the building next door untouched but took  
my office to the ground, transformed wood, glass,  
floors, typewriters, and all those sentences created  
on typewriters into piles of ash and debris.

Lost friends, of course, and abstract things: faith,  
certitude, the future. The Army sent me home after  
13 months, 10 days before I turned 21, but they  
wouldn't release my discharge papers till I turned in  
my field jacket—*wouldn't even let me keep the damn  
jacket*—couple of weeks before Christmas, 1970.