

# PARADES

By Leonard Ances

Hail the conquering hero.  
The centurion rode tall in his chariot,  
constantly being reminded that he is not a God.  
The soldiers followed in their shining breastplates.  
Then the slaves and the plunder,  
were paraded for all to see.  
And the dead were left behind.

The Nazis marched through the Arc de Triomphe.  
On their way to killing and being killed.  
The Soviets trooped in Stalingrad, Warsaw, and Prague.  
The Allies paraded in Algeria, Paris, and eventually Berlin,  
Leaving behind fields of honored dead

I saw the Viet Cong flag fly over Saigon,  
now known as Ho Chi Minh City.  
As we went back to the World,  
to be welcomed by cries of baby killers and assassins.  
And our returning dead were stuffed with drugs,  
like Thanksgiving turkeys.

Today there are no parades.  
For the wars are never ending.  
And the dead come home concealed in darkness.  
Quietly unloaded from dimly lit cargo ramps,  
in flag draped coffins,  
with only their loved ones to mourn.