1. Did the people of Viet Nam  
   use lanterns of stone?
2. Did they hold ceremonies  
   to reverence the opening of buds?
3. Were they inclined to quiet laughter?
4. Did they use bone and ivory,  
   jade and silver, for ornament?
5. Had they an epic poem?
6. Did they distinguish between speech and singing?
7. 1.Sir, their light hearts turned to stone.  
   It is not remembered whether in gardens  
   stone lanterns illumined pleasant ways.
8. Perhaps they gathered once to delight in blossom,  
   but after their children were killed  
   there were no more buds.
9. Sir, laughter is bitter to the burned mouth.
10. A dream ago, perhaps. Ornament is for joy.  
    All the bones were charred.
11. It is not remembered. Remember,  
    most were peasants; their life  
    was in rice and bamboo. When peaceful clouds were reflected

in the paddies and the water buffalo

stepped surely along terraces,  
maybe fathers told their sons old tales.

When bombs smashed those mirrors  
there was time only to scream.

1. There is an echo yet  
   of their speech which was like a song.  
   It was reported their singing resembled  
   the flight of moths in moonlight.  
   Who can say? It is silent now.