

DAVID VANCIL

Fallen Pony

near Dien Khanh, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam

We pulled up the jeep and told the man beating
the little pony with a whip as it lay
gasping on the ground between staves to stop.
“Put him in the shade of the tree,” I said.
“Give him some water,” said Sergeant Voter.
The villager smiled and nodded his head.
Nghi, our interpreter, made him promise.
My sergeant begged to return the same way
despite the risk. Villager and pony
were gone, as if we had dreamed them. I idled
the jeep in the middle of the dirt road.
I stared left and right and then drove away.

DAVID VANCIL retired from Indiana State University at the end of 2012 as a special collections librarian. He began teaching a literature course in the English Department in January 2013. He served as a Mobile Advisory Team adviser in Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam, from April 1969-April 1970. He has published both prose and poetry about his experiences in the military, including *The Homesick Patrol* (1995) and *Moon Walking* (2009).