

Fall 1990

Descent Through Indian Village

Gennie Nord

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Descent Through Indian Village *— September, 1967*

Single file we pass
the collapsing dance hall,
sinking Potawotomi graves

Ahead of me, in orange moose maple,
my father chews timothy,
walks softly as a bobcat

Skulls of feral apples
bump in gunny sacks,
nuzzle our backs

I finger scarlet blades
of staghorn sumac, my ex-lover's
jeans ride hot on my legs

My pregnant sister
kicks hawkweed, goldenrod
out of her way

A green rubber coat
hides her daughter, a puffball
waiting to explode

We make the long descent in bracken
tracking the dead beneath us,
our thoughts on Phu Loi

We stop in the alder brush,
look back as the trail closes,
sniff the twilight like bears

Crossing the creek, my father says,
"The Indians sure got a raw deal."
We wonder if it's anything like this
in Vietnam.

Gennie Nord