

Classic Poetry Series

Forrest Hamer

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Lesson

It was 1963 or 4, summer,
and my father was driving our family
from Ft. Hood to North Carolina in our 56 Buick.
We'd been hearing about Klan attacks, and we knew

Mississippi to be more dangerous than usual.
Dark lay hanging from the trees the way moss did,
and when it moaned light against the windows
that night, my father pulled off the road to sleep.

Noises

that usually woke me from rest afraid of monsters
kept my father awake that night, too,
and I lay in the quiet noticing him listen, learning
that he might not be able always to protect us

from everything and the creatures besides;
perhaps not even from the fury suddenly loud
through my body about his trip from Texas
to settle us home before he would go away

to a place no place in the world
he named Viet Nam. A boy needs a father
with him, I kept thinking, fixed against noise
from the dark.

Forrest Hamer