



## word

a collection of lyrics and poems  
to commemorate the tragic events of 9.11.2001

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*edited by Valerie Ghent*

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**to commemorate the tragic events of 9.11.2001**

*presented at The Songwriter's Beat Tribute Concerts 3.11.2002 & 3.25.2002*

**THE MEN**

**Norma Hardy PAPD ©2001**

I've met stronger men I'm sure  
I just don't remember when  
With barreled chests and big strong arms  
to carry our brothers in

I wish my shoulders now  
were even more widely spread  
so I could hold the grief we bear  
and not waver from the dread

I've seen young men with tears in their eyes  
they stand so tall, yet broken  
and when we have to say goodbye  
the words remain unspoken

we need to feel there's something  
on which we can rely  
and in our hours of anguish  
we look up to the sky

and through the tears we shed  
the wonders from above  
remind us that we're here to show undying love

sometimes I think about the fact  
that I've been truly blessed  
for I have been called one of the men  
an honor, nothing less

I've stood in the company of greatness  
heard stories of children and wives  
all from ordinary men  
who were just trying to live their lives

now I hear words like hero  
and it touches me within  
for I've broken bread with heroes  
but to me they are "the men"

I feel that now's the time  
to get my message to  
the men who I see daily  
their greatness shines through

the pipers who respond  
to our fallen brothers rites  
they're exhausted and so weary  
yes they play with so much might

I know there'll come a time  
when we will all meet again  
god's light will shine around us  
but we must wait till then

now we say goodbye to our poet, a prankster,  
a preacher and a friend  
all of those we hold dear in our hearts  
we say goodbye to "the men"

*dedicated to our fallen comrades*  
*Norma Hardy PAPD ©2001*

**I LOST MY BROTHER TOO**  
**Detective Fran Suarez NYPD ©2001**

*dedicated to the men and women of the NYPD*

I lost my brother too

I didn't work with him  
But I lost my brother too

He wears the blues and  
he is my brother too

Wanting mud on my shoes  
because I lost my brother too

Put me at ground zero  
so I can help my brother out too

## **SEPTEMBER 11 2001 -DECEMBER 5 2001**

**Maggie Dubris 911 paramedic ©2001**

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

I'm walking North on West Street  
crossing Liberty where a hot dog  
cart lies on its side, covered with  
ash. I feel like I've been cast into  
the future, ten thousand years,  
and everything I love has passed.  
The seasons crash together, muddy  
water, rushing fires. The ashes like  
snow that cover my feet, torn  
papers blow down West Street  
where the big trucks used to roll.  
The sun is up there, somewhere  
above the smoke, above the clouds  
of dust and bone. I feel its heat and  
against my arms, but the light is gone.  
To my right is the river. To my left,  
my partner, his skin a floury white.  
Into these streets I am walking, the fall  
of my feet in the ashes, the whine of a  
jet in my ears. On this sunny day, in  
early September, a brown cloud spills  
from what once was the North Tower,  
the air smells of dust and jet fuel burning.  
I am a medic, with no one to save. It will  
be night soon, the downtown lights  
gone. And the fires are everywhere

**DECEMBER 5, 2001**

Into these streets where Whitman  
walked, his great strong legs ferrying  
him into every corner, seen, unseen,  
to sing of the tenements, the souls of  
this immigrant land. Into these streets  
where Lorca walked, and spun the  
tale of the King of Harlem, hard so  
hard his spoon in the light of the  
Harlem moon. Into these streets  
where Ginsberg walked, to a  
tenement on East Tenth, a summer  
fire escape in the white hot night,  
a white tee-shirt a brown notebook  
who saw that fire, streaming  
from pen to paper, heard the  
scream of a generation, burning  
from the inside out. Into these streets  
I am walking, the fall of my feet in  
their footsteps, the rise of their words  
in my ears. On this foggy night, in  
early December, jazz music spills  
from a bar on East Third Street,  
the air smells of cut pine and diesel.  
I am a poet, and this is my poem. It will  
are be a new year soon, new poets will be  
born. And the lights are everywhere.

*dedicated to the Medics and EMTs  
of St. Clare's Hospital.*

***Maggie Dubris***

# AMERICAN HEROES

John Mascali ©9.12.2001 NYC

*dedicated to my brother FF Joseph Mascali*

*FF Carl Bisi, FF Michael Esposito, Captain Louis Modaffi and all the brothers of Rescue 5*

American Heroes  
walking your way  
not even ground zero  
could stop them that day

All across America  
we feel the pain

Let's try to be better  
let's try to be one  
do unto others  
as you'd be done

All across America  
we feel the pain

Let's not build a monument  
let's start a new life  
look out for others  
doing what's right

All across America  
we feel the pain

So long my broher  
a part of my life  
I miss you so much Joe  
it doesn't seem right

All across America  
we feel the pain

I feel you right near me  
I hear what you say  
I'll never forget you  
That promise I make

All across America  
we feel the pain

American Heroes  
walking your way  
not even ground zero  
could stop them that day

All across America  
we feel the pain  
America America

**TOMORROW**  
**Hughie Lynch ©2001**  
**FDNY Squad 1, Brooklyn, NY**

It's 3am - it's time to go  
we are here and you are home  
you feel alone within your beds  
and we are out the door again

I turn the corner fire's out of control  
there's people dying why I just don't know

so I reach out my hand  
to do all I can  
that one might live  
tomorrow

and now I'm crawling down the hall  
it's too dark to see I find the door  
"find my baby, find my child"  
a desperate mother screaming wild

so I reach out my hand to do all I can  
so that one might live  
tomorrow

so that one might live tomorrow  
so that one might live tomorrow  
so that one might live tomorrow

the sun is up and life goes on  
I'll drink a toast to brothers gone  
this time I'm coming home  
but next time  
I just don't know

so I reach out my hand to do all I can  
so that one might live  
tomorrow

so that one might live tomorrow  
so that one might live tomorrow  
so that one might live tomorrow  
so that one might live tomorrow

so that one might live  
tomorrow

**WE'LL CARRY ON**  
**Valerie Ghent ©9.15.2001 Cavos Music (ASCAP)**  
**WTC Ground Zero Relief volunteer**

*This song is dedicated to those whose presence we all still feel among us,  
to the weight of their souls which we all carry now*

can you hear us  
cause we hear you  
can you feel us  
cause we feel you  
can you see us  
cause oh we see you  
everywhere and in everything we do

we'll carry on  
we'll carry on  
we'll carry on - as long as we can  
we'll carry on

and though we survivors  
we walk the streets  
stare into  
each others eyes  
as we search for connection  
to feel that we're alive  
though part of us has died  
yes deep down part of us has died

every morning  
every night  
we look downtown  
there's no light  
yet we feel your presence  
we feel your weight  
we feel your souls as they alight  
if it's any comfort  
as you watch from there  
I hope you see how much we care  
and know we carry you with every breath of air

we'll carry on - as long as we can  
we'll carry on - doing what we can  
we'll carry on - even if we don't know how  
we'll carry on

for those who are left  
to face the truth  
no one knows  
all we fear  
no one knows  
where we're gonna go from here  
but we'll carry on  
we'll carry on - even if we're scared  
we'll carry on - we carry you in our prayers  
we'll carry on  
we'll carry on

## **ENGINE 73**

**Kathleen Pemble, married to Charles Flood of Engine 73 in the Bronx, NY ©2001**

*this song is especially dedicated to all the men at Engine 73 in the South Bronx,  
but also to all the FDNY.*

We all draw our own conclusions  
But you may not have seen the men lining up in blue  
And we all know someone who knows someone who  
But you may not have one - who's coming home to you from...

