

# JOE

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CLIFFORD KANE

I remember, as a child  
listening to the body counts on the news  
while my mother cried  
I can't recall the figures  
but I know that they were a lot  
and I can't recall  
but I think that  
they must have announced them for both sides  
like the score of a football game  
I remember driving past  
the cemetery on the 280  
commuting with a teacher from my school  
he said  
"even in death they make them look the same"  
I was moved  
it was the best thing he ever taught me

He drank Gallo Hearty Burgundy  
out of the jug  
while he played John Prine songs on guitar  
it was a long time ago  
nobody seemed to care  
that he drank wine at school

He had been there  
most of them had avoided it  
but he had been there  
he worked in a medical unit  
he would tell us stories  
about how they would sneak in and steal  
spools of copper wire  
and shoot them with arrows  
into props of helicopters  
stories about doctors  
and really dumb guys  
or how he and Connie used to go see  
this old black blues singer  
in Oklahoma

who doesn't want a better guitar  
than his old Harmony  
because nobody could  
play better than him anyway  
he never told us much more  
but it was enough  
to make me understand resourcefulness