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November 29, 2017
Composition II

Reading Response for Chrisinger, David. *See Me for Who I Am: Student Veterans' Stories of War and Coming Home*. Hudson Whitman/Excelsior College Press, 2016.

Reading “Earning a Seat at the Table,” by Sara Poquette was kind of bitter sweet. Sara Poquette tells the story of her deployment as a war journalist, but at the same time, it wasn’t the kind of war story that most people think about. Her story is one of discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of fellow soldiers. She tells about how the male soldiers rolled their eyes at her, made sexual jokes toward her, and tried to avoid her all together. Instead of being considered a highly trained soldier in her field, she was looked down at like she was a woman that had no business being in a man’s world.

Like all veterans she returned home changed by the war, but she also had a different struggle that most veterans will never know. She brought home with her the insecurities that came with the way that she was treated. She was afraid to share any of her stories for fear that nobody would believe them because she was a woman and, because she was a woman, she was wasn’t taken seriously about post-traumatic stress disorder.

Her story was one of bravery both during and after the war. It was a story that was probably a little more sad to hear, for me, than for a lot of other people. Sadly, I was one of those men that she talked about. I had that same mentality that women had no business being in that kind of place during wartime. I was an infantry soldier, and all others were inferior to me. Now when I look back, I can see that I was wrong about a lot of it. Victory is won by all soldiers, from intelligence to the boots on the ground, and the aftermath is the same on all minds, men and women alike. Sara Poquette’s story should remind us all of that.

“We Greeted Violence With Violence,” by Aaron Lewis, was a completely different kind of story. It was more the kind of story that is closer to my own. Aaron Lewis spoke right to my heart about the war and the feelings that he had when he came home. Veterans are looked at as angry and violent, and it is those traits that makes them excel at what they do. If it weren’t for those traits, most would probably not even make it home.

Aaron Lewis talked about his attempted suicide and how that was the lowest point of his life. That is the cold hard reality of what soldiers go through when they try to leave the war behind. Veteran suicide is an epidemic. This country is currently still in it’s longest war and, exactly as Aaron Lewis said, no one still has any idea what to do about the trauma on veteran’s minds.

In the end, the two stories were completely different, but they were still the same story. As long as politicians are willing to send young men and women to die, there will always be an endless supply of broken lives. Young Americans come of age, are asked to do the things that no one else will do, and are then pushed aside when they have outlived their usefulness. It is a cycle that seems like it is going to last forever.