

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 10 | Issue 2

Article 25

January 2011

Recovery Team

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Recommended Citation

Tillet, Robert J. (2011) "Recovery Team," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 10: Iss. 2, Article 25.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol10/iss2/25>

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Tillet: Recovery Team

RECOVERY TEAM

Robert J. Tillet

-Vietnam, 1992

He brushes the few grains of silicate remaining
from half a mandible at the base of a palm.
It's the right half, this time, a boomerang
with teeth, cracked clean at the chin.

His tweezers flash along the broken
edge; this find, he thinks, will tell
him much about the mission & the great
hunks of metal growing from the ground.

A few inches down, a frontal plate
surfaces like the fin of something
returning beneath his boar-hair brush.
The dull white dish tipped & spilling

for decades. Particle & matter. Sunlight
off a shovel's handle leaning on a tent.
Wind pulls through a wooden crate
of bone flecks & femurs, a man's slick back

arches just about the jungle floor.
Chip by chip we reconstruct this one
body, place the fragments edge to edge,
held together by nothing but our finding.

The howls of discovery draw the others near.