

## He Never Shut Up

—Liz Dolan

But we all loved Tommy's uncombed locks  
his gut-busting laughter. Everything  
grist for his mill. In the beach house  
in the Hamptons he taped  
the older guys' riff on the summer stock  
of butts and breasts. He regaled us  
with tales of riding the rails in Ozone Park  
with Jimmy the Lip and Frankie Fingers.

The air went out of our summer  
after Tommy left for Nam. We broiled  
on Hot Dog Beach and languished  
on a tube in Peconic Bay. After his tour  
we expected the true skinny on the war:  
just another tropical cruise.

But he never spoke  
of the orange-scorched jungle,  
body parts dangling from branches.