

CAROLINE A. LEBLANC

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## Mission Creep

*I had hoped for a warrior's death,*  
he said wistfully, like an infertile woman  
might say, *I wanted three children.*

I had finally gotten him to discuss  
our need for long-term care insurance  
while he cut yards of grape vines

down from strangled thorn-apple trees.  
Below, I dug daffodils where years ago  
our sons had buried two dogs and one each:

a green parakeet, a white rat, a scarlet  
checkerboard milk snake, a yellow  
and black striped Florida rat snake.

*This is mission creep,* he grumbled.  
After all, I had asked him to help me  
do one thing. Now I had him doing

his fifth garden chore. He seemed to forget  
the five deployments he'd gone on in ten years.  
For them, he had been an unusually keen volunteer.

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**CAROLINE LEBLANC** is an artist, writer, veteran and military family member. Her poetry has been published in the US and abroad. Her chapbook, *Smokey Ink and a Touch of Honeysuckle*, was published in 2010. She created and leads *Writing For Your Life* ©, writing circles for soldiers and military family members at Fort Drum, New York and women veterans in Albuquerque, New Mexico.