There, the fire is still burning  
There you are still digging through,  
There, every day you are standing  
Everyday you are falling  
and you have your brothers waiting there for you

Every man there is somebody's baby  
And someone's tender heart to rest upon  
Every man among you held his head up high  
Walked into the sky  
You think of them as gone, but there are...

There, the fire is still burning  
There you are still digging through,  
There, every day you are standing  
Everyday you are falling  
and you have your brothers waiting there for you

I don't think about the bigger picture  
I don't think about you coming home  
I don't think about how fragile we all are  
I don't think about flesh and bone...

There, the fire is still burning  
There you are still digging through,  
There, every day you are standing  
Everyday you are falling  
and you have your brothers waiting there for you



## LAURIE SADLY LISTENING

Lou Reed NYC ©2001

(originally published in the New York Times Magazine)

*To all our courageous Brothers - FDNY/NYPD/PAPD with the utmost admiration and respect.  
Lou Reed NYC 2/28/2002*

Laurie if you're sadly listening  
The birds are on fire  
The sky glistening  
While I atop a roof stand watching  
Staring into the spider's clypeus  
Incinerated flesh repelling  
While I am on the rooftop yearning  
Thinking of you

Laurie if you're sadly listening  
Selfishly I miss your missing  
The boundaries of our world now changing  
The air is filled with someone's sick reasons  
And I had thought a beautiful season was  
Upon us

Laurie if you're sadly listening  
The phones don't work  
The bird's afire  
The smoke curls black  
I'm on the rooftop  
Liberty to my right still standing  
Laurie evil's gaunt desire is  
Upon we

Laurie if you're sadly listening  
Know one thing above all others  
You were all I really thought of  
As the TV blared the screaming  
The deathlike snowflake  
Sirens screaming  
All I wished was you to be holding  
Bodies frozen in time jumping  
Bird's afire  
One thing me thinking  
Laurie if you're sadly listening  
Love you  
Laurie if you're sadly listening  
Love you

**WHERE IS GOD**  
**Leni Stern NYC ©2001**

*to all victims of terror*

The air is filled with smoke  
The smell of fire surrounds us  
It's entering our homes  
The face of evil is obvious

Chorus

Where is god, where is god  
And all his angels singing  
Where is god  
My end, my beginning  
Where is god?

When our sadness is so deep, we could all drown in it  
When our hearts are so heavy we can't sleep  
When the face of any stranger looks beautiful  
And the end of the day brings no relief

Where is god....

And in my dreams you came to see me  
Something told me who you are  
you brought fear, you brought destruction  
You made the towers fall  
And in my dreams I hear you asking  
Am I a hero, loved by all?  
You're the ghost that burned my city  
And in my dreams I hear you call

Where is god...

And I wonder did you feel  
For all the people trapped inside  
Did you see you mother's face  
Did you call out god is great  
I wonder did you cry

Where is god?

## SANCTIFIED

Elizabeth Jordan ©2001 Confetti Factory Music, BMI

The day the world stood still, they said a prayer, and said good-bye  
Trusting that God's loving eyes would be their only guide  
Like birds without wings they flew, from death to life anew

SANCTIFIED, holy ground  
In these ashes, angels now  
Washed by a million tears  
Blessed by our broken hearts  
Healed by arms open wide  
SANCTIFIED

Each day, the earth still turns, the rising sun still greets the land  
Mercy in a passing smile, a stranger's helping hand  
Hope in the morning light, as we are all made new

CHORUS

I still cry out with questions unspoken  
But deep in my soul, I know that God holds them

CHORUS

## FLY OUR FLAG HIGH

Chris O'Brien, son of retired NYC Firefighter Chris O'Brien  
©9.14.2001, Tucson, AZ

The pride of a Nation was tested today  
A United Nation, the U.S.A.  
I share a tear with those who cried,  
And I'll live my life for those who died

America speaks every time it's spoken to  
America bleeds Red, White, and Blue

Let's join hands together  
United it's forever  
Hold your head up high

Prayers to families  
Who will send their sons across the seas.  
May you be in God's Eyes,  
And fly our Flag high

The pride of a Nation shined true today  
America made it another day  
Americans speak every time they're spoken to  
Americans breathe Red, White & Blue

*My name is Chris O'Brien and I am 32 years old. I was born in New York City and lived there until 1983 when my family moved to Tucson, Arizona. My father is a retired New York City Firefighter. I have been a singer/songwriter for more than half my life and the tragic events of 9/11/01 inspired me to write and record this song entitled "Fly Our Flag High". This song is dedicated to each and every American who had something taken from them that day and to all of those who are helping to give it back. I invite you to share this song with as many people as you possibly can and hope it will lift the spirits of every American.*

*Thank you for listening and God Bless America!!!*

*Chris O'Brien*

## OUT OF A SKY-BLUE SKY

Maggie Dubris ©2001

*Maggie Dubris is the author of the book Weep Not, My Wanton, coming out from Black Sparrow Press in April of 2002. She is also a 911 paramedic who was at the World Trade Center on September 11.*

*(The second part of this poem is patterned very closely on an Old English poem called The Ruin, a description of a deserted Roman City, probably the city of Bath, written about 300 years after the fall of Rome. The poem was found partially burned, and is one of the earliest surviving poems written in the English language.)*

On the plains of Northern Tanzania, thirty miles south of the Olduvai Gorge, are two sets of footprints, preserved in a layer of hardened volcanic ash. They are three and a half million years old, the footprints of hominids; not running, but walking, side by side in the shadow of the Sadiman Volcano, across the then-soft carbonite ash.

September 11, 2001

Two people walk towards the ruin. A man and a woman. The air is filled with smoke and powdered glass. Small fires burn in the rubble around them. Footprints in the ashes, side by side. They are medics; blue paratrooper pants, blue cotton shirts, white letters on the back. M-E-D-I-C. Still legible though the sifting ash. They wear helmets, and walk slowly. Blink against the burnt air, step by step finding footholds on the metal planks, the chunks of stone. Warm brown water two feet deep. No sound but the fires hissing. As if they have been thrown forward in time, two thousand years, to a place they once knew. Everyone dead. The buildings gone. Sky-blue sky behind coils of smoke. A sound, like a freight train rolling, and the smoke turns red.

### Ruin

Skies tapped this tower. Terror broke it.  
The stairwells burst . . .

Cracked walkways, pillars fallen  
The work of the welders, the steelsmiths  
smolders  
    Grime scours the great towers  
    Grime on murder

Shattered the shone glass, beams broken  
Time over-took them  
    And the traders and titans?  
Towergrip holds them long gone, long gone  
fast in death's grasp, six thousand  
sons have passed.

    West Wall stood  
South Tower, sunstruck glass, rulers fell often,  
stood under snow, a hundred floors crashed;  
Stands yet the ground-steel, scorched by jetfuel,  
by planes fear-flown  
. . . gleamed the old great plaza  
. . . shrunk to blown dust

Light were the lobbies, realms where tiles shone  
radiant, rich-copper, such strong noise  
these boisterous bars, bankers filled  
with laughter, careless: Terror changed that.

