

Gulf Memo

By Stephen Sandy

Tell me the way to the wedding
Tell me the way to the war,
Tell me the needle you're threading
I won't raise my voice anymore.

And tell me what axe you are grinding
Where the boy on the bivouac believes,
What reel you are unwinding
For the girl in her bed who grieves.

While behind a derrick's girder
He watches the sinking sun,
He asks what he'll do for murder
And what he will do for fun.

Will you read him the ways of war
His Miranda rights in sin,
Will you tell him what to ignore
When he studies your discipline?

He dozes off—but he shakes
In a dream that he is the one
Death finds abed and wakes
Just as the night is done.

Tell me what boats go ashore
Riding the oil-dimmed tide,
Red streamers and black in store
For the boy with a pain in his side.

And tell me where they are heading
Tonight; now tell me the score.
Tell me the way to their wedding
I won't raise my own voice anymore.

Source: *The Thread* (Louisiana State University Press, 1998)