

## *Soldier's Heart - Lee Burkins*

I've filled two cubic feet of yellow sheet paper with words. Piles of words strewn beyond juxtaposition and conflicting segments with no obvious connection in the literal sense. Writing filled with hesitant expression, unclear rambling and frightening demons. I've written and rewritten of battles but war is still lost to me in understanding. I need to express something besides the obvious battlefields. Horror and trauma are too familiar to us all. **War is hell.** Actual combat is a mother. **What I want to know is, what does a man do when he seeks to end war within himself? To be wounded is to experience pain. Pain is the root of all anger; Pain of body; Pain of heart; Pain of mind, psyche, and soul. Who or what is it that wounds us? Pain is the root of all anger. Anger is the root of violence. Fighting anger is an endless war. Rather we should understand the anger is because of pain. Finding the anger's root in the pain, identifying the wound then treating it will heal the anger. Lacking anger a human being is not likely to be an aggressor. Pain deposits anger. First there is pain but the anger manifests so sickly it masks the pain. Pain makes us weak. Anger makes us strong. Anger is something you can war with. Pain is what we most avoid.** Here I am finished with jump school and infantry training. In less than a week, I will ship out with an airborne unit to war. I am going to die. It's not the thought of going to war that pains me but the idea of having to follow incompetent leadership. Doomed by default. A casualty by someone else's orders. I am going to get stuck under the command of one of the Army's six-month-wonders, add water, shake and bake, instant Sergeants, who have no experience in real combat. From my previous encounters at the hands and orders of these instant NCO's, I know I am a dead man. Even before I was a soldier I experienced fighting. Bullies in elementary school and in the neighborhood. Wrestling in High School. **But war was beyond a black eye or bloody lip; the shock of life or death; your life or death. No winner. No loser; just horribly dead or frighteningly alive. War turned fighting into a necessary study. Defend or attack? Do you fight to survive or do you fight to kill? They are not the same fight.** Do you fight at all? As a soldier you are not supposed to question. As a Warrior you will have to. "The first power is '**the Word.**' Speak well enough and people will listen. Speak with authority and people will follow. **the Word.**' is basic to everyone's survival. If you sit at a boarding house table and the potatoes are at the other end of the table, you don't get any unless you speak. 'Pass the potatoes!' If you go into a store, you don't get any service unless you tell them what you want. If you need help you have to ask for it. If you want someone to do something for you, you have to use '**the Word.**' So, if someone in this society wants someone else to do something, they have to ask or persuade them with '**the Word.**' '**The Word**' is the first basic power in this world making events what they are." "This is where the second power comes into play. I say, hey Marvin, if you do this for me, I'll give you all this **Money!** And it's 'a lot of **Money.**' '**Money**' is the second power. Marvin says, well, tell me again what it is you want. I think I can help you out. But maybe Marvin says, no thank you I'm not interested." "Now the third power comes into play, '**Force.**' I say Marvin, either you do this or I'm going to kill you, your family and your friends. Our country does this daily on an international scale. The USA wants this. The little country says no can do. USA says, hey, I'll give you all this money. Little country says, no don't want it. USA says either you give me what I want or I'll engage economic sanctions against you and if that doesn't convince you, I'll bomb the hell out of you. This is how many societies function. Check the history books. Read current events." "That leaves us with the fourth power, '**Intention/Spirit.**' Now this power is unique because it is within the first three powers. What is my **Intention** in convincing you to do something for me. Is it for personal gain or the benefit of the both of us? Or think on this: Marvin, I've got all this money and I want to share it with you. Here, have a couple thousand. On me. But later I come around and say, hey Marvin, I need a favor. **What was my Intention in giving? Just to give or to give to get?** And what about **Force?** Do I exercise physical prejudice against you because you won't give me what I want or do I knock the bodily fluids out of you because you are a threat to all decency? What is the **Intention?