
POETRY | FALL 2017

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By Billie Holladay Skelley

The doctors say it is PTSD.
I just feel different.

My wife says I am not as attentive and loving.
I can't help feeling detached and emotionally numb.

My children say I am not as much fun.
I feel guilty enjoying myself.

My parents say I am more irritable and anger quickly.
I feel anxious and nervous almost all the time.

My friends say I am aloof and indifferent.
I feel I have to be alone and keep my distance.

I say nothing. I can't think of anything *to* say.
I just feel different.

Billie Holladay Skelley earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Working as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, she provided postoperative care for cardiothoracic surgery patients. She also taught nursing students and worked in curriculum development. Now retired from nursing, she enjoys writing. Her work has appeared in several magazines, journals, and anthologies in print and online—including *Heart & Lung: The Journal of Critical Care*, *American Journal of Nursing*, *Missouri Nurse*, *Today's Caregiver Magazine*, *PreMedLife*, *Harvard Magazine*, *Well Versed*, *Almanac for Farmers & City Folk*, *Space Review*, *American Aviation Historical Society Journal*, *VietNow National Magazine*, and *Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors*. An award-winning author, she also has written books for children and teens.

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