Came a morning fire-drenched; from the skies men fell dead  
Death fetched off the flower of the people  
Where they stood to save, vast graves  
And at land's end, ruins

Those who would build again  
turned to dust. Thus these streets are weary;  
red fire, crackling curtains  
of glass, once sky high , streaming downwards . . .  
Scorched steel . . .

There many a traveler  
heart glad, soul bright, stood smiling  
cameras clicked, the flush of men come  
to feast on men's marvels: on silver, on gold,  
on futures told and traded , on light-filled avenues  
on this sparkling city of song and celebration.  
Flashed fevered light; wild jazz spilled  
hot from the source, and the towers all caught  
in its heaving heart; that the nights were  
lit til deep dawn, that was fitting . . .

When young dreams, loosed, ran over old stone  
unto the dream-tank . . .

. . . It is a kingly thing . . .

. . . city . . .

## CHRONOS IN CHAOS

Marinelle Ringer ©9/2001 North Little Rock, AR

Yeats noted, "All things fall and are built again."  
Again and again. No temple, no tower stands  
forever tall. The works and way of men  
rent but a small space in time. Time  
grips and rends hearts, hurls cities into chaos: bold,  
blistering anguish--with felicity--undone,  
nations and races perish in cold  
stasis ordered by nature, over-run.

Yet when those dire hands rip with *human* nails  
open the jugular architecture of bared bone--  
distant nebulae shiver with disgust, stars quake,  
gods quiver; the Eyes of the Universe turn stone:  
Chronos, with Chaos, conspires to remember  
exactly where you were on the eleventh of September.

## 911 WHY CAN'T WE SEE

Joseph Bowie

©2002 (ASCAP/GEMA)

Watching TV, fire burns dreams before us  
Screaming, choking from smoke and gases  
Everybody's running, filled with fear and anguish  
Why, our perfect world has left us abandoned

how this can be real, attacking our ideals  
Crashing through our lives, will evil sympathize?  
rush to employment, enforcing our foundations  
Leaping to death, as an only salvation

Does it not seem real, our lifestyle attacked  
Showing nothing of compassion, woman, child or elder  
People of the world working and sharing together  
One common goal, freedom of choice, happiness and safe shelter

Left home for work to share ideals and get a paycheck  
On 911 what they found was terror's hatred  
Success, money, and fortunes to be made  
World Peace through finance, the Twin Towers were sacred

Why can't we see...  
We are in the line of fire  
Caused by hunger and selfish desire  
Why can't we see...  
Not just looking for an alibi  
Really trying to understand the reasons why  
Why can't we be...  
Understanding about the Mystic Law  
Feeling all the colors of life's rainbow  
Why can't we be...  
Make a movement to all join hands  
Share the wealth that abounds the land

Look around the world, most people are hungry  
Famine and drought consumes the native cultures  
Social injustice bleeds form nation to nation  
Corrupt politicians bent on domination

What will end this vicious cycle, evil cause and effect  
Stop the killing ways, thinking thoughts we regret  
We must educate all children in the ways of the world  
Elevate our spirit, let our souls shine like gold

What is the solution to end the ills  
That support destructive ways  
Only inner revolution. Mind/body/spirit collusion  
Can give us the courage to win

The pain we feel now, we are destined to suffer  
If we don't stop this cycle of death  
We must learn to live and protect, all this universe  
Oh yeah...we all must connect

Why can't we see...  
Makes no difference what color you are  
Inside your soul there's a shining star  
Why can't we see...  
In this world of absolute illusion  
All we have is selfish, with confusion  
Why can't we be...  
In the mind to try to be connected  
Shouldn't matter at all who's elected  
Why can't we be...  
Make good causes, help those in need  
Put love first, in the lives we lead

**BLIND, UNBROKEN BLUE**  
Marinelle Ringer ©9/2001 North Little Rock, AR

In these wide-empty skies' unbroken blue,  
vast vacancies of un navigated space,  
even a *curve* of bird suggests jets slicing  
the instant to vaporize air invisible,  
but/next/and/yet its frail wing feathered flaps;  
even the rumble bumbling freeway vein roars  
a heartbeat that mocks the hum from once-above.

Now less than men, machines ravage gasoline,  
collide like bees beneath a lost sun.  
With the Twin Towers of Manhattan gone--  
Downtown Town down--  
the very skies are blank blue staring  
in blackout silence blind.

**WAITING FOR THE SNOW**  
Ann Klein NYC ©November 2001

I am home in New York City  
I have lived here most of my life  
It is late in November  
And I crave signs of white

There is nothing quite like a blizzard  
On the streets of this town  
The silence is delicious  
You can hear every little sound

\*\*I'M JUST WAITING, PERCOLATING  
I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE SNOW

Shovels clearing the sidewalks  
Chains on the plough  
Air as fresh as an infant  
Won't you cleanse us of our sorrow now

\*\*I'M JUST WAITING, PERCOLATING  
I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE SNOW  
\*\*I'M JUST WAITING, PERCOLATING  
I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE SNOW

Instrumental

Covered in heavy layers  
Grounded by the weight  
I have made it through the autumn  
Now I'm standing at winter's gate

\*\*I'M JUST WAITING, PERCOLATING  
I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE SNOW  
\*\*I'M JUST WAITING, PERCOLATING  
I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE SNOW

**SAY WHAT YOU WILL**  
Al Maddy NYC  
©2001 Mad Orphan Music

Say what you will  
But all this flag waving kind of scares me  
Taught not to kill  
But an eye for an eye with a little amnesia  
When you're scared  
Can make you pledge alligence to your flag  
Look at what they've done

So say what you will  
This terrorism has baited us  
There's blood to spill  
We're sending planes and ships overseas  
And maybe it's not right to not agree  
But what can be done

The city struggles to move on ahead  
As our rescuers search for the dead  
All around I see broken hearts  
Parentless children, families apart

Say what you will  
People need some closure to this  
They're ready to kill  
These renegades who say it's their holy war  
But don't confuse them with islam's core  
These fanatics work alone  
So say what you will

All around i see shattered dreams  
The fabric of life, split at the seams

So say what you will  
But all this flag waving kind of scares me  
Taught not to kill  
But an eye for an eye with a little amnesia  
when you're scared  
Can make you pledge alligence to your flag  
Look at what they've done



## **THE WORD IS LOVE**

**Rosalinde Block, volunteer massuese for FDNY Engine 40/Ladder 35**

**©2001 Roziejane Music**

*dedicated to Michael D'Auria from Engine 40/Ladder 35*

*upon signing of this song, I plan to donate all publishing royalties to the WTC Relief Fund*

In this world we've got the choice to live together  
Hand in hand we can weather the storm  
But instead we go to war  
And after wars are lost and won  
After all is said and done  
When push comes to shove  
**THE WORD IS LOVE**

We can fight for our rights - wear our colors  
Doesn't matter - we're just crying to be free  
But the way we go about it  
Is the opposite of how we're supposed to work it out  
Let's take off the gloves  
**THE WORD IS LOVE**

Love is the key to the Kingdom  
Silently spoken through our eyes - through our minds  
Let us leave the past behind  
And speak with our hearts  
And make a new start  
There's no other answer 'cause love is the answer to life

City streets  
The city beats to something frightening  
It's a lightening that's cracked through the town  
And it's striking people down  
But we can turn this one around  
By showing what we've found  
From Heaven above  
**THE WORD IS LOVE**

## **MOURN FOR THE THOUSANDS SLAIN**

**new words by Sol Weber**

*(the original round is a solemn and lovely one from the Victorian era)*

Mourn for the thousands slain,  
the old and the young.

