

Laurie Kruk

Poem for September 13th, 2001*

While the ashes still fell
jumbling DNA dreams:
faith-crazed, headline-effaced
attackers and victims
hanging from the sky...

while the darkness roared
blanketing September gilding,
paralysing our vision
while reasonable men and women
lost television tongues,
returning our eyes again and again to
the fallen towers
bearing fragments of fate
named in the thousands....

and as the rain descended after, drops
crawling for the ocean—

You crashed through, baby woman:
violet-limbed, still trailing the knotted tie,
like a parachute;
piercing the pall with knife-edged cries,
carried to your mother's aching
emptied belly and cut into history.

Survivor's guilt or not,
your wrinkled, furious brow
took nine months to mould
with each cry a triumph, each angry lifted
fist, pummelling the alien air,
a claim on our hearts.
The fall is made new, and this aging green century
watered by rivers of a returning spring
this September 2001
carrying away tears and fingerprints
as the nurse presses your dyed sole
to the identification form, entering
your name as others
are finally written in stone services.
Fifteen-minutes-breathing, you
root for the maternal ocean, meeting
sustenance of milk, rising warm
to the surface of my numbed openings.

We are born into loss
as we are opened by love:
"It's a game of inches and seconds," the grey-suited man
draped in the dust of friends, enemies, strangers
tells the hope-hungry world
in the same paper that declares your arrival.
He escaped the fireball down 78 stories
breathing soot and screams and the ceaseless quest
for ground. Ran into the embrace of strangers,
keening of sirens. And found his way home, an unfamiliar
four-miles walk
out of yesterday.

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And as you are born into tomorrow
season of loss and uncovering
for always
suddenly we are rooted to the same page;
sharing both beginning and ending
the tenacious grip of a tiny hand, latching on
like my heart, pulsing
hope and despair—
like the foreign grip on familiar controls
which may bring us back to
earth, together
if only to be claimed by its gravity

Second daughter, this day you fly
the present forever into the past
astonishing, terrifying, marking us
for this moment, a lifetime's
opening

**two days after the terrorist attacks on the U.S.A, in New York and Washington*