

### ***Mop-up Crew, 1973***

Nothing moved but the wasps in their crisp nests, some wisps of smoke. We started at six. We walked through the knee-deep ash, we spread out and walked a grid, each to a section a mile on the map. It was mostly flat. There were trees but these were black and cadaverous. We sweated inside our fire suits --yellow canvas—our rubber boots, under the August sun. We soaked the smoky holes with our “piss bags;” with our pulaskis we grubbed up smoking roots. The hours passed. There were no birds. Some deer a bear but they were charred, were dead. At noon we ate our dull food: baloney on slick white bread, Fritos, a Zagnut Bar. Shadeless we sat in the rig and chewed until our time was up, then we filled our piss bags, shouldered the straps, spread out again ‘til six.