



Dancing at the Gold Monkey

Allen Learst

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Winner of the 2011 Leapfrog Fiction Contest.

"Renders transient moments of great beauty, to reveal the way we might transcend sorrow by our unwavering attention to exquisite detail and the mystery of creation."—Melanie Rae Thon

"Time jumps in this accomplished story cycle, as does the boundary betwixt reality and dream, memory and imagination. . . . And war, as it will, soaks all. Learst writes with the special visceral authority of combat seen and visions earned. Vital, necessary reading."—Donald Anderson, author of *Fire Road*

"The destruction of the human spirit at the hands of an experience that is as emotionally pyrotechnic and morally absurd as the behavior of [Learst's] characters."—Gordon Weaver, author of *Count a Lonely Cadence*

A young naval officer crashes his F-16 fighter jet in the South China Sea, forever changing the lives of the five soldiers who find his body. They move through gritty post-Vietnam Detroit with the women they love in this linked collection of psychological drama, sexual escapades, and latent violence tinged with compassion, grief, and love, arriving finally at the death of one man's son in Iraq. Allen Learst's writing explores an interior war—the war of the psyche fought by all returning soldiers—and their attempts to adapt and survive without the knowledge it takes to heal or alleviate their pain.

Allen Learst, a Vietnam combat infantryman, worked for Detroit's auto industry, attended college on the GI Bill, and earned his PhD in creative writing. He is a senior lecturer at the University of Wisconsin, Marinette.

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