**" My first direct experience with government was when I nineteen years old. I was told to report within thirty days of notice military service. If I did not report, as ordered, federal officials would come to my home and arrest me and imprison me. If I did not agree to go and kill human beings on the other side of the world I would be deemed a criminal. Essentially, the government kidnapped me and forced me to kill for them. Killing. A harsh word but that's the work of the infantry soldier. Engage the enemy and destroy them. I would again become a weapon. A weapon has a life within, a character of its own. It solicits use. It exudes fear. It aspires to create death. The use of weapons is lamentable but there is a time for every purpose. Even the sagacious will use a weapon when given no choice, but they never revel in its skill nor exult war. When what you hold to be most holy is attended by pain, destruction and death the spiritual expenditure is devastating. But one's own suffering is minimal compared to beholding the suffering of others. The sorrow of experiencing human beings at their worst and of not being able to help the victims is forever carried. **In war you sacrifice ideals for personal existence and the rage of killing. The experience will be permanent. The hazard is not risking one's life, but one's very humanity. When we were shooting the M-60 machine-gun, running fire and**

**maneuver drills, tossing hand grenades and setting off claymore mines, an alien personality possessed me. Resistance was futile. A demon released by the joy of war, pleased with its rage, lived itself through me. It was sentient destructive energy, immaculate in its love of self. Surviving a war is a blessing, living to understand it is a curse.** For there is no easy answer to relieve the pains of guilt, loss and especially the frustration of not even having a clear idea of what in the heart of myself needs answering. The mind sometimes seems as foggy as a battlefield covered in the haze of cordite, numbed into a purely empty void by the shock of what has incomprehensibly taken place. I couldn't imagine that it would take many, many years before any clear concept of the experience struck clarity within me. Every time I asked myself, "What the hell was that all about?" my ability to focus on the question was like trying to grasp a ghost. And for the time being, my answer to everything was, "it don't mean nothing." And I guess I did it because I knew I couldn't 'possess him' or 'own him.' **The war taught me that you couldn't possess or own anything. Life as you know and experience it is here one moment then gone the next. If you hold onto it, part of you suffers."** I have crossed the battlefields of guilt caused by making decisions that resulted in friends being killed. **The guilt of killing. The guilt of living.** And now I find myself journeying further, following the familiar marked path that leads to the recorded pains of life. I excavate. Face hair is allowed. You will wear a uniform identical with everyone else. You will not speak unless spoken to. You will do what you are told or suffer physical, emotional and mental consequences for your taking initiative to be an individual. Then your daily life will be subjected to purposely arranged twists and turns in expectations. **Training to expect the unexpected. You will be pushed to limits you will learn to go beyond, because life is about your survival. Your need to survive is what the training all points to. Combat. Kill or be killed. You will learn that use of force is a power that brings results. You will learn to use labels that de-humanize. You will learn that there is a time to kill. A time to kill. A time to kill. With your rifle, with your grenades, with your bayonet, with your bare hands.** And as an adolescent you will go forth into the world of war. Travel to distant exotic places, meet strange people and kill them. For whatever reason authoritative powers dictate. **You learn the world is a dangerous place. You learn that you are a pawn of others. You learn that you are expendable so others might impose their rule.** And of course you may agree with it all, but then again you might not. Then what? **Every war has produced its share of "hidden casualties," those who came home so debilitated mentally and emotionally crippled that their health would remain precarious for the rest of their lives. After the Civil War, "irritable heart" syndrome, symphonized by palpitations, quick fatigue, shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, chest pains and disturbed sleep was often diagnosed as insanity. A label attributed to psychological casualties was the term, "nervous disease". Psychiatric problems accounted for six percent of Union Army medical discharges. So great was the public outcry that Military Hospitals for the Insane were established in 1863. But after the Civil War's end the government closed the hospitals and no more effort was made to treat those soldiers afflicted with 'the stresses of combat'. After the Vietnam War, soldier's who sought help for combat stress related disorders were told by the government that such claims had no merit. Consequently many of these men suffered alone. But in 1983, due to continuing public pressure, Congress passed laws requiring the Veterans Administration to recognize, treat and adjudicate monetary relief