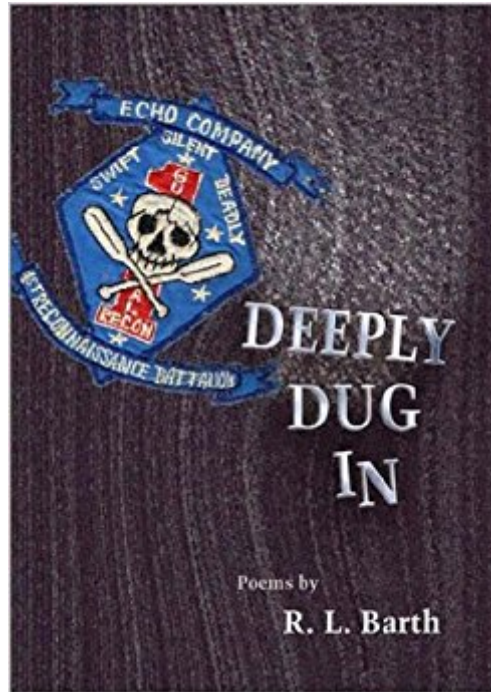


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Deeply Dug In (Mary Burritt Christiansen Poetry)



Synopsis

Thirty-five years ago R. L. Barth was a Marine patrol leader in the First Reconnaissance Battalion in Vietnam. Today he is a poet's poet who articulates the harsh realities and ironies of war in the style of the great classical satirists. Barth writes about Vietnam, but his soldier's take on the war is startlingly applicable to the conflicts of the twenty-first century or to any war that happens to be going on. "I never once saw dying eyes / That were not stunned or shattered by surprise." That is just as it is, never mind all the dulce et decorum exhortations of politicians, who today as always clamor to kill us all. In this slender but rich collection of poems, R. L. Barth proves himself a worthy descendant of Martial and Archilochus, lobbing grenades at what Kenneth Rexroth called the Social Lie, capturing moments of grace and disgrace in combat, and locating the Homeric nobility of ordinary soldiers under fire. As he does, he honors the language. Read him, eyes wide open, and understand."--Gregory McNamee, editor of *The Desert Reader* "An inventive and resourceful poet. . . . very discreet . . . his lines are built out of images balanced by concepts, each giving weight to the other. . . . Poet or not, Barth was in charge of an elite fighting group that stayed out longer than other units. . . . Many died, including a friend of Barth's memorialized in 'Elegy for a Dead Friend,' one of the best war poems in English."--Thomas D'Evelyn, *Christian Science Monitor*

Book Information

Series: Mary Burritt Christiansen Poetry

Hardcover: 96 pages

Publisher: University of New Mexico Press (November 30, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0826331823

ISBN-13: 978-0826331823

Product Dimensions: 7.6 x 5.1 x 0.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,989,666 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #107 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Poetry](#) #7142 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > United States](#) #9885 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > United States](#)

Customer Reviews

Many Viet Nam War veterans write poetry, but very few write with the power, passion and skill of R.

L. Barth. A trained classicist, Barth is at his best when writing in the epigrammatic tradition of Simonides, Martial, and Pope, although this collection does include a few somewhat longer narrative and lyric poems. Barth writes with savage indignation, acute wit, and wonderful control of language. He gives no quarter to chickenhawks who send other people to war and he refuses to accept or profit from our comfortable myths about war. There is little sentiment here, and no self pity. Most veteran poetry will be forgotten, but surely not Barth's. These poems are not about Viet Nam, but about war, human nature, and society.

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