



(Photo by Dick Epstein)

Eight Men

Aging veterans all—
one has a metal leg.

Back bent, one shuffles
as he walks. Two steady themselves
with cane and walking stick.

One drives a shiny Cadillac.
Three pull up on a Beemer and two Harleys:
a Trike and Fatboy.
All but two suffer from diabetes,

Parkinson's, heart disease, kidney failure,
cancer—from Agent Orange
They gather for a weekly luncheon
at different restaurants around town.

They talk about old times, their first car, first
love, the old neighborhood, dirty jokes, shrap-
nel, the VA, liberals and politics.

Unit insignia on their hats,
each man is a story, a novel, a play.

Their character and courage,
proven, time and time again.

Like tenacious weeds, they withstood storms,
drought, monsoon rains.

They came from strong seed.
They blossomed, they withered.

May they rise again.

**Remembering
Our Veterans**

—Dick Epstein, Army Vietnam War Veteran,
Signal Corps