

March to the Front Line (2:35) Words and
Music by Huy Quang

Since the days we began to oppose *Giac My**
They have killed our brothers, sisters, and
parents
We cannot sit still.
We must march to the front lines.
We must have courage,
To protect our village homes.
Avenge the blood of our kin.
Cast off the American yoke.
Their puppet troops burn our homes,
Our granaries.

We must rise together against them,
Until victory.
Blood for blood, we'll fight to the last.
All our people, we'll work together.
After our victory,
We'll return to our village homes.
But blood will flow as long as the
Oppression is here.

**Giac My* means American aggression.
—1971 by Paredon Records

**Diary of an Unknown Soldier from the
*National Liberation Front of Vietnam***

It is May 1st. I am writing because something very important happened that suddenly changed my life: this morning at half-past seven, I turned up to report and comrade Lan told me: "Get ready to go into the army." I think writing may help me to understand the feelings that seized me. A kind of joy and excitement, I admit. But, at the same time, something like terror and pain. Because I shall have to leave my wife, Can, this be love that is so sacred to me. We were married only four months ago and have been together so little. In accepting this separation, I am making a great sacrifice and denial. Dying does not frighten me: if my death helps my people, then I am ready to die. But to be parted from Can makes me suffer so much. Too much.

May 3. *Can, your heart is in your eyes. A broken heart. But someday there won't be a single American devil left in this country. If it were not for the Americans we would not be kissing each other goodbye.*

May 8. *Today it is my turn to do the cooking and I have to find water. But after marching for two nights on end my legs are almost broken. Every movement I make causes terrific pain; I have never been good at sports . . . I miss Can terribly. I think of nothing else and count the days we've been separated.*

May 10. *We have no rice and cannot buy any here because there is none. All we have eaten is the little rye and we have slept on empty stomachs. We shall have no rice until tomorrow evening and only then if things go well. Hunger is an ugly thing and I have no wish to write.*

May 26. *I have been feeling ill for sixteen days and did not write . . . For six hours I have been cutting wood. But that is nothing compared with the leeches. The moment we set foot in the jungle and in this damp climate we met our worst enemy—leeches. Curse them. They are everywhere; they cling to the first man they see. Although we are careful to cover every part of our bodies, they still manage to attack us*

and every time I feel a prick I know what it is. I take off my shoe and invariably my foot is covered with blood. Disgusting.

June 1. *I have been in the army for nearly a month and all we do is train: to creep forward on hands and knees, to roll into holes, even to climb trees and hide among the leaves. These exercises are hard, and harder still because of the heat; even the wind that blows from Laos is hot. But this hard life has strengthened our ability to bear it. It has actually restored my enthusiasm . . . Tomorrow is a day of rest and I have asked permission to visit my home; my parents live not far from here. I was allowed to because I had volunteered to go to South Vietnam . . . I feel wild with happiness; I shall see my mother and the rest of my family.*

June 2. *I have seen my relatives but not my Mother. Oh, Mother, how sad. When we arrived it was half-past eleven at night and my heart was beating fast . . . You had gone to Dong Noi that morning. Dearest Mother, you will suffer so much when they tell you I came and did not find you. I suffered as well . . . I was thinking of you, Mother. Perhaps I shall not have another chance like this one . . . Even now the tears are falling on the paper. How sad it was, Mother. We have never been lucky, the two of us . . .*

Dec. 30. *When we saw a house, Li and I took off our equipment and went in to ask for food. The owner gave us a pan of freshly cooked potatoes and a bunch of bananas. We ate until we nearly burst and called Nuoi and Mai to give them the rest. We wanted to pay him, but the good man refused. He even offered us a cup of hot water to help us digest the food. His kindness put us into a good mood . . .*

Jan. 18. *Only a few days more and we shall celebrate Tet . . . Suddenly we have been ordered not to stop in houses, not even to go inside them. Something new is in the air. We must keep silently marching. So while other people are gaily celebrating Tet we shall have to hide quietly in the wood. I remember the last Tet. Can and I spent it together. We were happy.*

Jan. 23. *Suddenly we heard planes and someone shouted: "They're bombing us." A second later a plane dived straight above us, then came a terrific explosion and fragments of the bomb hit everywhere. One passed at four centimeters from my head. I heard it whistling. What mysterious laws govern a man's life and survival? . . . Clearly it is not my destiny to die here. Where is it written that I am to die?*

Jan. 29. *We got up very early and had breakfast before dawn. Everything is ready. I wrote a letter to Can and gave it to a*

friend who has just come back from Thailand and I hope he can manage to get it to her. Can, my dearest Can. Perhaps the end is waiting for me, but there will never be an end to our love. Even if I die or you die it will not end. Can, my dear Can. Now we must go. The commander is calling and telling us to . . .

(Oriana Fallaci, the Italian journalist, picks up the story from here.)

Feb. 19. The diary stops here. He must have died five or six days later, on the outskirts of Saigon. Or else he may have died on Jan. 29 itself, in a bombing raid like the one I went on with Capt. Andy in the A-37. I can't think of anything else. And I keep wondering: does Can know about his death? Perhaps she has just received his last letter and is writing to him at his new address . . .

—Oriana Fallaci, *Nothing, And So Be It*, translated by Isabel Quigley, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1972