

New Poetry by Aramis Calderon: "Loyal"



THE DESERT ROADSIDE / image by Amalie Flynn

We saw a stain on the desert roadside.
The moist spot wasn't from an emptied spit
bottle or a planned checkpoint alongside
the route to stop and relieve the unit.
It wasn't a bloodstain from a gun fight,
where men and rifles roared and proved their worth.
It was diesel used to compact dirt tight,
to leave no impression of disturbed earth.
I followed my CO. He dug for the bomb.
I did not call for help or special gear.
I failed to think of a prayer or psalm.
I stood with him, too loyal to show fear.
He talked the whole time about his ex-wife,
said she's the biggest mistake of his life.