

GREG MCBRIDE

The Research Dermatologist and I, the Army Photographer

In the Mekong Delta, Doc and I
chopped into a forward base camp
as if onto a Hollywood set,
a scene morose with soldiers who littered
scrubby flatland. We were REMFs,
rear-echelon motherfuckers, come
to ponder how they might survive.
Doc asked a soldier how many days
he'd slogged through paddies, slept wet in fatigues
and socks, how many leeches he'd burned
from his crotch. Doc turned to the sole and heel
and toes of a kaleidoscopic foot,
its welter of colors. *Wow! Get a close shot
of this!* Eye rapt in my viewfinder,
I marveled at fungal shadows,
scattered islands across the arch, the ankle,
under nails, the foot bloated, blue currents
coursing beneath yellow-purple knolls.
Wow I thought *Wow*, then snapped.

GREG MCBRIDE is the author of *Porthole* (Liam Rector First Book Prize for Poetry, Briery Creek Press, 2012) and *Back of the Envelope* (Southeast Missouri State University Press, 2009). His work appears in *Boulevard*, *Gettysburg Review*, *River Styx*, *Salmagundi*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. His awards include the *Boulevard* Emerging Poet prize and a grant in poetry from the Maryland State Arts Council. A Vietnam veteran and lawyer, he edits *The Innisfree Poetry Journal*.