

Untitled

By T. Kerr

Stella got back from Vietnam and everything changed
All her boyhood things went from her mother's house into the trash or the Goodwill
Everything
except one photo of her, as Steve, in the Rio Grande, that she kept
because her dad had taken it
The water had been muddy that day, just after the storms
Her dad had snapped the picture right before he jumped in to join her
They swam together for hours

She found a doctor in Chicago who was willing to 'doctor' the paperwork for the VA
She tried to forget all about South East Asia,
but it was tough
She wrote a "One Woman" play about a girl with a vegetable fetish
It sucked, but got rave reviews and ran for seven years, off Broadway

She had simple tastes
Nothing ostentatious
Most of the Money from the play went to veterans organizations
She kept some of it though, and bought a spread in the high desert
She wrote poems there
She scattered them to the prairie winds
Or tacked them to the walls of the shack until the ink faded from the sun, or the wind
spirited them away

On her last birthday she dug out the photo of Steve in the river and laid it on the table
She wished she had a photo of her dad, she thought
as she chambered a round in her 45

No one heard the ending
No one felt a thing
No alarm was sounded
Stella lived on her terms
– as volatile as they may have been

Only one regret
The Corps and Vietnam

Maybe that was two, but she really didn't care anymore.