

Barry North

Not in the Body Count

I learned everything I need to know,
or want to know, about war
from the boy in our neighborhood
who returned from Vietnam
to sit on his front porch like a mute,
as though he had lost the ability,
or the right, to speak –
sat there for days,
which turned into weeks
and then months,
apparently staring out at
what he had seen, or maybe done,
until, one day, I guess, he realized
he couldn't stop looking at it
or keep looking at it,
and decided to just return to the good earth
like a failed crop.

Barry W. North is a sixty-nine-year-old retired refrigeration mechanic. Since his retirement in 2007, he has won the 2010 A. E. Coppard Prize for Fiction and Honorable Mention in the 2011 Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards. His published books are *Along the Highway* and *Terminally Human*. His new book of poetry, *In the Maze*, will be published by Finishing Line Press and will be released in August, 2014. For more information please visit his website. <http://www.barrynorth.org/>