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## Purple Heart

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### Author Bio

MarieAnn C. Raguso is a veteran, scholar, and poet. In 2021 she had several publications, "Blame Game" and "Flesh" were featured in the Santa Fe Writers Project Issue 26, "Penetrating Darkness" was featured in the Wingless Dream's Breath of Love Anthology, and in the May and June issues of the Dillydoun Review for the poems, "Drive Away" and "Lending Family Money." Her love for writing doesn't stop there. In 2017 Raguso was published in Hinnom Magazine Issue 4 for a short fiction story, "The Atlantow." She also edited and wrote the screenplay for the 2007 indie film, Revival of Darkness.

# Purple Heart

MARIEANN C. RAGUSO

Two hundred thirty years  
before, General Washington  
created, in where my old base stands,  
the Purple Heart – a concave, fabric  
merit to honor three Revolutionary  
War heroes, and later on  
15,000 WWI veterans,  
all men, marched on DC,  
it became a metal badge  
to honor all war heroes. The day  
I was presented the Purple Heart

overthinking consumed me  
about those war movies, where  
Tom Hanks or Tom Cruise –  
one of those Toms – played  
a man who went to war and  
returned home. Then, I thought  
of GI Jane and Wonder Woman,  
Lt. Ellen Ripley and Tank Girl,  
because there's not a lot of movies  
about women who go to war,  
and my anxious mood grew,

depression engulfed me  
like down-range smoke after  
a long gun fight, and stained  
my brain with images of darkness  
and despair, but still I stood up  
as my sisters-at-arms cried out for  
Justice from sexual assault and from  
the unnecessary blood stains on  
our uniforms – we are out of regulations.

And, in that moment, staring at the royal  
purple merit, I did not have  
a response for the dead, except  
I can hear your silence.

**Author Statement**

*"As a combat veteran, I received a purple heart after my MRAP, armored truck, was blown up by an improvised explosive device (IED). It made me reflect on those who have come before me, and I wondered, how many women have a Purple Heart? The answer was less than 100 women have a Purple Heart, according to the Military Order of the Purple Heart in 2017. Having a Purple Heart is still a cauldron of mixed feelings for me, and I felt the urge to write about it."*