All those who perished on that day;  
For them these words be sung.

Mourn, mourn, mourn.  
Mourn for the thousands slain.

*Dedicated to Steve Adams & Christoffer Carstanjen, from the Country Dance/Morris Dance world, former members of the same Morris dance group, re-united in death (as described in the NY Times) on that day. Steve was the wine steward in Windows on the World, Chris was a passenger on one of the two planes. Also killed, connected with the New York Pinewoods Folk Music Club, was Darren Bohan.*

**ALL AMERICAN Larry May and Lance Jordan NYC ©2001**

We're all american, together we stand this is our land  
We're all american, together as one we shine like the sun  
we're strong, we're strong, we're strong

Smoke can't cloud our way of finding hope hereafter  
ashes and debris can't cover up our chance for laughter  
they dig through the night and try to find our friends and brothers  
we hold on tight, to the flag and to each other

We're all american, together we stand this is our land  
We're all american, together as one we shine like the sun  
we're strong, we're strong, we're strong

Give our leaders strength to make the right decisions  
we can't ever fail armed with justice and precision  
we walk in the sky with memories of those who left us  
the battle never cries if we pull together shoulder to shoulder

We're all american, together we stand this is our land  
We're all american, together as one we shine like the sun

I see a day when all the people have no fear  
we can create a peaceful world the time is near

We're all american, together we stand this is our land  
We're all american, together as one we shine like the sun  
we're strong, we're strong, we're strong

**SUDDEN GOODBYES  
Donna Stearns NYC ©2002**

*(based on Queen Gertrude's monologue in Shakespeare's "Hamlet")*

*Dedicated to Jason and his friends attending all the memorials  
and to the families who lost loved ones. In memory of our eSpeed friends.*

There is a bridge grows aslant our waters,  
That shows his strong steel in the glassy stream.  
Nearby with fantastic purpose did they provide  
For home, family, children, or just a better life  
That evil enemies give a grosser name,  
But our good citizens do freedoms call them.  
There on the pendant floors our loved ones  
Clamb'ring to hang on, an envious attack broke our hearts, and all hope  
When down their many dreams and themselves  
Fell near the weeping brook. Our prayers spread wide,  
and patriot-like awhile they bore them up,  
Which time they chanted their last *I love you's*,  
As those incapable of their own distress,  
Or like new martyrs native to this great land. But long it could not be  
Till that their towers, heavy with destruction,  
Pulled our poor friends from this needless suffering  
To sudden goodbyes.

**I AM A NEW YORKER**  
**Vincent Pasquale, Maspeth, NY ©2001**

I am a New Yorker  
I do not live in the five boroughs or on the Island or Upstate  
I may live hundreds or thousands of miles away  
Or I may live just over the GW Bridge  
But I am a New Yorker

I am a New Yorker  
Whatever took me out of New York:  
Business, family or hating the cold  
did not take New York out of me.  
My accent may have faded and my pace may have slowed  
But I am a New Yorker

I am a New Yorker  
I was raised on Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Rockefeller Plaza,  
The Yankees or the Mets (Giants or Dodgers)  
Jones Beach, Rye Beach, Rockaway Beach or one of the beaches  
on the sound  
I know that "THE END" means Montauk.  
Because I am a New Yorker

I am a New Yorker  
When I go on vacation, I never look up  
Skyscrapers are something I take for granted  
The Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty are part of me  
Taxis and noise and subways and "get outa heah" don't rattle me  
Because I am a New Yorker

I am a New Yorker  
I was raised on cultural diversity before it was politically correct  
I eat Greek food and Italian food, Jewish and Middle Eastern food and  
Chinese food  
Because they are all American food to me.  
I don't get mad when people speak other languages in my presence  
Because my relatives got to this country via Ellis Island and chose to stay  
They were New Yorkers

People who have never been to New York have misunderstood me  
My friends and family work in the industries, professions and  
My firefighters died trying to save New Yorkers and non-New Yorkers  
They died trying to save Americans and non-Americans  
Because they were New Yorkers.

I am a New Yorker  
I feel the pain of my fellow New Yorkers  
I mourn the loss of my beautiful city  
I feel and dread that New York will never be the same  
But then I remember:  
I am a New Yorker

And New Yorkers have:  
Tenacity, strength and courage way above the norm  
Compassion and caring for our fellow citizens  
Love and pride in our city, in our state, in our country  
Intelligence, experience and education par excellence  
Ability, dedication and energy above and beyond  
Faith--no matter what religion we practice  
Terrorists hit America in its heart  
But America's heart still beats strong  
Demolish the steel in our buildings,  
but it doesn't touch the steel in our souls  
Hit us in the pocketbook;  
but we'll parlay what we have left into a fortune  
End innocent lives leaving widows and orphans, but we'll take care of them  
Because they are New Yorkers

Wherever we live, whatever we do, whoever we are  
There are New Yorkers in every state and every city of this nation  
We will not abandon our city  
We will not abandon our brothers and sisters  
We will not abandon the beauty, creativity and diversity that New York represents  
Because we are New Yorkers  
And we are proud to be New Yorkers

**REMEMBER THE WTC**

*Thank you Vincent for allowing us to share this with our fellow New Yorkers all around the world.*

**WE WILL REMEMBER YOU**

**John Galvin & Marty Rogers, Red Cross volunteers NYC © 2001**

we will remember you  
we will remember you

the sun shone down so bright and clear on our great city that day  
there were no clouds up in the sky, just another ordinary day  
than in one quick moment it changed so fast, oh what a terrible sight  
they took our twin brothers away from us disappearing into the night

they were towers of joy, they were towers of pain  
they were towers of peace, till the terror reigned  
they were towers of confidence, evil could never sway  
but now there towers of memories and they can't take them away

you may ask how this could happen, you may ask who is to blame  
you may want vengeance or reckoning but god wouldn't want it that way  
so just close your eyes and pray for them, for they know not what they've done  
they'll be judged on another day but now god has more left work to be done

(repeat refrain)

now imagine those towers there again standing tall and standing proud  
remember the lives taken away remember when remember how  
and remember those who risked their lives, let nothing stand in their way  
and god will bless everyone of us and this great land the usa

(repeat refrain)

## **INNOCENT BLOOD**

**Robert Hill ©2001 Wild Animal Ditch Music (ASCAP)**

The winds have changed, innocence fades  
Dark and cold, an evil we now know  
They robbed us of your love, you paid with your blood  
Those who are to blame, cannot wash off the stains of

Innocent blood - innocent blood  
Innocent blood - innocent blood

A nightmare filled the morning skies, and forever changed our lives  
A father's final call, "Just know I love you all"  
Unborn life in a mother's womb, dies with the mother it never knew  
Police lie buried arm in arm  
A fallen priest in a fireman's arms

Innocent blood - innocent blood  
Innocent blood - innocent blood

Justify murder with their faith  
They strike, then run and hide their face  
Unholy acts in their Holy War  
God, what is it all for?  
The line between justice and revenge  
Grows invisible - again  
Shock and tears turn into rage  
Someone has got to pay, for this

Innocent blood - in the name of  
Innocent blood - in the name of

Prepare for war, only God settles the score  
Someone has got to pay, but it's all of us who pay for

Innocent Blood - innocent blood  
Innocent Blood - innocent blood

## **RETROGRADE**

**Lia A. Steele North Little Rock, AR ©2001**

9-11-01

JETS SMASH  
TOWERS FALL  
PEOPLE FLY

JET SLAMS  
FIVE SIDES DIVIDE  
PEOPLE MELT

JET PLOWS  
EARTH DIGS  
PEOPLE STORM

PEACE SHATTERS

**AND THE BELLS RING**  
**Pat Doyle, Palm Beach Gardens, FLA ©9.15.2001**  
*dedicated to Danny Suhr, Engine 216*

A fifth alarm to the 100th power,  
As two planes hit our city's Twin Tower.

