

Stars and Stripes

By Kelsi C

So much activity, all around
That in my head, the colors blur
Right now in this crowded airport
My life is changing, and nothing's for sure

I look up at my hero
In vain, I try to smile
Although he seems so strong
I know that even he is fragile

I try to take a snapshot
A snapshot with my mind
So that I will not forget
My hero's face, so kind

Suddenly he's pulled away
I swallow my urge to cry
The print of desert camouflage
Swims before my eyes

Deep breath now,
Breathe in, breathe out
'Cause for my hero,
I'm staying strong.
Deep breath now,
Breathe in, breathe out
It's just one year...
It's not that long

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We all leave in silence
But our family is incomplete
Turning back will do no good
I don't want him to forget me

I wish that I could hold him in
Just one more warm embrace
I call to mind with teary eyes
The snapshot of my hero's face

Every day when I wake up
I wonder if he's ok
This fact of life weighs down my heart:
He could die any day.

Praying through the night
Staring longingly at moon
Does he see it too, and think of me?
Please, Daddy, come home soon.

Pick myself up, time to keep going
Although it should, life does not stop.
I must keep living, I push ahead,
It's time to wipe up all my spilled teardrops.

Deep breath now,
Breathe in, breathe out,
'Cause for my hero,
I'm staying strong
Deep breath now,
Try to remember
That he still loves me
Although he's gone

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I refuse to consider
All the possibilities
So I just keep living,
Believing desperately

That God is watching over him
That he'll be ok
That angels guard his sleep,
That he'll be coming home to stay

Feeling so selfish,
Wishing that he was with me
We could be outside together
Laughing, playing, completely free.

Daddy, don't get me wrong
I'm so very proud of you
I just wish your service to our country
Didn't hurt me so much, too.

I call upon my snapshot,
Already, it's starting to fade
I wait for the time when I will no longer need it
The time when I will throw it away

But until then, I'll be hoping
And praying with all my might
That somewhere around a year from now
We'll be hugging each other tight

So I
Take a deep breath now,
Breathe in, breathe out
'Cause for my hero,
I'm staying strong
Deep breath now,
Breathe in, breathe out,
Try to remember
He'll be home before long.

Kelsi C is a fourteen year old child of a military family.