



# The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War

*Paul Hendrickson*

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A New York Times Notable Book of the Year

Finalist for the Helen Bernstein Award for Excellence in Journalism

"Meticulous in detail, epic in scope, psychologically sophisticated and spiritually rich, it ranks with *The Best and the Brightest* and *All the President's Men*."

--San Francisco Chronicle

More than the two presidents he served or the 58,000 soldiers who died for his policies, Robert McNamara was the official face of Vietnam, the technocrat with steel-rimmed glasses and an ironclad faith in numbers who kept insisting that the war was winnable long after he had ceased to believe it was. This brilliantly insightful, morally devastating book tells us why he believed, how he lost faith, and what his deceptions cost five of the war's witnesses and McNamara himself.

In *The Living and the Dead*, Paul Hendrickson juxtaposes McNamara's story with those of a wounded Marine, an Army nurse, a Vietnamese refugee, a Quaker who burned himself to death to protest the war, and an enraged artist who tried to kill the man he saw as the war's architect. The result is a book whose exhaustive research and imaginative power turn history into an act of reckoning, damning and profoundly sympathetic, impossible to put down and impossible to forget.

"A masterpiece. . . . [Hendrickson] has a gift with language that most writers can only dream about. "

--Philadelphia Inquirer

"Approaches Shakespearian tragedy."

--The New York Times Book Review

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