

Does the new government speak as you do about peace?"

"Yes, new government want good ties with West. Diplomatic, and trade. With America. With talk, understanding come, too."

"When I go back," Brad said slowly, "I am going to speak to students and professors at the universities in California. I'm going to bring them my pictures of Viet Nam. What can I say to them on your behalf?"

"Say that time now is for talk. American and Viet Nam. Talk to no more fight."

"Do you think you ever will visit America?"

Lien laughed out loud, and held up one hand in a 'slow down' gesture. "Say she very much like, but she think no. More maybe to Canada, if you help her."

"Lien, do you have nay family left?" I asked suddenly.

"Mrs. Vo Thi Lien have husband now, and child." Mr. Ho listened again. "She ask where your family in Canada."

I told her about growing up in Nova Scotia with my sisters. She followed the translation with a genuine interest that I found painful: how could she care about anyone's family?

"All girl?" I said yes, and she smiled her approval. "Mrs. Vo Thi Lien ask you bring her best wish to your mother and sisters."

"I will, and I send my best wishes to her family as well."

Mr. Ho rose then, and insisted that we start for the Marble Mountains before the storm struck. We left by the back door, Lien and I strolling hand in hand down the drive. The silence between us was warm and comfortable. At the car I tried once more to convey the feelings I feared would be lost in Mr. Ho's translation.

"Lien, despite the past, I hope you and your family will always be happy. And you must remember that you are not alone with your message! I'll help you in Canada, and I'll look for you when I come back to Viet Nam."

"Say she find you when she come Canada." She waved from the guardhouse as we drove off through the dreary junkyards and gutted military bases that surround Danang.

¹The US Army assigned new names to Vietnamese settlements: the greater village of Son My became My Lai; Lien's

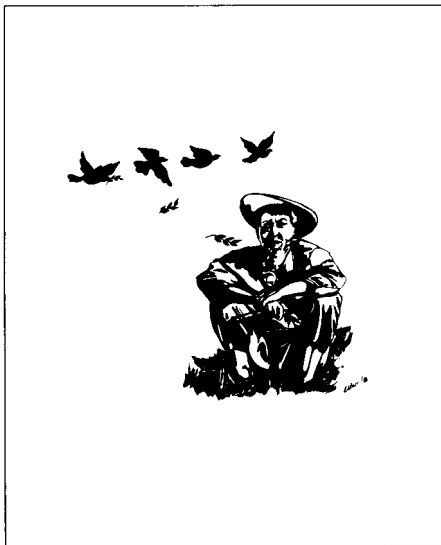
hamlet of My Hoi became My Khe (2). The hamlet known to us as My Lai (4) is properly called Xom Lang or Thuan Yen (the latter name means The Place To Which Trouble Does Not Come).

²The killings in My Hoi took place about two hours after the initial massacre, and involved a different company. No one has ever been disciplined for this adjunct to My Lai.

³Women's active role in the Vietnamese military dates to 39 AD, when the Trung sisters led a rebellion against Chinese occupiers. All-female guerilla units fought throughout the country in the American war. The most powerful woman was a peasant, Nguyen Thi Dinh, a commanding general in the National Liberation Army.

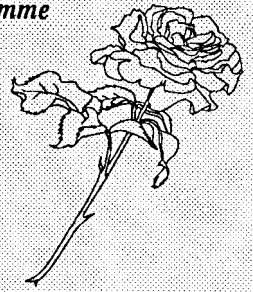
⁴A reform-oriented Politburo (including Nguyen Thi Binh, the woman leader of the NLA delegation to the 1968 Paris Peace Talks) has made radical economic and foreign policy changes since the Sixth Communist Party Congress in December, 1986. We benefited when Brad received the first unsponsored tourist visa ever issued to an American.

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CLAIRE ROTHMAN

Portrait d'une femme



In this city of wide and faceless streets, limousines, long and sleek conduits for men who confer on phones or mix martinis in the back seat while Jacques or Justin drives, you shine. Not like some jewel or bauble no, don't misunderstand me, not like that.

The town has its share of costumed beauty) More like a peony, some soft flower, petalled velvet intent on pushing through cracks in the asphalt, straining on its stem while lines of long and heedless cars roll by.

Femme parmi les hommes. And what a woman, they whisper, wink like schoolboys as you pass, brush shoulders in the corridors of power, who can say you covet it? I think rather, for you, it is a game to while away the hours, like chess, or late night movies.

Pink is a colour that you evoke A rich dust rose set off against the greys of suits, lacklustre stone, ice on the canal that divides this ordered English city. Your rooms are rose, the office where you work, a skirt, a slip, a blouse of Spanish silk. You never quite grasped the English way nor mastered the English tongue. To your ear

it sounds tinny, nasal, devoid of grace and so you stick to French, composing notes to your confreres with flourishing pen on hand-made paper from Japan, scented with gardenias.

Woman in a world of men.