there was a term for making your decision via this action—it was called “voting by feet”
The photos with this symbol are taken from the archives of former SÔNG THẦN photographer Ngy Thanh. The rest are from my family’s personal albums.

† TO VOTE BY FEET
THE LAND
In the spring of 1972, a deluge of people flooded Highway 1 between Quang Tri and Hue, flowing in that southerly direction that at the time symbolized escape, and about a thousand of them were felled by shells and gunfire from Communist fighters hidden in the hills above the road. Many, so many, people had died already, so why is this death-site any more significant than another? When my mother and her colleagues arrived at this stretch of road—the first members of the press on the scene after the bodies had lain untended for two months—they dubbed it “The Street of Horror.” My parents were lovers at the time and theirs was what you would call an unsanctioned relationship. I was born on April 1, 1973. If you count back exactly nine months from that date, you arrive at July 1, 1972, the same day the SONG THÀN press members
arrived and my mother and father stood together for a moment on that patch of Highway 1.

(*) Already, however, some years earlier my mother had been warned by a fortune teller not to expect marriage of any man she was involved with before the age of 30. The man she would marry, said the fortune teller, would be from some other place, faraway. My mother was 31, just landed with her two children in a place called Hope Village, when she received the letter from a well-meaning stranger that was to alter the course—the very topography—of our American geography.
A WESTERN MARRIAGE - 1975
This was the type of thing my parents thought was hilarious.
FOUNDATION-BUILDING, OR A BIG PART OF THE REASON WHY (PROBABLY) I TAKE COMFORT IN THE PRESENCE OF MEN WHO BUILD THINGS...  

††Memory dawns, for me, in the dimness of an unlit room, close walls, a rectangle. Another room where the others are not and I’ve been sent alone to search for something and I have a sense of apprehension about this search for I was told sternly (by my stepfather) to go there; I fear I’m in trouble. But in the unlit room I find instead a gift. In a large box. A Fisher Price toy house, an object I’d been coveting, with its bright hard-plastic colors, all its satisfyingly rounded corners, the friendly, solid heft of those palm-sized limbless citizens. Round plastic heads, wooden barrel bodies. Simple faces smiling. The bodies hollow-bottomed to fit perfectly onto the pedestal nooks contoured into the seats of each piece of furniture, each resting perch in the perfect plastic house—which can be opened up right down the middle like a book, then closed up again and latched when not in play. It is the child’s desire to possess
... AS WELL AS IN COCOON-LIKE SPACES

the ordinary world in miniature, her craving to own the power to reenact the daily motions of life—in her hands—via little plastic-and-wood figurines; the first experience of this wish fulfilled that becomes, for me, also the moment at which remove is first handed to me. The complexity of life inside of a house reduced to a microcosm cast in plastic, a rendition of family made manageable, miniature, harmless, pleasing; manipulable. It is then, for me, that remembering becomes safe, possible. So memory begins for me there. With a gift that is a simulacrum of residence. §