word

a collection of lyrics and poems
to commemorate the tragic events of 9.11.2001
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The Men
I Lost My Brother Too
Sept.11, 2001 - Dec.5, 2001
American Heroes
Tomorrow
We’ll Carry On
Engine 73
Laurie Sadly Listening
Where Is God
Sanctified
Fly Our Flag High
Out Of A Sky-Blue Sky
Chronos in Chaos
Why Can’t We See
Blind, Unbroken Blue
Waiting For The Snow
Say What You Will
The Word Is Love
Mourn For The Thousands Slain
All American
Sudden Goodbyes
I Am A New Yorker
We Will Remember You
Innocent Blood
Retrograde
And The Bells Ring
Catching Manhattan
This Is Not A Game
All Those People
Boxcutters and Knives
September Eleventh
Always Near
A Million Hearts
Hope
I Am The Light
Stand Together
Universal Love
September 11, 2001
Goodbye
Grace
9-11
When Mohammed Came To The Mountain
Sonnet For The Twins
First Writing Since
The World Trade Center
America’s Heroes

acknowledgements

edited by Valerie Ghent
I've met stronger men I’s 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 truely 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
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 brother
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
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

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 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

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
Americans 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 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 Olduvi 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 carbonitite 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 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...

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**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 from 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 unnavigated 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 allegiance 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 allegiance 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 oridnary 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 vengence or reckoning but god wouldn't want it that way
so just close your eyes and pray for them,for they know not what thy'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 WildAnimalDitchMusic (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
(Amandalynn 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
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

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 allright"
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

Dedicated to the memory of my father, Sy

...
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
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
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.  
than 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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