Responding on 9/11 to a 911 like no other,  
Unprepared for the horror they are about to discover.

Disbelief and dismay upon reaching Ground Zero,  
Just doing their jobs, they become our heroes.

Command Post established, but that stage is wrong,  
Leaders they looked to are too soon gone.

The buildings crumble, who can survive?  
And the first bells ring, 5555.

Shoulder to shoulder they pass 5 gallon cans.  
Moving debris caused by terrorists' hands.

"Missing" describes those that were first due.  
As days pass by, with no one to rescue.

The Mayor and Commissioner appear shaken and ashen.  
Traumatized by events, they speak with passion.

Of dedicated Civil Servants, now battered and lost,  
Of a nation united, at too high a cost.

Days have passed, where are those alive?  
And the bells ring again, 5555.

A trio of Bravest raises a flag at the site,  
A symbol of pride on a wet rainy night.

As dust turns to oatmeal and hampers the task,  
"God, let us find a survivor", is all that they ask.

Our hopes diminish, as other buildings rumble,  
A whistle blows, they move on, another building may tumble.

The President visits with assurances the world hears,  
Our Bravest at work, at work, without fears.

But little left to celebrate, no one to revive,  
And the bells again ring, 5555.

**CATCHING MANHATTAN**  
**Kristina Krause ©9/18/2001**  
**San Jose, California**

on the day  
of disaster  
I sat for hours  
on the floor of  
my living room  
stacks of my  
poetry books  
around me  
shoulder high

I hunkered  
behind them  
waiting for the  
next body to drop  
waiting to

leap up

and catch her  
keep her safe  
behind my  
paper walls  
read to her  
odes to beautiful  
fallen things  
while we exchanged  
the heavy robes  
of gravity

by now the sky  
has turned  
a lighter page  
but my heart's  
still catching  
all you who  
plummet  
from the swollen  
eye of grief  
a far longer fall  
my brave island brothers  
my sweet sisters  
my new family of tears

**THIS IS NOT A GAME**  
**Amandalynn Jones, WI ©2001**  
(Amadalynn is 16 years old)

We've done this somehow...  
No one knows why.  
Where do we go now...  
We look to the sky.  
Civilians, they died...  
Early that morning.  
In millions we cried...  
There was no warning.  
We kill and we fight...  
We point fingers we blame.  
We forget, we loose sight...  
This is not a game.  
On steps hundreds sang...  
In unity.

The voices all rang...  
For the land of the free.  
There's corruption and grief...  
Confusion and sorrow.  
They're forming relief...  
Maybe hope for tomorrow.

There's nothing to earn...  
They've all died in vain.  
Unless we all learn...  
This is not a game.  
We thought it was fun...  
To fight, to control.  
Now dust blocks the sun...  
And we've missed our goal.  
We kill and we fight...  
We point fingers we blame.  
We forget, we loose sight...  
This is not a game.

**ALL THOSE PEOPLE**  
**David Heitler-Klevans ©2001**

1. All those people, in New York  
shouldn't have died, they shouldn't have died  
When I heard - that bad news  
Oh, I cried, you know I cried  
It was wrong, so wrong  
The hurt lasts long, so long  
All those people, all those people  
shouldn't have died, they shouldn't have died.

2. All those people, in Kabul...

3. All those people, in D.C. ...

4. All those people, in Jerusalem...

All those people, in Bagdad  
All those people, in Kosavo  
All those people, in Oklahoma City  
All those people, in Santiago  
All those people, in Soweto  
All those people, in Auschwitz  
All those people, in Hiroshima  
All those people, at Wounded Knee

5. All those people, in New York...

**BOXCUTTERS AND KNIVES**

**Ina May Wool ©2001 NYC**

boxcutters and knives  
hatred and flight instruction  
a chance to die for something  
i heard it on the news  
this is what they used

bomb threats and manuals  
fake id's and freedom of movement  
humiliation brewing  
nothing left to lose  
this is what they used

stealth bombers/f16's  
hundreds of thousands of men  
we need to protect and  
we need to defend  
consider what they used

boxcutters and knives  
and anonymity  
disintegrated countries  
the fuel, the fire, the fuse  
this is what they used



## SEPTEMBER ELEVENTH

Nancy Hershatter, NY ©2001

*dedicated to Cordelia and Liam McGinn*

*and to all the other children who lost a parent on the eleventh of September*

Jenna's in the playground building castles out of sand  
Happy shaping towers with her sand-encrusted hands  
Regarding her creation with unrestrained delight  
Who's going to be the one to tell her Daddy won't be coming home tonight?

Jacob's on the soccer field at practice with his team  
Making all-county league this year has been his dream  
Feet go flying down the field, so agile in their flight  
Who's going to be the one to tell him Mommy won't be coming home tonight?

How can the sun still be shining  
How can the sky be such a vivid blue  
With our beautiful city doubled up in pain  
And absolutely nothing will ever be the same

Just an hour or so ago we gathered in assembly  
Ended with their favorite song "from sea to shining sea"  
Now pictures race across the screen of firefighter heroes  
God help the thirty seven hundred families with loved ones at Ground Zero

### REPEAT CHORUS

Juan last saw his Papi when he was three or four  
Left to make a living on the far-off New York shore  
Sent home money when he could, wrote "things will be alright"  
Who's going to be the one to tell him Papi won't be writing home tonight

REPEAT CHORUS Except this time, sing "beautiful children" instead of "beautiful city"

## ALWAYS NEAR Brian Muni NYC @2001

*Dedicated to the memory of my father, Sy*

frozen in time. floating through space  
wherever i go, i see your face  
walking down streets, i look for you there  
no matter how far, you're always near

so unprepared for this aching inside  
you left too soon, no time for goodbyes  
how long ago? how many years?  
no matter how long, you're always near

too late for tears, too late for regrets  
we live with your love, memories we can't forget  
your diamond still glows eternal with light  
your love burns deep through the night

frozen in time, floating in space  
wherever i go, i see your face  
smiling at me, 'though life can be unfair  
somehow, somehow, you're always near

## **A MILLION HEARTS**

**Tracy Stark ©2001 TSongs Music (BMI)**

As I looked across the river  
I saw the pride of the of the city  
Lit up like 2 cigarettes

And as I watched in horror  
As those buildings crumbled  
And burned in my memory -  
An image I never will forget

This has hit so hard  
Right in our backyard  
With thousands - who won't be coming home again

