

New Poetry by Wayne Karlin: “What Binds Us”



FROM THE BOMBS / image by Amalie
Flynn

What Binds Us

I spent twenty-six years
in the jungle;
I was thirty years old
before I kissed a woman,
the Vietnamese poet said
and stared at
the American veterans
as if amazed at
what he had kissed instead.

In the war, he said,
his comrades had covered
his body with their own
to protect him
from the bombs
so he could finish
writing his poem,
although now
in his country
he fears there's no one
who will understand
the language
in which it was written.