



1-1-2016

Daddy's Deployment

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Recommended Citation

Towne, Rylie (2016) "Daddy's Deployment," *Calliope*: Vol. 47 , Article 27.
Available at: <http://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope/vol47/iss1/27>

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DADDY'S DEPLOYMENT

RYLIE TOWNE

Cheeks still damp from kisses,
We turn back.
This time, cheeks damp from tears.

Tall men tower over us
Wearing neutral faces,
And dark blue uniforms.
They hand us a folded flag
Too perfect, too pristine.

The pain hits us like the shrapnel in his body.
Hard, piercing.
Attacked with emotion, we try to take cover.
But there was never a ceasefire.

We line up along the casket like troops along
the battlefield,

Bombarded with apologies
and regrets,
And we are fighting.
Mother clasps my hand, not wanting to ever let go.

But she must.
I must.

Cheeks still damp from kisses,
We turn back.
This time, cheeks damp from tears.

PERSPECTIVE

KATHRYN HARLAN-GRAN