

After Watching Ken Burns' *The War*
For my father

My fingertip taps the brine-colored shape on the map.
Are you back at Cassino? Or wounded again at Bastogne?
I keep taking out the trash, wondering.

Here's my WWII history: *Combat! Rat Patrol. Hogan's Heroes.*
Von Ryan's Express. The Dirty Dozen. The Great Escape.
My fingertip taps the brine-colored shape on the map.

When you dream, does the blood of the dead run red to black?
Jack was never the same, your mother used to say.
I keep taking out the trash, wondering.

When mom was pregnant, you told funny barracks' stories.
Then Vietnam leaked black and white from our tv.
My fingertip taps the brine-colored shape on the map.

Towns, forests, dates. Why didn't I record your words?
Do they now, fragmented, bob back in my blood?
I keep taking out the trash, wondering.

Watching the war footage, I keep hoping I'll see you.
A teenager with old-man eyes that say: *This only the dead can know.*
My fingertip taps the brine-colored shape on the map.
I keep taking out the trash, wondering.