for the veterans' claims related to combat stress. Statistically, in Vietnam, approximately twelve percent of all military personnel participated in direct combat. Some two million men served in combat during World War I. "Shell shock" a state of depression, thought to be caused by brain concussion, disrupts a man's physiology. Because of shell shock, over 69,000 U.S. soldiers were permanently evacuated from the fighting. Nearly 36,000 men were hospitalized for lengthy periods of time because of this disorder. Eventually almost 160,000 soldiers were deemed psychiatrically unfit. "Shell shock" centers were created to treat psychiatric casualties. World War I shell shock cases accounted for over fifty percent of VA patients by 1942. Attention to WWI veterans' problems, particularly payment of pensions and medical care, reached a threshold in 1932 when an estimated 15,000 veterans marched into Washington D.C. to petition for justice. This first-ever mass demonstration in our nation's capital was dispelled after the government's militia attacked the unarmed veterans and several veterans were killed. Congress I immediately passed legislation-meeting veterans' demands for justice. **The stress on the heart, mind and soul of the soldiers of W.W. II was profound. Battle fatigue, sometimes called combat neurosis, trouble over one million men. According to Richard Gabriel in No More Heroes: Madness & Psychiatry in War, more than thirty-seven percent of all W.W.II Army combat troops were discharged for psychiatric reasons. The minds and nerves fractured in battle possibly represented the greatest challenge to healing.** Once upon a time, I was a soldier. A military man who was highly trained in the art of battle. A member of an elite unit that endured many casualties in a war. I was trained and battlefield educated to overcome the greatest of odds. My personal power of mind and determination carried me through. When the war ended, I believed there was nothing in the world that could shake me or break me. Now that is being proved wrong. **My being****

**a warrior defines certain aspects of life as an internal struggle with the daily use of power. Power being the ability to take action to get things done. The everyday, common social undertaking of the necessity of earning a living can sometimes be an uphill battle. The familiar ways in which we propel ourselves forward toward our goals may themselves become casualties. What then is the power that endures? Making a living as a warrior is not quite the same as being a provider of services or a maker of goods. The providers and makers earn a monetary living by their trades' identities. Being a warrior is more of an attitude, philosophy and idea of ones' self-identity, which in today's world is not readily financed. Soldiering is a paid military skill. But soldiers follow orders. Warriors know their duty. I like to think I know my duty, especially after having survived a real war. I had quit my job to flee to a dying flower farm situated on the slope of a mountain, four thousand feet in the clouds, four miles of serious four-wheel-driving off a secondary road exit. No electric. No phone. No running water. No orders to follow or to give. Just the quiet and stillness of isolation. Me and the trees and a view of the surrounding sea. Perhaps I could find a new life in saving the life of flower. I had become a warrior in battle with the enemies of confusion and loss of hope. No job, no money, no future but debt. No well to draw from. I felt powerless. Standing in the quiet of the farm's cabin, gazing through the windows across the mosaic field of varied Protea plants and trees, I saw the few faces of flowers ready for harvest. Representation of six months of effort and hard work produced only fifty or so dollars a week. I was losing hope. I was at a loss to carry on. No matter how many orders the old serge in my head barked, my feet couldn't follow the commands. I was losing what little internal strength I had. A hungry warrior, drained of energy, exhausted of emotion, too weak in spirit to carry one more bucket of water or fight one more battle. Powerless. You can't buy rain. Within the shack's structure I saw emptiness. I lived with neither table, nor chairs, nor bed. I slept on the bare plywood floor in a sleeping bag. I bathed in a five-gallon bucket. My propane-powered fridge was empty. There was barely enough gas in the truck to drive the twenty-five miles to town to sell the few flowers that needed to be cut. Without thought to the future, I spent the last half-year of my life in the field of the island's mountain giving my all to the flowers. Day by day, moment-to-moment, I cared for them, talked to them and caressed their boughs and leaves. Kissed their blooms. I knew every plant by heart. I knew exactly where each bud grew, where each flower waited. I knew that a dozen flowers waiting would not make a living for this failing farm, nor empower this weary warrior. Worry wracked my heart. The fatigue in my body and weight upon my soul wrestled weary for resolve. I reflected. Days ago I sat down on the floor and fell into this nothingness. My aloneness echoed empty and my mind could only observe itself struggle. Now, I couldn't be motivated. No matter how much my mental drill sergeant persisted I couldn't respond. Part of me gave up. Then all of me gave up. Nothingness. Absentmindedly I speak aloud to a cabin empty but for me and the space made by the enclosure of walls. What is the greatest power? Clear as a bell that's what the voice asked. Again and again. "What is it troop? **What is the greatest power?