

one kind word

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In one instant, all we knew  
Assumed, hoped, or dreamed  
Had collapsed.

A thousand brother's aspirations  
A thousand mother's adulations  
A thousand sister's ruminations  
A thousand father's hard won stations

Washed away in a sea of fire,  
Concrete and steel,  
Dust and tears.

Haunting cries of electric armbands in the darkness  
Screeching, shrill alarms  
Sole witness and testimony  
To heroes lost.

Twin towers of Babel  
Monuments to the one language  
That covers humanity;  
Mighty fortress,  
Brought down with blood of innocents;  
Pride bedashed lying at our feet;  
Stench of smoldering death  
Draped on a late summer breeze.

Ten thousand eyes burned dry for life;  
Ten thousand hands scraped raw from moving rocks in vain;  
Ten thousand hearts broken while searching in the rain.

Cries of vengeance!

Calls for revenge tip-tip like rain on a thin glass roof;  
The question Why? bursts in desperate, choking, breathless despair.

But the soul of the world knows  
What is softly whispered in the quiet corners  
Of our solitude:

Violence sown is violence reaped.

*Michael was in New York on business on September 11. He notes, "We were on the 40th floor of a building in midtown Manhattan about a mile away from the World Trade Center. We watched it all from behind a glass wall. It was a terrible, surreal experience."*

Oh the mother of hatred is an empty belly;  
And her husband is neglect.

Yet one act of kindness  
Marks the end of suffering.  
One act of kindness,  
Born of humility,  
Propelled by faith.

The time to act is a twinkling;  
A challenge that flickers,  
Fleeting and swift.

It is our chance to reply  
With one kind word,  
Or help lift one burden,  
Or ask forgiveness,  
Or offer thanks.

Our moment is at hand!  
Don't waste it.  
Say one kind word;  
So it might flourish and grow.

Hurry!

For in an instant, all you know,  
Assume, hope, or dream,  
May collapse

Leaving orphaned intentions  
To wander in the caverns  
Of broken hearts.

