

DAVID A. WILLSON

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—*Tan Son Nhut, 1967*

## Alms for the Burned

An image of her keeps coming back  
The bands of grief that bind her features  
The grey disgrace of the letter  
Written in a spidery script  
Held out in a red rashy hand  
Held out to a man who pushes by  
Annoyed at the touch  
She's attempted to make of him.  
But an image of her keeps coming back  
Although it's shoved away  
Again the taut pulled muscles  
Of her cheeks  
Again the red rash etched  
Across her fingers  
Spatter the time, the thought of the man  
With a question of why  
There is always the blame of the note  
The suspicion of the man  
That it's not the skillful  
Act of a professional  
Tagging alms from those susceptible to guilt  
But a woman whose family were truly  
Napalmed by Americans  
As the note claims  
It's not really unlikely, is it.

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David A. Willson is author of *REMF Diary: A novel of the Vietnam warzone* and *The REMF Returns*.