**" **At this point I am set to lose all I believe I own, so I figure losing my mind as surely as I feel I am, is only natural. I think about nothing but this: What is the greatest power, oh penniless, powerless warrior? In the realm of trying to 'think' I hear a whisper. Clear and resonate. A whisper. Love. Love is the greatest power. Written in literature. Spoken in the words of the saints. Love is the greatest of powers. Love conquers all. "Oh yea?" Ego quickly retorts. "And where am I going to get some love?" I growl. I'm alone, in the wilderness, on a mountainside, on an island in the middle of the ocean. Where in the hell am I going to get some love? I yell at the walls and windows and world around me. I feel my voice swallowed by the expanse of Nature surrounding me. While the drill sergeant of my mind kicks, berates and yells at me, I hear one word spoken clearly and softly between and around the dog barking orders I can't follow. "Friends." Again through the noise of my suffering self the word passes as an arrow in flight. "Friends!" My eyes are squeezed shut trying to stop the tears. Now they open and through my lips the word "friend" whispers to me. I hear it. I feel it. **The few friends I believe I have are thousands of physical miles distant, but the thoughts, feelings and spiritual bonds I experience with them are here and now. Immediately the thought and image and feeling of my spiritual (same soul in two different bodies) brother, Mitchell, comes to me. I close my eyes. I give my thoughts over only to him. Mitch and I met years ago at the university. After graduation we went separate ways. We wrote to each other from all parts of the world. We viewed the full moon as a time to think deeply of each other. We were brothers by spirit. He was ten thousand miles around the world from me. Images of us being together appear in my mind. Feelings of being close to him follow in my heart. I love Mitch. I don't know why but I do. I always have. The brothers we never had, in each other we loved. As I sit on the cabin floor, in the middle of nature with my eyes shut, I pour every memory of our being together into my present reality. In my mind I hold him fast. We embrace. We hold each other. I love you Mitch, I think. I love you Mitch, I feel. I love you Mitch, I say. My words echo to no one, but in my mind I see the love I have for him fan the cold coal in my heart to ember. I mentally stoke my feelings of love for my friend until my heart becomes flame. Warmth begins to burgeon into my chilled******

**soul. Even though Mitch is thousands of miles away, in my mind and heart I hold fast to what is between us, to what made us what we are to each other. Brotherly love. For nearly an hour I revive and relive all the experiences we once shared. All the love I had ever felt for him. Over and over. Again and again. Suddenly the image of my mother appears in my mind. Without diminishing or letting go the love I feel for my friend, I think of my Mother and how much I love her. I hold her and Mitch inside my brain and bosom for an hour more. Loving them, pretending as if they were actually present. My mind's eye holds fast to the beautiful images of embrace. My heart entwines itself in the images as well. My feelings respond to the reality my memories and reflections create.** Other friends came into my awareness, into my mind and heart and I make them real. Everyone, everything I have ever loved is with me and I love them as though they are here at the farm, in the cabin, being close to me. Through the tears in my now open eyes I recognize the empty cabin but I feel a fullness of being and warmth. A smile surprises me on my face. I am physically alone in a wilderness, poor to the demanding world, yet inside and beyond me I feel rich. I have love alive inside me. I feel it radiate outward from me like light from the bulb. I sit unmoving on the floor and feel timeless by the liquid life-giving feelings of love. After immeasurable moments, the love imbibing me gently begins subsiding like a good-bye kiss left on one's cheek. For the moment I am feeling better than when the day began but a small heaviness presses me more into the present earthly moment. After a long sigh, I stand on stiff and shaky legs and tell myself to get on with the task at hand. "Let's go feet." I will go and cut the lonely few buds turned to flower I know exist. I will sell the few and go on from there. I can't bear another thought beyond that. The further into the