AS THE EAGLE IS, SO IS THE DOVE
(Tribute to Women in the Military 2012)

there must have been an eagle flying
above her cradle –
she may have felt its freedom’s refrain
the sovereignty of all her choices

once she was on roller-skates
another time on a surfboard
or maybe she just walked miles into her future

she may have grown to be a mother
or not
even childless she is designed to care
only if nurtured in the hands of her primary teachers:

those who came before her
those who passed along the visions and aspirations
from strong women of all possible worlds

the machinists, welders, mechanics
the riveters, nurses, philosophers even the poets
the maids, waitresses, violin and piano players

the ones without shoes plowing the land
without gloves hoisting large trash bins
without a home yet building a shelter for someone else

throughout this vast living young women still thrive
daring to reach the stars and carve the finest monuments

not shrines to false designers
but memorials to the essence of women’s efforts

as for the brave – she is the valiant warrior as well
taking on the shield, sword, musket, M16-fixed bayonet
she is firm and with resolve on
stealthy horses, wagons, tanks, battleships, submarines -

the mighty B-29 and yes she can manage the F-22 Raptor
in her return, she has learned to be the commander of her own life
she may have a family waiting in the endless
airport terminals and train stations
may have a child, husband, boyfriend, partner
maybe no one

this with no one - is no less the hero deserving
of her own child laughter and tears

the past, present and future defines her merit
all of those, all of them, all of you, all of us
we have become our own primary teachers

and this one child with the eagle above her head
grown, saluted and answered by another flight of
soft winged symbols
the white doves of peace – the anchor of her valor
the journey of her own creations –
to see a better world for all she has dreamed
and for all she has imagined
from our ancient pugilists brought forth to and forever

when you see her in or out of uniform
greet her not only by a salute or by a thank-you
honor her by passing on the tribute
grow into a venerable generation
a generation that
as the eagle is, so is the dove

(c) Juanita Sánchez 2012, Veteran UASF/USA