



# Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram

By Dang Thuy Tram

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At the age of twenty-four, Dang Thuy Tram volunteered to serve as a doctor in a National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) battlefield hospital in the Quang Ngai Province. Two years later she was killed by American forces not far from where she worked. Written between 1968 and 1970, her diary speaks poignantly of her devotion to family and friends, the horrors of war, her yearning for her high school sweetheart, and her struggle to prove her loyalty to her country. At times raw, at times lyrical and youthfully sentimental, her voice transcends cultures to speak of her dignity and compassion and of her challenges in the face of the war's ceaseless fury.

The American officer who discovered the diary soon after Dr. Tram's death was under standing orders to destroy all documents without military value. As he was about to toss it into the flames, his Vietnamese translator said to him, "Don't burn this one. . . . It has fire in it already." Against regulations, the officer preserved the diary and kept it for thirty-five years. In the spring of 2005, a copy made its way to Dr. Tram's elderly mother in Hanoi. The diary was soon published in Vietnam, causing a national sensation. Never before had there been such a vivid and personal account of the long ordeal that had consumed the nation's previous generations.

Translated by Andrew X. Pham and with an introduction by Pulitzer Prize winner Frances Fitzgerald, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace* is an extraordinary document that narrates one woman's personal and political struggles. Above all, it is a story of hope in the most dire of circumstances—told from the perspective of our historic enemy but universal in its power to celebrate and mourn the fragility of human life.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram By Dang Thuy Tram Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #255675 in eBooks
- Published on: 2007-09-11
- Released on: 2007-09-11
- Format: Kindle eBook

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1970, while sifting through war documents in Vietnam, Fred Whitehurst, an American lawyer serving with a military intelligence dispatch, found a diary no bigger than a pack of cigarettes, its pages handsewn together. Written between 1968 and '70 by Tram, a young, passionate doctor who served on the front lines, it chronicled the strife she witnessed until the day she was shot by American soldiers earlier that year at age 27. Whitehurst, who was greatly moved by the diary and smuggled it out of the country, returned it to Thuy's family in 2005; soon after, it was published as a book in Vietnam, selling nearly half a million copies within a year and a half. The diary is valuable for the perspective it offers on war—Thuy is not obsessed with military maneuvers but rather the damage, both physical and emotional, that the war is inflicting on her country. Thuy also speaks poignantly about her patients and the compassion she feels for them.

Unfortunately, the writing, composed largely of breathless questions and exclamations, is monotonous at times, somewhat diminishing the book's power. (Sept.)

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#### Review

“Now available for the first time in English – faithfully translated by Pulitzer Prize-winning Vietnamese American journalist Pham – [LAST NIGHT I DREAMED OF PEACE] is witness to the unjust horrors and countless tragedies of war, a reminder made more pertinent every day.”

—*The Bloomsbury Review*

“*Last Night I Dreamed of Peace* is a book to be read by all and included in any course on the literature of war.”

—*Chicago Tribune*

“Remarkable. . . . A gift from a heroine who was killed at twenty-seven but whose voice has survived to remind us of the humanity and decency that endure amid—and despite—the horror and chaos of war.”

—Francine Prose, O, *The Oprah Magazine*

“As much a drama of feelings as a drama of war.”

—Seth Mydans, *New York Times*

“An illuminating picture of what life was like among the enemy guerrillas, especially in the medical community.”

—The VVA Veteran, official publication of Vietnam Veterans of America

“Idealistic young North Vietnamese doctor describes her labors in makeshift clinics and hidden hospitals during the escalation of the Vietnam War.

Tram did not survive the war. On June 22, 1970, an American soldier shot her in the head while she was walking down a jungle pathway dressed in the conventional black pajamas of her compatriots. Judging by her diary, rescued from the flames by another American soldier and first published in Vietnam in 2005, she died with a firm commitment to the Communist Party, the reunion of Vietnam, her profession and her patients, many of whom she saved in surgeries conducted under the most primitive and dangerous conditions imaginable. In one of her first entries, on April 12, 1968, she characterizes herself as having 'the heart of a lonely girl filled with unanswered hopes and dreams.' This longing and yearning...”

## About the Author

Born in Hanoi, DANG THUY TRAM was a Vietnamese doctor who tended civilians as well as Viet Cong soldiers. She died in 1970 at the age of twenty-seven. To learn more about Dang Thuy Tram and how her diary came to be published, visit [www.ThuyTram.com](http://www.ThuyTram.com).

Andrew X. Pham is the author of *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam* and the forthcoming *The Eaves of Heaven: A Life in Three Wars*. He is the recipient of the Kiriyama Pacific Rim Prize.

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Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or all their friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book is usually option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the book untitled *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram* can be good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

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