



Keep Your Head Down: Vietnam, the Sixties, and a Journey of Self-Discovery

Doug Anderson

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An award-winning poet highlights the vibrant history of his generation in a farewell to Vietnam, the chaotic sixties, and their long aftermath.

“We tend to write about what will not go away,” Doug Anderson says in this candid, darkly humorous journey of self-discovery. Beginning in 1943, in the pre-civil rights South filled with tobacco and war stories, he recalls the difficult childhood that propels him into service in Vietnam. In 1967, having returned home deeply shaken by his experience as a combat medical corpsman, Anderson plunges into the heady freedoms and excesses of the sixties. His downward spiral—through booze, substance abuse, and sex—brings him dangerously close to a total breakdown. Finally, in a return group visit to Vietnam in 2000, he meets with former enemies now become writers and poets. Moved by the realization that “the last time I saw these people they were trying to kill me,” Anderson confronts the past and calls upon a story—this powerful story—to rebuild a life.

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