A L A T e  C o r r u p t e d  F L A s h

I couldn’t think of anything to do;
I was out among the traffic, in the street,
but couldn’t make my way; my view
was blocked, and nothing left but new defeats,
and then I stepped into a line of trees
I know I’d seen before, the sulfur smell,
the bullets whizzing past like wild bees.
I wasn’t where I thought I was. I fell
again through something damp, like air, then back
inside the traffic jam I knew was caused
by me, my drifting as I do, my lack
of self-control, to know just when to pause
before I cross into that other place
that somehow always stays inside my soul,
and I wish that I could say a simple grace
would be enough to make me whole.
I was lost inside the river so I
didn’t move, and thought I’d wait it out,
the night, in all its splendor, the lies
that let me stand there, as if without a doubt.
In the morning someone came, or no one came at all.
I knew somehow I’d wake and be alive,
but never be the same again, a fall
from grace so hard and fast, I can’t abide.
That night I died and it was not like dreaming
although my heart kept beating, my brain a whir.
The world outside my mind stopped meaning
anything at all, so you can’t see me through the blur
of monumental metaphors the doctors rig
like platinum crosses
that hang a name on my latest jig,
and never mind, the other losses.

Bruce Weigl
The Long Term Consequences of the Convoy Leading to Pegasus in the Fallen World

Or, or, when I packed myself up for the loony bin,
I didn’t know it was the loony bin at the time
was my lousy problem, and I blame myself for that,
and I ended up in a field
I know is littered with mines
because I’ve seen it before
beside a river named Ca Lu,
if my brain allows me
just one memory,
just one sane moment
like the one the photon
bright flashes the doctors
held inches from my face
brought back a radiant time
that no one in the room could know but me
like the field of mines
I had stood next to on the LZ,
and walked around more than once and watched
a parachute of something
drift off target and land there,
almost softly, the
lights the doctors flashed
in my eyes and the saline
they pumped into my veins
and the thirty hours without sleep
brought that morning
right back into the room
and that morning became the day
of the longest night. Night of the seven
dead in a single bunker
from artillery of the other.
Night of small arms fire
along the river,
and movement in the high grass, voices, radio noise,
sometimes even their music; night
of the separation of my soul from my body;
such a violent tearing
I couldn’t even feel.

Bruce Weigl