

Not Seen

By Alexis Todd

Not seen are the reasons for his post-traumatic stress,

Not seen by me or anyone in our family.

Even though it has been four years since it all came to be,

The things my dad witnessed in Iraq, I simply could not guess.

At times, it is difficult to understand his lack of patience and the anger that comes from nowhere,

It is odd to see his reaction to sudden noises when he is caught unaware.

Occurrences that are ordinary to us, tend to give him quite a scare.

All of these challenging moods must come from the things he is reluctant to share.

I hardly stop to think, I rarely stop to care,

Why the things in his mind are such a mess.

Even though I know he tries to think of them less,

There will always be horrid, mental images he will have to bear.

He constantly watched for IEDs, was surrounded by children living in poverty,

Observed too many dead bodies, and too much blood and gore.

When I do stop to think about what it was like for him at war,

It helps me realize why these images affect him and our whole family.

Loosing five of his brothers-in-arms while fighting this war,

Has caused a new emotion to show, a kind of survivor's guilt,

The many memories of their lives come back to him in a mental, patch-work quilt.

Now I see in him, a sadness I could never see before.

Those who live through war know these images mean,

There is a reason to keep fighting, a need to bring some good out of bad.

All who die in the fight are heroes, but so too, is my dad,

He will have to live forever with the things not seen.