

The Great Goodnight

Magellan

I was only four
I don't remember you
I have seen your pictures my whole life

Brother... in this great goodnight.
A black frame still protects those two
Letters from the President
They start out: On this day in May 1966
For wounds received in action
Still hanging here after all of this time
Right next to your purple heart
In this great goodnight.

I do have this one hazy memory
I think you had me up on your shoulders
Playing on top of the world for a moment
That couldn't last (it never does)
I love this black and white of you
Playing the harmonica like a giant at our old house
Sitting on that green sofa
You were only 19 but to this kid
You were probably more like 43.

I read an old clipping from the paper
It said they prayed for you
At the church
Now I know everyone
In the photograph
Long before the memorial rose
Looking so much different than today
I haven't touched that stone of names
But I have a tracing of yours

On this day in May 1966
For wounds received in action
Still hanging here after all of this time
Right next to your purple heart
In this great goodnight

But for some unknown reason
We never discussed it much growing up
I pieced together the
Whole story out of
That old trunk left in the attic

You'd been gone only 6 weeks
When the Army brass came
To the door knocking
Breaking the news -breaking our hearts
They broke the new to mom
She took it worse than anyone
She really believed- 'he didn't have to go
The draft missed him by a mile'
You could have walked away
But instead you had your final day in Vietnam

When they broke the new to mom

All I can say... she took it worse than anyone
She really believed he would make it back home
'He didn't have to go to Vietnam'

Here is what thay said;
They claymore went off and you went down
And you would have been ok
You would have been all right
But they could not get to you
The VC were everywhere
So the orders came....

We can't pull Jack out
For him it's getting late
But a hundred men
Won't see tomorrow
If we don't quietly wait

'We can't pull Jack out'...

You knew exactly
What was happening
-why nobody came
You were a good soldier,
Keeping still
Holding out as long as you did

On this day in May 1966...

Within an hour you relaxed
Somehow everything seemed ok
Cause in your soul you knew
Your time in Nam had passed away

...my brother.

With your shirt wet with blood
And your forehead cool
You thanked the Lord
For this Great Goodnight
In this moment of acceptance
This Great Goodnight
Brought you a peace
You'd never known
In this Great Goodnight
The war raging on
In this Great Goodnight
.....my brother.....

But brother let me tell you
It's what I know
So maybe one day
We can fill in the blanks

Until we meet again - brother
I'll choose this memory
We'll keep remembering
What you did
In that great goodnight

You couldn't hear the medic
Yelling in your ear
While you dreamed of this

Kid back at home
Saying pick me up
So we can play
Brother let me tell you -
I remember
And I think you made it
In that Great Goodnight
In fact, it's the only thing
I remember
From that Great Goodnight

Well brother let me tell you...
It's what I know.
Maybe one day we will
Stand together
Until we meet again
I'll choose this memory
And thank you guys
For what you did
And what you tried to do
In this Great Goodnight

On this day in May
For wounds received in action
...and now I see, my brother

This is for you.

And someday you will see that this song
Was for you, my brother.

Now that dat has joined you -
I'm sure that he would agree
Got a son on my shoulder
And lots of work to do, brother.
...like was done with me.