

Have I Ever Been to War?

With a different view of the
battlefield, I'm wary of what I
claim.

I have dented the earth and bent
the air inside the enemy's door
But I cannot help but ask my-
self, Have I ever been to war?

I've topped the heights and
flung my craft into valleys in the
black of night
But the intimate pain and guilt
in death remained outside my
sights.

I've squeezed the trigger that ended men's lives but did not witness the gore
So again I have to ask myself, "Have I ever been to war?"

I've seen the ghost of my imminent end
But never the face of a dying friend

I've seen the hopeless green smoke rise
But never the suffering it disguised

I've heard the whistling rounds drop in,
Without a clue of where they'd land
The picture can't be displayed.

But I've never felt their sting before.
And so I ask, Have I been to war?

I don't carry a load, nor am I lost between the darkness and the light
I'm the same as the man who left to go, but I question if that's right.

To all those who there remain, and to those who've gone before
I joined you in that hellish place, but I'm still not sure I've been to war.



—Lt. Col. Ryan “Rhino” Hill, U.S. Air Force
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