

New Poetry by Abena Ntoso: “Dear Melissa”



CARE STONES CRUNCHED / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

Dear Melissa

On the walk back from the d-fac
in Kandahar I almost peed in my uniform
pants a long way from home
we were laughing uncontrollably like other
things we could no longer control
having birthed two children each and left
them in someone else's competent care.

Incontinent overseas
on a mother of a mission drilling
cavities filling them with a matronly
patriotic responsibility for health care
stones crunched beneath our boots
we stopped and bent over shifting
weapons we carried on our hips like kids.

We almost cried in the dark after dinner
absent from bedtimes reading
The Giving Tree aloud, sent
voice recordings stateside for storytime
my son and daughter heard
me reading, heard I love you
no laughing though.

Remember how tough we had to be
for babies to sit on our bladders for nine
months only to leave them four years later
promising to return once our tour of the war
was over we were bent on becoming militant
mothers chuckling again with our children
thank you for finding life funny on the way back.