

# Richard Turton



## *The Eagle Cried...*

The acrid smell of cordite  
Still hovered in the air.  
No breeze to wash away  
The scent of Satan's hair.

Medivacs are fading now,  
Their cabins filled with dead.  
So many grisly pictures  
Surging through my head

Another hill's been taken  
The earth charred and black  
We all know what's coming;  
Tomorrow..."Give it back!"

The Eagle cries from barren trees  
His tears he cannot hide.  
Where once a proud, young soldier stood  
My Warrior Brother, died

The scorched ground surrounds me;  
Am I in Dante's Hell?  
This skirmish now is over  
We saw them as they fell.

My Warrior Brother, Donny,  
Died that gruesome day.  
He took the bullets meant for me  
With his final words did say,

"Tell Mom and Sis I loved them!  
Please! Don't let me down!"  
I promised I would tell them  
A promise I'd soon drown.

The Eagle cried that tragic day,  
Back in Sixty-Eight.  
A promise made...un-kept,  
To my Warrior mate.

One thing that I'm sure of,  
A thing that gives no rest.  
The hounds of Hell still battle  
Deep within my chest.

A bottle'd been my address  
For forty years or more.  
I'd take 'most any drug,  
I couldn't find the door.

Somewhere there's a record,  
Of drugs and booze and tears.  
When I crawled out of the bottle  
I'd been buried in for years.

Half a decade sober.  
Not a real long time.  
That's how long I'm clean tho',  
My life's becoming mine.

The winds of war are blowing by;  
In history books they last.  
I'm in the winter of my years,  
My best days...they have passed.

One thing that I've never done  
One thing I cannot face:  
To visit the Memorial,  
The headstone for that place.

My daughter said, "You have to go,  
To honor those who died!"  
I said "I know I should..."  
And that "I'd go"...I lied

Then one day the phone rang;  
A call I knew I'd dread.  
It was Donny's sister,  
"Please help me!" Karen pled.

"I've spent these years just searching  
I even hired a sleuth.  
I finally found out where you live...  
I need to know the truth."

"The Army's always been real vague,  
And their answers never matched.  
I need to know what happened;  
They always seemed detached"

"Our Mother has passed on now,  
But I still need to know;  
I'd really love to meet with you,  
Please...just tell me how!"

The hounds of Hell are roused again;  
Their howling has re-started.  
I force their shrieks out of my mind,  
My path, it has been charted

Quiet now, you dogs of war!  
It's time for a new quest!  
It's time for *me* to wrestle *you*,  
And lay *your* souls to rest!

Then I thought the one thing,  
A thought I'd never say,  
Should I meet her at The Wall,  
And put my hounds at bay?

I finally said I'd meet with her,  
With a voice that was not mine.  
"The Wall is where I'll meet you.  
I'll see you there at nine."

I saw flowers in her hand,  
As she walked my way.  
"Yellow roses were his favorite."  
Later she would say.

"Hello, my name is Karen."  
She said when we did meet  
"Donny wrote me many things,  
I knew that you'd be sweet!"

"I know this must be hard for you,  
But I really need to know.  
Please tell me how my brother died,  
That day, so long ago."

The moment had arrived.  
I could hide this fact no more.  
I said things I'd kept hidden,  
Behind my mind's locked door

She took my hand in hers,  
And waited patiently.  
My head bowed down as I thought  
Of the words I had to say.

I knew my words would stab her heart  
But she would not look away.  
She watched me as I told her  
Of that ghastly day.

"Your Brother died in my arms  
In that nameless place.  
He took the bullets meant for me  
And died as we embraced!"

Her head dropped down, when I was done  
Her chin upon her chest.  
A single tear rolled down her cheek,  
"Now Donny's laid to rest"

I walked with her as she made her way  
To the Wall of Stone.  
She laid the flowers at the base  
Her silent prayer was sown.

At last I've honored those who fell,  
Whose names are etched in rows.  
We touched the name of Donny,  
Who died so long ago.

And we cried...

The Eagle's cry is heard again;  
It lives within the Wall!  
Each time a name is touched  
The Eagle gives his call.