future I look the dimmer the vision. My feet get me to my truck. My mind says cut the flowers. I drive through the field's gate, up the small rise to the back of the farm's boundaries and stop. I know every plant intimately and where each bud and flower grows. In a few minutes it will be over. I get out of the cab and sigh heavily. The love left in my heart is losing resonance. I move to gather the few beautiful flowers that await me. Walking on loose rock and dead weeds I head toward the proteas. The first tree presents a prize flower. The "pink mink" is a large shuttlecock shaped bloom made of what seems to be long, narrow pink bird feathers tipped in black mink. Inside at its center is a yellow dome, soft as teddy bear fur. I gaze upon it, stroke it, thank the tree and cut the flower. A small smile crosses my face. A moment of rest lays in my heart. I move to another tree and cut. Another tree another flower. I cut another and another. I suddenly realize there are flowers everywhere! In every direction from every tree and shrub, hundreds of flowers cry out in bloom! I cut and cut until the truck bed is entirely filled. Entirely. Flowers everywhere. Flowers everywhere. I am breathless with amazement. This is a miracle. I knew where each bud was. I am with the plants everyday. I knew there only to be a dozen or so flowers to cut. I know my trees. Hundreds of flowers don't bud, mature and bloom in an afternoon! A weapon is a tool. A war is an action. Torture is an examination. Killing is reinventing. The incarceration of a different philosophy is justice. A mass facade of words to make hypocrisy invisible. But I believe the most hypocritical of words ever used are those of prayer for victory. The utterances of patriotic orators and pious leaders that fill the hearts of the masses with exalted excitement in the glory of war. You never know what to expect in war. It's best to expect nothing but to be ready for anything. I never expected to see my tour of duty end. I just took every moment as it presented itself. I never counted down the days. Every day was just another day. There were no weekends, no holidays, no Mon-Tue-Weds-Thurs-Fri-Sat-Sun days of the normal week. I called the day Po-day. Every day was Po-day. Past and future had no meaning. **Living in the present was what kept you alive. I realize that in a few days I'll be leaving this life of war. Not once in the forever-ness of being here have I given in to the thought of going home. There comes a time in a warrior's martial study when he must realize that the greatest challenge and most formidable opponent is not an enemy outside of himself. It is within the warrior's emotions, mind and psyche that the greatest of confrontations occur.** How does one confront an attack of ill feeling or adverse thought? Of what good is a conditioned body, techniques of physical engagement and the wielding of conventional weapons against the sometimes hostile energies of our heart and mind? Without strong health a warrior cannot expect to endure against any enemy, be they physically to our front or mentally and emotionally within our being. A hand cannot hit, a sword cannot cut and a bullet cannot pierce the anger, confusion, doubt, worry and fear that can assault our inner well-being. What are the weapons and the techniques that calm and heal the battles within the self? The weapons that are used in the battle within the self are non-dualistic. They are not something an "I" picks up and "wields". The only action of the "I" is to manifest the weapon into existence and then set it free. Once the weapon is accessed and set free, the weapon does what its nature dictates without an "I" wielding it, without any personal intention directing it. A weapon with its own mind. **The weapons I speak of are energetic feelings. Feelings are a powerful energetic force. Rage, for instance, can have such power as to be uncontrollable. More powerful are the feelings of Thankfulness, Forgiveness, Love and Surrender. Like a sword, they can cut through the unwanted feelings, inimical thinking and unbalanced psychic energies that bind our spirit and disrupt our relationships with the world and others. Unlike a sword that is picked up by the hand and wielded, the weapons of**

**Thankfulness, Forgiveness, Love and Surrender must be manifested within the self.** Feelings are an experiential energy we are all familiar with like anger, joy, sadness, laughter, confusion, clarity...to name a few. Like different musical notes in a symphony, each feeling has a distinctive frequency or vibration giving it a quality unique unto itself. Feelings are extremely powerful. Grief can knot a stomach. Fear can weaken the knees and loosen the bowels. What then is the vibratory nature of the weapons I speak of? What does Thankfulness "feel" like and how can a warrior access this frequency of feeling? And what does the warrior do once the feeling is located and identified? What is its affect? To begin, settle yourself in a quiet environment where no outward distractions are likely to occur.

