

J O S E P H T . C O X

Second Tour

The night before Thanksgiving
my son told me he's going back to Iraq,
again. The first cost him his two best friends
and his CO's legs. He doesn't talk about it much.
This time he has go to Fort Riley
for two or three months first.
I told him that after that shit hole,
Iraq might even look good.

His grandfather went to Germany,
got shot twice, came back an angry,
sullen man, still picking shrapnel out of his legs
as he fought the middle-aged battle of the bulge.
I had my time in Vietnam, never shot,
but came back different, or so my
first wife told me before she left.

Every soldier's war is unique, every minute,
every step, every square foot, even for those
in the same country at the very same time.
My only wish is that my son will find peace,
but I honestly don't know how to tell him that,
and when I try, it sounds like just one more lie.

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