And we'll stand close in this fight  
In reverence to our heroes sacrifice  
When the city of a million strangers  
Can feel like closest friends

As we stood up in screaming silence  
Wondering where God was  
And how could this be part of the plan

But this is just fear --- at it's peak  
And the angels are crying  
At the emptiness and arrogance  
Of the worst side of man

And this has hit so hard  
Leaving our souls scarred  
With thousands --- Who won't be coming home again

And we'll stand close - in this fight  
And pray for our heroes sacrifice  
And we'll find God in a million hearts - and open hands

### **INSTRUMENTAL**

And we'll stand close in this fight  
In reverence to our heroes sacrifice  
And we'll find God in a million hearts - and open hands

Oh beautiful --- for human kind  
And a skyline by the sea  
Oh God bless America .....and have mercy

## HOPE

Elisa Peimer NYC ©2001

Another page has turned  
Another bridge has burned  
What is the lesson learned this time

I stare into the sun  
To try and blind my eyes  
Instead I see a shadow of its light

And when nothing is left in this world for me  
And the journey is left to an endless sea  
There is

Hope

And when there's no way out  
The barrel of this gun  
You throw your weapons down and run  
I don't know what this means  
Don't think I ever will  
That's when I close my eyes and be still

And when nothing is left in this world for me  
And the journey is left to an endless sea  
There is

Hope

Lead on I will follow  
Fireworks will be here tomorrow  
I will beg steal or borrow  
But I'm not gonna lay down  
No I'm not gonna lay down  
When there is

Hope

## I AM THE LIGHT

Theresa Sareo NYC ©2001

And so there's pain  
And there's so much confusion  
I feel a silent emptiness  
I'm rearranged  
I need a resolution  
Cause I don't want to face  
what I'll regret

But I won't hang my head in sorrow anymore  
I won't let my disappointment  
Keep my head from looking up

I am the light  
I am the light  
I am the beacon in my darkest hour

It's so unclear  
It's all so uninvited  
It wasn't anything predictable  
How did things change  
How did we miss the warning sign  
Just when we thought we were invincible

I won't disappear in my discountenance  
I won't let my heart be swallowed  
By these shadows in the night

I am the light  
I am the light  
I am the beacon in my darkest hour  
I am the light  
I am the dreams I seek  
I am the hope that I am reaching for

## STAND TOGETHER

David HB Drake ©November 9, 2001 Milwaukee, WI (*moved from NYC*)  
(Tune: *Gentle Annie* by Tommy Makem)

On the day the world was shaken and our country changed forever  
We were so clever none would dare to take us down  
And we built our ivory towers on the pillage of the helpless  
Taking all the earth's resources that we found.

Now the mighty towers of Babel have all fallen into rubble  
There's a trouble spreading dark across the land  
And the news is filled with babble echoing that mighty rumble  
Though our dreams have crumbled we will rise again

Stand together, Stand together! Though our dreams have crumbled we will rise again

As the crimson-flamed inferno led our firemen to cremation  
The nation saw them die to help another live  
With police and crews and tractors, all the nurses and the doctors  
Through our pain and tears they showed us how to give.

As we sift the dust and gravel for the loved ones lost that morning  
Dreams unravel of the future that we planned  
But there's hope in every action that we take to help our neighbors  
And their labors teach us how to take a stand.

Stand together, Stand together! And their labors show us how to take a stand.

On this day the country wondered just how such a thing could happen  
Angry voices call us out to win the fight  
Take revenge on those who hate us, its an eye for eye that's needed  
Till our vision for true peace is lost from sight.

There are heroes in our alleys; there are saints around the corner  
There are those who lend a hand to those in need  
You won't find them in our leaders, in the news or with the famous  
They're just ordinary folks like you and me

Stand together, Stand together! With the ordinary folks like you and me

For the mighty towers of Babel have all fallen into rubble  
There's a trouble spreading dark across the land  
And the news is filled with babble echoing that mighty rumble  
Though our dreams have crumbled they will rise again

Stand together, Stand together! Though our dreams have crumbled we will rise again

**UNIVERSAL LOVE**  
**Art Halperin ©2001 Sword in the Stone Publishing (ASC)** A

I just want to give you a smile  
It should never go out of style  
'cause sometimes the world gets cold outside, and a smile can warm you up  
So wherever you go, the people will know  
It's time for universal...universal love

I just want to send you a kiss  
I hope it brings you some happiness  
'cause sometimes the world gets cold outside, and a kiss can really warm you up  
So wherever you go, the people will know  
It's time for universal...universal love

I just want to send you some peace  
And put an end to all of your grief  
'cause sometimes the world gets cold outside, and love can only can warm it up  
So wherever you go, the people will know  
It's time for universal...universal love

I just want to give you a smile  
Oh yeah...Oh yeah

**SEPETMBER 11, 2001**  
**Thom Manno NYC ©2001**

That day, was the saddest day  
of our lives, of all time  
Away, they've taken away  
thousands of lives  
and our skyline

We still can't believe it  
all of those innocent people  
that have died

We must be strong, and carry on  
We must help each other, sisters and brothers  
We must walk tall and never fall  
We must have love, for those high above

Love will help us through this  
We can truly do it, if we try  
Life is very precious, but we never realize it  
Until it's taken away from us  
Life will go on, even though they are gone

We will sing their song  
Please stop the bombing in America  
Please stop the violence, don't use weapons  
Please love one another instead of hating  
Arms are meant for hugging and rejuvenating

We have lots of love for those who passed away  
These are the saddest days that there will ever be  
That day was the saddest day  
That day was filled with hate  
That day has gone away  
Today will never be the same

## GOODBYE

Dina Fanai NYC ©2001

Close the window, winter speaks  
now the wolf must sleep  
Wind so empty, his echo won't return  
Time won't cry for you  
But, I do  
Still, I do  
Kissed by the night, held in the sea  
Is where you are  
all you ever dreamed?  
Here I am  
I'll reach out my hand  
to give you this one last goodbye  
Listen closely  
there's a new song that's just begun  
For a while angels share  
what we have lost  
I know now you touch what's real  
Just know I've been touched by you  
Kissed by the night, held in the sea  
Is where you are  
all you ever dreamed?  
Here I am with one wish, one prayer  
you hear this one last goodbye  
Goodbye my friend, goodbye  
Give me just one sign  
Let me know you see  
There's much more of me  
Because of you  
Kissed by the night, held in the sea  
Wherever you are,  
you're inside of me  
Here I am,  
please reach out your hand  
and take this one last goodbye  
Kissed by the night, held in the sea  
Is where you are  
all you ever dreamed?  
Here I am, reaching my hand  
To give you this one last goodbye  
Can you hear this one last goodbye?

*"Music is a sacred expression, a gift in which we can heal and connect more deeply within ourselves and each other. May we each experience and remember the truth of who we really are and find magic and peace in connection to earth."...Dina Fanai*

## GRACE

Peter Giambalvo NYC ©2001

Grace found out about “Tragic Tuesday” on Wednesday  
and now in just one day she’s selling lemonade  
She’s asking 25 cents a cup,  
And do I want some? Yes is all I can say when I look into the eyes of  
Grace

You ask yourself, “How, when, why, where? Do I know I care?  
Just listen to your heart now, cuz, here’s answers to your prayer

So do you want lemonade? Do you wanna know?  
Yes, the question remains, will you ever know?  
Will you ever know grace?

