The Lesson

Rick Naymark*
“Let me help you Ned. I can, you know. I’m your friend.”
“You know I got guts Sarge. Don’t you?”
“Yes, Ned. I know you do.”
“I can take a chance too. Just like the chances we gave. Right Sarge?” He opened the revolver quickly, placed in a single round, closed it, and spun the chamber. But Doug could see that the hammer was down, so the bullet stopped, just before the barrel chamber.
“One chance in six Sarge. Better odds than we gave. I’m not afraid.”
“Ned. Wait! Mother of God!” He tried to run. But his feet were heavy, very heavy. And he moved barely at all. Something held him back. Gently. Like a soft web. He fought to break through.
“You’ll never know Sarge.” Ned placed the revolver to his temple. Pulled the trigger. And the gun fired.
Everything changed to slow motion as he rose into the air several inches. His eyes opened wide. And his arms floated upward. Then he crumpled slowly to the ground. Like a child’s doll. And all turned to blue ice peace.

The Lesson

by Rick Naymark

Mathematics, Sr.

Someday
The number of men killed in Viet-Nam
Or of square miles of vegetation made brown by defoliation
Or the name of the lieutenant who massacred a village
Of people
Will just be test questions
Passed in passing over a cold breakfast egg
By two students
and
nothing
more.