



VIETNAM – My First Mission As A Helicopter Doorgunner – 4.11.67

Beginning sun-up and loaded up
My pilot gave the order;
And very soon the dust ballooned
Beyond our rotor border.

With knotted gut and nervous smile
I lifted into air;
I thought of life...my kid...my wife..
Then flew to God-knows-where.

And flying there at tree-top height
Damn!!...I felt exposed;
I had to screen thick foliage green...
My door could not be closed.

Shrinking back on canvas seat
I sought out some protection;
If bullets slim should find my skin...
It offered no deflection.

Return to base...refuel...re-arm,
Then back at tree-top height;
In circles wide, with gun I tried
The enemy to smite.

These first few hours (of hundreds more)
Were etched into my mind;
'I must endure this twelve months tour
And get home to my kind.'



Terry BROOKS.