

SEPTEMBER 11th 2001

I had given up poetry
Because of fear and horror
The fear of the unthinkable
The random selection of the innocent
The horror of the unimaginable
Of the massive destruction and of the consequences
 until I woke up this morning.

I had lost my poetry
In the pictures of the smoking skies
In the unseen stench that still pervades
In the mountains of filth that have to be cleared
In the over-reactions and the war that followed
In a world teeming with rabid terrorists,
 until I woke up this morning.

I could not imagine poetry
That could begin to capture the pain
That could cope to express the loss
That could touch the shock
That could mention the horror
 until I woke up this morning.

I had given up poetry
I had lost my poetry
I could not imagine poetry
The poetry was dead inside me
For more than two months
 until I woke up this morning.

I was numb to the poetry of fear and horror
To the poetry that prevents people from flying
The perverse poetry of the random selection of the innocent
And the deadly selection of the target
To the poetry of the unimaginable horror
 until I woke up this morning.

I could not exorcise the oft-repeated images then
Which are never repeated now
Those clean bright towers of hope
Of achievement, of prosperity
Of pride, of commerce
The poetry of symbols: now all gone
 until I woke up this morning.

I woke this morning to the poetry of horror
The beauty and the horror of those bright images
Those chance images, caught by chance against a bright sky
Those images, captured in a moment, imprinted forever.

I woke this morning to the poetry of the unbelievable
The unthinkable which was actually happening
The planes, the buildings, the collapse
The awesome horrific consequences
The Hollywood-like images and the lack of rolling credits
Telling you that this was not just Hollywood
That you could not go outside the theatre
 and take up your normal life outside
That this was not Bruce Willis and entertainment
Or visual poetry, and it is not your perverted imagination
Or a nightmarish dream
 that unfolded that morning.

It is real; it is forever; it really happened; it is horrific.

I awoke to the poetry of conflict and horror this morning
The remembering of the conflicts of cultures
The oppression, the arrogance, and the ideologies
The history of conflicts that create such horrors
Ypres, the Somme, Gallipoli, Dresden, Nagasaki, Hiroshima,
Mi Lai, Ruanda, Oklahoma, Sarajevo & Bosnia, Kosovo, Omaha, Waco,
The Twin Towers and the Pentagon.
A litany to remember; a litany of horror to remember
 that I woke to this morning.

I woke to the poetry of people - ordinary people dealing with horror
Jumping off buildings that were on fire
Going back to help others
Stories of distressed mobile calls to loved ones
Stories of heroes and heroines that may never be told
Stories of ordinary people affected forever
By the horror, by the conflict, by the unimaginable
Coming into their lives on this bright morning.

This is the poetry of this morning.