

# To the Color

Having discovered the old combat boots that I had tried to hide  
my toddler strides across the room, feet engulfed in them, he clomps  
across the floor; his footfalls call back to other eras, other wars

*When Johnny comes marching home again, hurrah, hurrah*

Fluttering guidons, snapping in the wind, fifes, bugle calls, siren songs

*We'll give him a hearty welcome then, hurrah, hurrah*

Recruiting slogans, jingoes, jangling of stirrups  
Going to whip us some Rebs (or Yanks or... just fill in the blanks...)  
Helicopter rotors brings the target objective closer  
and somewhere in the night, the motifs of wrong or right  
are drowned out by the ardor of the battle song: *hurrah, hurrah*—

“That? That?” my kid has caught me in the act of taking my war  
photos off the wall. Images from long ago, helicopters, flags,

me standing beside the best friends I ever had  
M4s by our sides (am I selfish that I would deny him this kind of life?)

“Gee-tar? Gee-tar?” My little guy, his eyes still full of stars  
He thinks our rifles are guitars—I tell him that, in fact, they are  
And they make the most beautiful music in the world

