AMY BAGWELL

epitaph for uneasy inheritance

_He was sent to Vietnam to do a job, and on March 16, 1968, he thought he was doing his job._
—John Philp, WSB-TV News, Atlanta, March 20, 1971

the only soldier convicted of murder for the My Lai Massacre returned from Vietnam to my hometown where he was never despised the only soldier sentenced for the My Lai Massacre served ninety minutes for each of his twenty-two confirmed dead victims the only soldier imprisoned for the My Lai Massacre thanks to Nixon left life and hard labor for three years’ house arrest the last soldier to apologize for the My Lai Massacre became a strip mall jeweler and when my mom stopped biting her nails bloody sold my dad a diamond and sapphire ring for her prize (her only such item) and none of this they explained but who could blame them Rusty isn’t a killer Rusty is your buddy with a past you want to help him outlive because it’s your past too and looking back means we either look at or look through at least five hundred ghosts, one-third of them children