

“Military Moves”

by Jennifer Carpenter

Air Force-blue, the crayon of my childhood
The motif of each page, creating continuity in chaos
The uniform of the sky in every state, from Alabama to Hawaii
The color of the ever-shifting face of home

Home is reclining alone in the regimented grass,
In the comfortable safety of armed guards;
Wandering barefoot through the mystery of the silver mountain
Guarded by the green girl or finding dinosaur tracks around every corner.

Home is a symphony of jet fighters, loaded with bombs
Or painted warriors and logistical geniuses,
As doctors and nurses headed for Korea or Kuwait
Dancing unnoticed through the day moon, and blue light.

Home is a 2-minute family of strangers, soldered by circumstance
Placed like pawns in Hickam, Homestead, Gunter, or Keesler
And then moved to the next square, but always Brother of my brother,
Sister of my thought, and Mother of my memory.

Home is a ration, a built for four when there are five
Sleeping in the room under the stairs barely wide enough for a mattress,
A duplex with invisible walls that hear, all the laundry and still keep it
Within the barrier of the uniform exterior.

Home is the setting of unfinished stories, created and destroyed in a moment
Lost by constant upheavals, like the dishes turned to dust over the pacific
Taking my passport at 21, and dismissing me from the family
And exiled from the shifting faces of home, where I belong, and can never be

Jennifer Carpenter has spent her life in the company of the arts and with artists; painting, directing, singing, acting, and writing. She was raised grew up on Air Force Bases across America. She is married to her first love, her children, and her job as an English teacher. Her bookshelves are filled with notebooks brimming with poetry and narrative possibility. She believes that writing poetry is an expression of humanity and hope demonstrated by language and sound.