

1000 Travels Of Jawaharlal "The Big Parade"

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[music: Jerome Augustyniak/words: Natalie Merchant]

Detroit to D.C. night train, Capitol, parts East.
Lone young man takes a seat.
And by the rhythm of the rails, reading all his mother's
mail from a city boy in a jungle town postmarked
Saigon.
He'll go live his mother's dream, join the slowest
parade he'll ever see.
Her weight of sorrows carried long and carried far.
"Take these, Tommy, to The Wall."

Metro line to the Mall site with a tour of Japanese.
He's wandering and lost until a vet in worn fatigues
takes him down to where they belong.
Near a soldier, an ex-Marine with a tattooed dagger
and eagle trembling, he bites his lip beside a widow
breaking down.
She takes her Purple Heart, makes a fist, strikes The
Wall.
All come to live a dream, to join the slowest parade
they'll ever see.
Their weight of sorrows carried long and carried far,
taken to The Wall.

It's 40 paces to the year that he was slain.
His hand's slipping down The Wall for it's slick with
rain.
How would life have ever been the same if this wall had
carved in it one less name?
But for Christ's sake, he's been dead over 20 years.
He leaves the letters asking, "Who caused my mother's
tears, was it Washington or the Viet Cong?"
Slow deliberate steps are involved.
He takes them away from the black granite wall toward
the other monuments so white and clean.

O, Potomac, what you've seen.
Abraham had his war too, but an honest war.
Or so it's taught in school.

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