

# New Poetry: “What Great Grief Has Made the Civilian Mute” by Jennifer Murphy



To watch soldiers load into planes on television  
To ignore veterans who manage to make it home

To cry out when an airman murders four of your friends  
To never question the valiance of combatants

To have visions of your father stabbing you to death  
To lose your sight in vodka and cigarettes

To flee the western night for that big bright eastern city  
To discover there is no such thing as relief in escape

To forget the names of the slain from your hazy youth  
To remember in excruciating detail the site of their wounds

To learn there is nothing you can do to raise the dead

To spend your life writing the killed into existence

To read the greatest fear for men is being embarrassed

To understand that for women it's being murdered

To be the only female in the room of camouflaged men

To befriend the lonely fighter in the city of civilians

To love a Marine who became a decorated firefighter

To lose him in the North Tower that blue September

To watch soldiers load into planes on television

To embrace veterans who manage to make it home

*for Deborah, Amy, Melissa, and Heather Anderson  
and Captain Patrick "Paddy" Brown*

**Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Maj. Adam Weece, 3rd CR PAO,  
1st Cav. Div.**