Sunday June 24, 2018 – 2pm
Moonstone Poetry @ the Pub - Fergie’s Pub, 1214 Sansom Street

A Shadow on Our Hearts:
Soldier-Poetry, Morality, and the American War in Vietnam
by Adam Gilbert ($ 32.95, University of Massachusetts Press)

A Conversation and Reading with Contributors

From the author Adam Gilbert: “I am a writer and historian. My work focuses primarily on the American war in Vietnam, with particular emphasis on both the poetry and the moral dimensions of the conflict. *A Shadow on Our Hearts* combines these two interests to look at the American soldier-poetry of the war through the lens of morality. This builds on previous publications about the veteran and poet W.D. Ehrhart, moral responsibility and war, and the soldier-poetry anthology *Winning Hearts and Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans*.

In the spring of 2010, I met and interviewed Jan Barry, Michael Casey, Horace Coleman, David Connolly, W. D. Ehrhart, Yusef Komunyakaa, Gerald McCarthy, and Bruce Weigl. I also interviewed John Baky, who served as a military policeman in Vietnam and was the director of the Connelly Library at La Salle University in Philadelphia, where the Imaginative Representations of the Vietnam War Collection is held. This is not an oral history project, and the poetry is always primary, but the interviews provide a useful supply of additional viewpoints, ideas, contexts, and background information. They are employed here as a supplement to, rather than a replacement of, the poetry. All of the interviews have been transcribed verbatim and are available in the Imaginative Representations of the Vietnam War Collection.” – Adam is in Europe and will not be here.

John Baky (Army, 1969-1971, in Vietnam from 1970-1971) In 1980 he came to La Salle University to work for acquisitions and became the Director of Library Services and Curator of Special Collections at La Salle University. Baky spearheaded The Vietnam War Collection at La Salle. Baky was specifically interested in how the trauma of the war played out in literature. As a result, La Salle’s Vietnam War Collection is one-of-a-kind. It was instrumental in supplying source material for *A Shadow on Our Hearts*.

Jan Barry (Army, 1962-65, Radio specialist, 18th Aviation Company 1962-63) is a poet, author and journalist. Appointed to the U.S. Military Academy after a war tour in Vietnam, he resigned from West Point to become a writer and peace activist. A co-founder of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, With W.D. Ehrhart, he compiled *Demilitarized Zones: Veterans After Vietnam* and he also edited *Peace Is Our Profession: Poems and Passages of War Protest*.

W.D. Ehrhart (Marines, 1966-69. Assistant intelligence chief, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 1967-69) is a Poet, Writer, Scholar and Teacher. Ehrhart joined the U.S. Marine Corps, serving three years, including 13 months in Vietnam. Through the 1990s, he made his living primarily as a writer and speaker, but early in the new millennium he returned to fulltime high school teaching His poems were included in *Winning Hearts and Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans*. Exclusively a poet until he was almost 30, he has since written and published a wide variety of nonfiction.

Gerald McCarthy (Marines, 1965-68, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1966-67) is best known for his spare, powerful meditations on his experiences as a marine in Vietnam. He is the recipient of awards from the National Writers Union and the New York State Council on the Arts. McCarthy deserted the military and did time in civilian jail and military prison. His early work, collected in *War Story*, is an unflinching yet understated meditation on his scarifying experiences in Vietnam. He remains a committed Anti-war activist and has participated in actions by Vets for Peace and Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Lamont B. Steptoe (Army, Scout dog handler, 25th infantry Division, 1969-70) is a poet, activist, Vietnam Veteran, photographer and founder/publisher of Whirlwind Press. He is the author of fourteen books of poetry, has performed his work at the Library of Congress, the National Library of Nicaragua, the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, Shakespeare & Co. in Paris, the Knitting Factory, the Schomburg Center for Black Culture, and various colleges and universities throughout the United States.