

“Ambush”

by Michael Foran

The first ambushes were staged just beyond
the streetlamps in summer out of the sight
of the parents, with boys betting that the drinking
would ease the *be home at* order,
and *come home* would give way to sleepouts
or, better yet, sleepovers
on the fringe of the neighborhood circle,
where once they found an *Arisaka*,
its length as long as the longest child’s body,
the bayonet slot touching chins, the bolt oily
still and ready to pinch the skin
of any grabbing hand,
in *that* basement, I learned to be quiet,
like the time the man
brought us all out to the dead stump,
unwrapped the burlap,
held the rifle up, slid the bolt forward,
first me, then the boys running into the ambush.

Michael Foran is from Ware, Massachusetts, and teaches literature classes at Holyoke Community College. Some of his poems have been published in: *Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors*, *Driftwood Press*, *Ocotillo Review*, *Blood Tree Literature*, *Medmic* and *As You Were: The Military Review*. A third generation U.S. Army veteran, he served as an infantry team leader, 1-17th CAV, 82nd Airborne Division.