Grace is selling lemonade from a stand  
Yeah she’s taking a stand, but that’s just Grace  
Man, you’re never too young to start  
and you’re never too old to finish what you started  
cause you’re always that age, the age of grace

You ask yourself , How, when, why, where? Do I really care?  
Just listen to your heart now, cuz here’s answers to your prayer

So do you want lemonade? Do you wanna know?  
Yes, the question remains, will you ever know?  
Will you ever know Grace?

But it breaks my heart to know that Grace is gonna grow up in a  
fragile place  
where she’ll live under the shadow of our shattered dream  
Yet it comforts me to know that Grace is gonna show up with her  
lemonade  
to put a smile on my face, to shed some light unto this darkened space

Do you want lemonade? Do you wanna know?

Still the question remains, will you ever know?  
Will you ever know?  
Will you ever know?  
Will you ever know grace?

9-11

Brenda Kahn  
NYC ©2001

Sweet perfume  
of death  
Rising from  
uncertainty,  
Beggars, liars,  
dreamers,  
Woven shards of Islam.  
Your stuttering demands  
Drift, ashes on  
a hollow wind.  
The misperception  
of your unity,  
A stinging nettle  
of defiance.  
Better to walk slow.  
The labyrinthine escape  
Of our wrongdoings,  
Our prayers are  
whispered.  
Money sticking to  
everything.  
Flags flying and  
discourse sweeping  
The back alleys  
of indignation.  
The wind shifts  
a past breeze,  
Blows sweet freedom  
through the  
city walls.  
Gathering light  
and courage  
Is it more  
compassionate  
to remember  
or to forget?  
Friends, today the  
brackish wind is you,  
Turning into what  
will always be  
A memorial, a vision,  
a human being.

## *when mohammed came to the mountain*

*Frank Tedesso NYC ©2002*

*could it really have been beyond reason,  
calculated without regret.  
this shattering of all proportions convinced us of what.*

*was the yawning, lazy blue of the sky complicit.  
were birds caught off guard.  
where were the birds  
when sudden renegade moments,  
with an appetite for lives,  
cut loose from time  
and tore the hour open  
with a precision beyond comprehension.*

*the solid structure of the morning swayed,  
and then became a waterfall of artifacts  
cascading down through the air.*

*lunchtime apples,  
neckties, bought haphazardly but given with great affection on father's day and christmas eve;  
watches & clocks emptying themselves of lost time as fast as they could;  
a spider who toiled his life away unnoticed, inside the leaves of a camellia plant on the window sill;  
many final words  
& the last rags of breath;  
dozens & dozens of broken eggs from the cafeteria,  
ideas extinguished in mid thought,  
birthday cakes,  
tomorrows still & sleeping, small as caterpillars on the under leaves of time.  
a scrap of dark blue, chinese silk  
from a stylishly sexy blouse;*

*even the air seemed to be falling.  
strangers dropping down through the darkness,  
suddenly flung together and married.  
nothing in between themselves.  
weddings performed in all directions.  
you cannot separate yourself from such moments.  
an incredible descending,  
unbuttoned and plummeting.*



*lives slammed open and shut  
open and shut.*

*did starfish emerge  
from the ruptured socket of the sea  
and swim up river  
to bear witness  
to the remains of names,  
naked & divided from bodies,  
piling up on the air.  
the morning decomposed quickly,  
devoured by some terrible awakening  
and by its own uselessness.  
all this hysterical information  
swept over  
indecent,  
gawking,  
and wounded logic.  
details hidden in the bellies of snakes  
burst forth  
with inhuman surprise.  
the uninhibited imagination of Death's pigs  
suckled at the living  
with a wretched awkward skill.  
in the forsaken belly of the world  
had some other, more horrible virgin birth occurred;  
or did the snake just fuck eve again  
because the gods of men were hungry for vengeance & another little snack.*

*fragments of meaning falter  
in the anarchy of such dreams.  
the wine where oysters once suckled  
and grew fat  
beneath the stairways of harbour seals,  
still laps at the tip of manhattan.  
yet so many things are lost in the tangled, threadbare latitudes of history.*

*in dense silence,  
washed over by oblivion,  
the soul wears a thousand years lightly  
as she undresses her dead,*

and places them in arms  
where centuries have no idea  
of that obscene nothingness  
hanging now over the ruins.

you keep watching the sky,  
but you stop looking so furiously at the emptiness.  
the infinite, indifferent blue has filled it  
and yet has not filled it,  
because the emptiness ignores it.  
the truth is unmiraculous here.  
it killed a summer dress.  
you live with this strangeness.  
in a furnace of melting metals,  
innocent as a tea pot,  
worlds evaporated.

2 corners bound by water,  
one by light & mortal odor,  
and one by the mournful augur  
falling over the city now  
of what all this becomes next.  
  
only winter,  
arranging the snow,  
and the exhausted and separate moon,  
ask nothing from your heart....

**SONNET FOR THE TWINS**  
Charles Borkhuis NYC © 9-11-01  
lowered into lessness  
two shall now be one  
and one reduced to none

the collapse of inwardness  
under the shell of the exterior  
falling through its shape

language turned to fire  
the word WATER written in flames  
still burns above our heads

waking life leveled by dream  
dreams replayed till a silent film  
covers us in dust  
the future implodes inside the present  
but the present is already a memory

**FIRST WRITING SINCE**  
**Suheir Hammad NYC ©2001**

*Suheir is the author "Born Palestinian, Born Black" and other books, this piece was widely circulated via email in October 2001*

1. there have been no words.  
i have not written one word.  
no poetry in the ashes south of canal street.  
no prose in the refrigerated trucks driving debris and DNA.  
not one word.

today is a week, and seven is of heavens, gods, science.  
evident out my kitchen window is an abstract reality.  
sky where once was steel.  
smoke where once was flesh.

fire in the city air and i feared for my sister's life in a way never  
before. and then, and now, i fear for the rest of us.

first, please god, let it be a mistake, the pilot's heart failed, the  
plane's engine died.  
then please god, let it be a nightmare, wake me now.  
please god, after the second plane, please, don't let it be anyone  
who looks like my brothers.

i do not know how bad a life has to break in order to kill.  
i have never been so hungry that i willed hunger  
i have never been so angry as to want to control a gun over a pen.  
not really.  
even as a woman, as a Palestinian, as a broken human being.  
never this broken.

more than ever, i believe there is no difference.  
the most privileged nation, most americans do not know the difference  
between indians, afghanis, syrians, muslims, sikhs, hindus.  
more than ever, there is no difference.

2. thank you korea for kimchi and bibim bob, and corn tea and the  
genteel smiles of the wait staff at wonjo the smiles never revealing  
the heat of the food or how tired they must be working long midtown  
shifts. thank you korea, for the belly craving that brought me into  
the city late the night before and diverted my daily train ride into  
the world trade center.

there are plenty of thank yous in ny right now. thank you for my  
lazy procrastinating late ass. thank you to the germs that had me  
call in sick. thank you, my attitude, you had me fired the week  
before. thank you for the train that never came, the rude nyer who  
stole my cab going downtown. thank you for the sense my mama gave me  
to run. thank you for my legs, my eyes, my life.

