



What's in a Name?

**In the Civil War it was "Soldiers Heart"
A romantic term for war's aftermath
But the myths would grow from that early start
To describe a soldier's walk down an ugly path.**

**"Shell shock" was the next bad name
Used to characterize a warrior's pain.
And the message was still the same
It still seriously failed to fully explain.**

**The problem was the pejorative term
The military sought to hide the truth
About the real effects of this mental worm
The long term damage to our nation's youth.**

**"Battle Fatigue" was the next diagnosis
Developed in World War Two
A benign term to call a psychosis.
Which still failed to give the devil his due.**

**Then along came Vietnam
A different kind of war with uncertain goals
But the aftermath was just the same
The same grim bell continued its tolls**

**At last the scope of war's horrible carnage
were on TV several times a day
and the causes of this widespread trauma
were suddenly in full display.**

**Now the broad occurrence hidden in shame
And mischaracterized in decades past
Had a more honest name
And was in the open at last.**

**PTSD is no longer a coward's label
It's often the mantle of those who answered the call.
These soldiers belong at a hero's table.
To think otherwise dishonors them all.**