**Weapon of Thankfulness: Quiet your mind, calm your heart and then ask yourself, "what does Thankfulness feel like?" Look, listen and be sensitive for the experience of this feeling. Search your memory of mind and feeling. Perhaps there is a time you can recall when someone did something for you that gave you an opportunity to feel thankful for. Recall this feeling. Once you feel it, gently increase your awareness of the feeling, so the feeling becomes more prominent. Feel this 'Thankfulness' as much as possible. Continually increase your awareness of the feeling to such a degree that there can be no doubt it is truly the distinct feeling of Thankfulness you are experiencing. Focus and enhance your awareness on the feeling's vibration. Resonate with this feeling until your sense of self and doing disappears! This is the most important part of the practice. Your awareness of the feeling (within yourself) must be of such a great degree that your consciousness of self ceases to exist. All that exists in this moment is the energy of Thankfulness you have discovered within yourself. It is an experience similar to darkness generating light within itself. When the light radiates where does the darkness go? The moment of disappearance of self is a moment of non-duality. You are no longer taking any action with respect to the feeling you have found within your being. Your intention does not exist. All that exists is the vibratory energy of the feeling of Thankfulness. By your disappearance of self-consciousness, this "energetic thankful feeling" is set free. Like a wave piercing space, taking its own course and spreading its affect. The action of the nature of Thankfulness is let loose into the world through your inaction. We have not taken a moment of thankfulness and expressed it in words to "something or someone" (duality). We have not directed it by our hand. We have set the immense nature of a unique feeling free to do its own bidding (non-duality) without our assistance. A metaphor would be that of turning on a light. When we turn the light on, we don't spread the light around the room ourselves. We flip the switch and the light does its thing. The same holds true for turning on the Thankfulness switch. There is no personal aim or desire for it to "do" anything or "go" anywhere. Light fills the room of its own accord. Like the light, the energy of Thankfulness, its vibratory frequency, permeates every direction, crosses every distance and touches all. So what does this self-generated "energetic feeling" accomplish? It assists healing within the self and the world. **Thankfulness is a sonant condition to the heart and soul. The energy of its vibration is nourishing. It will set previously blocked energies in motion, create space and free energy for other uses. This is the nature of Thankfulness. All that we have to do is find it within ourselves and set it free. Like a pebble dropped into the pond, the manifested wave journeys to every shore. Like a victorious army on the move, the wave-like energy of Thankfulness will steadfastly transform enemies of conflict and resistance within you and beyond you. Like water wearing through a rock, the force of thankfulness will eventually come to obvious fruition.****

**Weapon of Forgiveness: For many people it is difficult forgive the injustices they feel they suffer. Some people would rather die than forgive. Even those who reluctantly make a conscious decision to be forgiving sometimes do so only because they mentally believe it is the right thing to do. Intellectually, "they" forgive "them". "I" forgive "you". This is a dualistic relationship. Ever though there is a beneficial nature to being forgiving, doing it with a sense of duality is not as powerful or effective as the non-dualistic reality. We need to remove ourselves from judgment and personal intent. We need an action to take place through our inaction. Forgiveness must be set free because being unforgiving will deny you room to move. We must discover within ourselves the energetic feeling of Forgiveness. Like Thankfulness, Forgiveness has a frequency, a vibrational quality that is distinctly its own. We must look for that feeling within ourselves. What does Forgiveness feel like? Search your memory of past experiences and recall a time you felt Forgiveness for someone. Maybe a good friend couldn't keep a promise they had made. They are feeling bad but for you it is not a problem. Perhaps you've been the one forgiven by another for some transgression. Recall this event. Search deep within your feelings for the "vibration" that is forgiveness. Once you find it evident, use your awareness to increase the intensity of the feeling like an ember fanned into flame. Be calmly persistent until the feeling of Forgiveness gets so incredibly large that you disappear within it. In the moment you lose your sense of self. Forgiveness will be set free to impose its nature. Its "tune" will play upon your being and like light it will extend its reach toward the ends of the universe. You do not have to think or have the intent of forgiving anyone or anything.