

Surprising God

By Bob Hanson

How does one surprise God?

I have heard the door or gate is not locked; it is always open.

Every day I think of Mike,
he told me about the river boat he was on,
the murky river water, many small boats alongside,
action all around. He was a sailor on a ship,
what the hell was he doing on a river boat, he often asked, even now.
Can't remember the name of the river,
but it was Nam...

You come home from war... you are different now.
No one seems to know that, "but glad you're back, bro," they say.
Yes, you are home, but then there is the addiction, not of killing but of forgetting.
The time comes to report, remembering one's service, out in the woods, away from it all. There is that
standing at attention, hair and beard trimmed, at muster for the last time... There was a strange silence
afterwards,

How does one surprise God?

I have heard the door or gate is not locked; it is always open.



Discussion Questions

1. What is the effect of starting this poem with an abstract question?
2. How is the passing of time handled by the speaker?
3. Describe each angle of the triangular relationship between God, the speaker, and the character Mike, and describe how each angle affects one another.