3. the dead are called lost and their families hold up shaky  
printouts in front of us through screens smoked up.

we are looking for iris, mother of three. please call with any  
information. we are searching for priti, last seen on the 103rd  
floor. she was talking to her husband on the phone and the line  
went. please help us find george, also known as adel. his family is  
waiting for him with his favorite meal. i am looking for my son, who

was delivering coffee. i am looking for my sister girl, she started her job on monday.

i am looking for peace. i am looking for mercy. i am looking for evidence of compassion. any evidence of life. i am looking for life.

4. ricardo on the radio said in his accent thick as yuca, "i will feel so much better when the first bombs drop over there. and my friends feel the same way."

on my block, a woman was crying in a car parked and stranded in hurt. i offered comfort, extended a hand she did not see before she said, "we're gonna burn them so bad, i swear, so bad." my hand went to my head and my head went to the numbers within it of the dead iraqi children, the dead in nicaragua. the dead in rwanda who had to vie with fake sport wrestling for america's attention.

yet when people sent emails saying, this was bound to happen, lets not forget u.s. transgressions, for half a second i felt resentful. hold up with that, cause i live here, these are my friends and fam, and it could have been me in those buildings, and we're not bad people, do not support america's bullying. can i just have a half second to feel bad?

if i can find through this exhaust people who were left behind to mourn and to resist mass murder, i might be alright.

thank you to the woman who saw me brinking my cool and blinking back tears. she opened her arms before she asked "do you want a hug?" a big white woman, and her embrace was the kind only people with the warmth of flesh can offer. i wasn't about to say no to any comfort. "my brother's in the navy," i said. "and we're arabs". "wow, you got double trouble." word.

5. one more person ask me if i knew the hijackers.  
one more motherfucker ask me what navy my brother is in.  
one more person assume no arabs or muslims were killed.  
one more person assume they know me, or that i represent a people.  
or that a people represent an evil. or that evil is as simple as a flag and words on a page.

we did not vilify all white men when mcveigh bombed oklahoma. america did not give out his family's addresses or where he went to church. or blame the bible or pat robertson.

and when the networks air footage of palestinians dancing in the street, there is no apology that hungry children are bribed with sweets that turn their teeth brown. that correspondents edit images. that archives are there to facilitate lazy and inaccurate journalism.

and when we talk about holy books and hooded men and death, why do we never mention the kkk?

if there are any people on earth who understand how new york is feeling right now, they are in the west bank and the gaza strip.

6. today it is ten days. last night bush waged war on a man once openly funded by the cia. i do not know who is responsible. read too many books, know too many people to believe what i am told. i don't give a fuck about bin laden. his vision of the world does not include me or those i love. and petitions have been going around for years trying to get the u.s. sponsored taliban out of power. shit is complicated, and i don't know what to think.

but i know for sure who will pay.

in the world, it will be women, mostly colored and poor. women will have to bury children, and support themselves through grief. "either you are with us, or with the terrorists" - meaning keep your people under control and your resistance censored. meaning we got the loot and the nukes.

in america, it will be those amongst us who refuse blanket attacks on the shivering. those of us who work toward social justice, in support of civil liberties, in opposition to hateful foreign policies.

i have never felt less american and more new yorker, particularly brooklyn, than these past days. the stars and stripes on all these cars and apartment windows represent the dead as citizens first, not family members, not lovers.

i feel like my skin is real thin, and that my eyes are only going to get darker. the future holds little light.

my baby brother is a man now, and on alert, and praying five times a day that the orders he will take in a few days time are righteous and will not weigh his soul down from the afterlife he deserves.

both my brothers - my heart stops when i try to pray - not a beat to disturb my fear. one a rock god, the other a sergeant, and both palestinian, practicing muslim, gentle men. both born in brooklyn and their faces are of the archetypal arab man, all eyelashes and nose and beautiful color and stubborn hair.

what will their lives be like now?

over there is over here.

7. all day, across the river, the smell of burning rubber and limbs floats through. the sirens have stopped now. the advertisers are back on the air. the rescue workers are traumatized. the skyline is brought back to human size. no longer taunting the gods with its height.

i have not cried at all while writing this. i cried when i saw those buildings collapse on themselves like a broken heart. i have never owned pain that needs to spread like that. and i cry daily that my brothers return to our mother safe and whole.

there is no poetry in this. there are causes and effects. there are symbols and ideologies. mad conspiracy here, and information we will never know. there is death here, and there are promises of more.

there is life here. anyone reading this is breathing, maybe hurting,  
but breathing for sure. and if there is any light to come, it will  
shine from the eyes of those who look for peace and justice after the  
rubble and rhetoric are cleared and the phoenix has risen.

affirm life.  
affirm life.  
we got to carry each other now.  
you are either with life, or against it.  
affirm life.

suheir hammad

**THE WORLD TRADE CENTER**  
**John Everett Beck , Little Rock, AR ©2001**

crackle drain of human remains.  
Wrested are the streets of New York.  
Human hands and human hair have burned  
back into the stars. No one survives,  
and nothing can bear the weight  
of eyelashes on fire.

All yesterdays close as dust is swept  
out of the streets and into the moon  
and we forget there was before;  
this rubble-dust is composed of sisters, brothers  
and mortuaries, all that collapsed  
into bone.

How can anything be born?  
The sea forgets her tides.

One's shoulders cannot carry this.  
Saturn situates to add another ring.  
Jupiter envelops Mars as Venus  
closes her heart. And no one can hold  
though everyone must try.

**AMERICA'S HEROES**  
**Carolyn Ringer North Little Rock, AK ©2001**

Dust encrusted  
Calloused hands  
Tear-stained cheeks  
Slumped shoulders  
Aching muscles  
Pained hearts  
Weary bodies  
God bless  
America's heroes

## Acknowledgements:

Many of these works were presented at The Songwriter's Beat 9.11 Tribute Concerts on March 11, 2002 and March 25th 2002 to commemorate the 6 month anniversary of the tragic events of 9.11.2001.

These concerts were held at The Cornelia Street Cafe in New York City.

To all songwriters and poets who submitted works for this book and the concerts, my thanks for your spirit, your talent, your hearts in creating art out of chaos and loss. Due to space and time considerations at the concerts we were not able to present all submissions, but I would like to honor each and every one of you who have written, and commend you to keep writing, no matter what.

For it is truth we seek with music, with word, with our hearts; in the deepest parts of pain we find our souls, as we carry that pain back to the light and set it free.

It is indeed an honor that you have chosen to share these works. Thank you.

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Dedications have been submitted by each author where desired.

However, works by Marinelle Ringer, Lia Steele, Kristina Krause, John Everett Beck, Carolyn Ringer and Charles Borkhuis are among others originally published September 21, 2001 in "Out Of The Pit", Mad Otter Publishing, Little Rock, AK. The first part of their collective dedication is included here:

"This small book is dedicated to those who have died, to those who loved them, and to those - many living and many already lost - who have desperately attempted to help them in *any and every way* possible." Thank you Robert Hill for bringing me the first copies of "Out Of The Pit" so that we could help hand them out at the site and from our Spring Street warehouse.

*WORD is dedicated to those we have lost and to those of us left here who feel the loss, as we struggle together to integrate the tragic events that have so profoundly affected us all.*

Valerie Ghent, editor

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We are now looking for songs/poems for the second edition of WORD.

Please contact us for more information.

Cover art rose line drawing by Doris China

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