**

**Forgiveness is set free by your resonance with its vibration. Resonate and you disappear into it. Any judgment you have held against anyone (including yourself) will begin to dissolve and transform the energetic stasis of having been unforgiving.** Life will open up and you will begin to find more potential in which to roam. Be aware that the use of the "Forgiveness weapon" may require much practice. Don't be on the constant lookout for miracles or other effects. Healing the hardness from being unforgiving may take time. But guaranteed healing will begin. By setting free the energy of Forgiveness you will experience opportunities opening up for you in ways you never thought possible. It is said, "forgiveness is not so much for the forgiven as it is for the forgiver." When we are unforgiving, we burden ourselves, we place limits on life. When Forgiveness is set free it will do what is needed to create balance within our lives and the lives of those with whom we are entwined'.

**Weapon of Love: Throughout the history of written literature Love has been quoted has the greatest of all powers. Power is the ability to bring about change. Love existing without the construct of duality opens the realm of infinite potential for change. With your awareness recall the feeling of Love. Feel energetic 'Love and help the feeling grow until it overwhelms your egotistical sense of self and you disappear into its radiant nature. Let its energy permeate you and spread like light through darkness. Have no intention for where it goes. Care not how it goes. Do not wield it. Do not guide it. Allow yourself to be transformed into the energetic feeling of Love free to live its own nature. Have no afterthought of what it has done or how it does it. Just find it, amplify it, set it free. Love helps heal all. Wounds that are physical, mental or emotional will begin to heal from exposure to the energetic frequency of Love. Find the space within yourself where the feeling of Love exists. Enlarge that space. Let the feeling resonate within you, throughout you. Set it free by transforming and disappearing in its essence. The weapon of Love is a tangible feeling. Only one more word is necessary.**

**Weapon of Surrender** is in the realm of finality. Surrender is an energetic feeling. In the practice of disappearing and transforming into the "energies of Thankfulness, Forgiveness and Love, the weapon of Surrender may be needed. There will be times in practice when it will be difficult to give over to the idea of letting loose of all control and identity. The energy of Surrender can help us release the final strands that hold us in a dualistic experience where we have a life that is sensed as separate from another life. A life we feel need to control. This perhaps is the most difficult act for the warrior to complete, for whom can we trust to "aim" the arrow other than ourselves when we sit on the cusp? **Surrender does not mean "giving up". It means allowing something other than one's self-identity to exist as our life. What does surrender feel like? It is a feeling of great release. In this release is great relief. In this relief is immense clarity and calm. In this clarity and calm is a peace where all things are made possible. In this feeling one can finally let go...When your conscious self returns to the realization of an act having taken place within you and beyond, think not of outcomes. Sit quietly, then slowly return to present daily concerns or continue practicing. Surrender eliminates confusion, doubt, worry and fear especially after much practice in the energies of Thankfulness, Forgiveness and Love will enhance our lives.**

**Practice. Practice. Practice.**

**Even the warrior who kills for his king and believes he does so with the blessings of gods and nation must nevertheless purify himself. Somehow the cleansing must absolve the soul. All killing, no matter the sanction of state and country, is a transgression to the fabric of what makes us human.** The six of us stand closely together at the edge of the dance floor. The intense staccato of strobe lights freeze frame the frenzied dancing of a sea of oblivious youth buzzing to an amphetamine vibration of rock music. We stand huddled within an invisible shell that slowly cracks with the disbelief of the world we've entered. We are of one mind, a small collective consciousness separated from the people gyrating around us. Guilt. We have entered a land where the Vietnam war does not exist. A land where people could care less that other young Americans are dying in a faraway jungle. We think and feel for our comrades we have left behind. We don't belong here. It's not fitting for us to be alive while others have died. We are a million miles from nowhere. "Baby killer!" he says with the slightest uncertainty. I remain quiet. All the eyes of the boys and girls in the hippie group are on me waiting for some reaction. I stay silent. Death silent. I feel every feeling war can generate grow like a storm within me, yet I feel unmoved. Without conscious effort these feelings that range from rage to horror pour from my eyes into the eyes of the young men and women now shaking in their sandals. They want to run but they feel held fast by an unseen force. I realize that it is something from within me that strangles their will. In this moment their lives belong to me. I lean my face into my accuser's. Distinctly and without malice I say. "You don't understand." They are freed from the demon that now returns to the abyss of my experiences. They sheepishly retreat saying no more. I pick up my duffel bag and walk to the taxi stand outside the bus terminal. The television airing of disabled veterans living in the jungles of Hawaii brought a full frontal attack and final foray deep into the ranks of the Veterans Administration in Honolulu. News Week, Time Magazine and the TV show 20-20 all came to visit and make veteran's stories known. Veterans of Korea, World War II and Vietnam had for years been

neglected and denied entitlements by the VA. When Time Magazine did their interviews with the head administrators of the VA the final shot found its mark: The top administrator, when asked for the reasons why disabled veterans and their families were living isolated and homeless in the jungles of Hawaii, replied. "These veterans are living like this because they want to!" All war is based on deception. The deception coming from the hegemony of men addicted to power. Men who do not seek to end war but only become dominant in it. **Wars have come and gone and come again. A great sad truth to the state of affairs of men is this: No one has ever saved the world; absolutely No One. Even the greatest of spiritual beings that have graced this earth have never succeeded in bringing peace to the world.** Despite the plethora of religions and spiritual intentions of individuals, humanity remains the same as it ever was. Men seek to rule the world and do it through the use of force. Until men begin to understand what pain is and how it motivates humankind, the healing needed to make a lasting change in our penchant to neurotically control life will fail to make a lasting peace. **Pain is an illusion of devastating separateness; its epitome lies in the joyous feeling of safety in killing. We kill only ourselves. Our suffering is our common blood. It will not be an intellectual dissemination of knowledge that makes a change in the way humans treat each other.** Peace will be born through the alleviation of human suffering. As individuals we are all wounded. Wounds left untended fester deep into our souls and in our anguish we lash out at others. Because of our wounds, our words harm. Our actions injure. **Until we make healing ourselves and others a priority, we will continue to make war. Healing. Healing ignorance. Healing hunger. Healing homelessness. Healing poverty. Healing separation. Healing. Healing. Healing.** If any one word could describe the rap group it would be frailty. We were hardened warriors made frail by the epidemic of violence and the fear of relapse. As damaged in soul, as we were, each one of us wanted never to do violence again. I think many of the men passed on because of the frustration they experienced at not knowing how to bring an end to the ongoing violence in the world and within themselves. Once violence has been set in motion, non-violence seems impossible. A great myth that needs to be uncovered is the arrogant presumption that governments and the men that run them are god ordained or divinely sanctioned. Never has a greater lie perpetuated itself. **Wars are fought to protect the value of a dollar. Wars are fought to feed the addiction of power. Wars are fought because we accept them. An animal has no choice in the action of preying upon other animals. Man, in order to rise above his animal nature, must make choice. I think to myself for a moment. I am now armed with my 'war pension' and the small freedom it gives me from society's conventions. I feel no joy in the victory over the inhuman bureaucratic machinations that view war as necessary.** The casualties the rap group suffered remain a reminder of the contagion of war. "I'm going to continue this healing process. I need to become a door through which all healing comes. As a warrior my greatest goal is to be able to heal an angry man if he gets within ten feet of me. If I can cover enough ground, perhaps I can make a difference in the way we humans treat each other."