

Sorrow and Joy

Sorrow is lurking

In the letting go.

At times, mire

At times, a rippling stream

At times, milkweed feathers floating in the air.

Sorrow rises and tumbles

In the letting go.

At times, an ebbing tide flowing out to sea

At times, a plunge into the screams of a free fall

At times, rumbling and fumbling below the laughter of the day.

Sorrow waits its turn

In its memory of loss

While fulfilled joys

Ride, afloat, upon their current.

Sorrow is so tangible

Joy, ephemeral.

Sorrow envelops from the inside out.

Joy is fluttering just beyond the finger tips.

Sorrow embeds itself into the pores.

Joy is a cleanser that evaporates.

Sorrow's icy fingers wedge into the folds of the flesh.

Joy swirls and flits, mussing up the hair.

It's not a battle, nor even a game.

Joy won't even try to play.

Sorrow screams,

“Stand still!”

“I'm tired of carrying you”.

“Can't you help?”

Joy giggles,

“Try to catch me.”.

From Susan Ceely Philips

Untitled #8

Blue
Blue
Skies
Sunlight glistening into squints
The not quite Autumn beauty
The routines of breakfast, donning of socks, grabbing keys
Students arriving at school doors
Businesses opening theirs
Workers stepping into revolving entries

A single moment of changed lives
Into rippled awareness that horror
Had occurred
Is occurring
Has occurred.

And then it's now.

22 years

Since names we know were crushed
Since friends we know were sickened by their gifts of love sifting through ashes
Since a solemn march of gray smudged faces and even grayer spirits
 Trudged toward home, up and down avenues, cross streets, bridges, tunnels
Since cell service jammed and loved ones so near felt so far away
Since we worried moment to moment about our children's window of their world
 Witnesses to tragedy and hatred so up close and personal.
Since billowing smoke and burning remnants of collapse filled the air
 Day after day after day
We don't want to relive it, but can't seem to turn away
So we turn inward, outward
To honor, to remember, to pray

22 years

When names are recalled and treasured
When friends recovered from their charity or were stricken by their efforts
When lives marched on into their futures
 Both bright and dimmed
When towers of communication or to strut resilience and tenacity
 Were rebuilt, stronger, yet still fragile
When many children went on to blossom and thrive

While some wilted under the weight of the fall
When breezes of freshened air currents and trees reached skyward
And memorial waters spill day after day after day.
And so we relive it. It seems callous to turn away,
Not to honor, to remember, to pray.

22 years

Other names have been crushed, yet recalled
Other friends have given selflessly and turned inward
Other marches for lives in climates of crisis
Other tragedies and hatreds slammed our homes and our children,
Can they, can we, still rise from those ashes?
Other billows of smoke and remnants of flooded collapse fill our lives
Day after day after day
We don't want to live it and attempt to turn away
Without honor, or remembrance, or a simple moment to pray.

22 years

Of life, loss, and love.

22 years

Of connections, walls, and persistence with fatigue.

22 years

But,
We hope
We hope
We hope?

From Susan Ceely Philips

Wait for Tomorrow

Summer's days are shortening.
The kayaks and yachts are docked.
Bicycles snuggle against one another in their home base.
Cool and blustery wind shuffles over the surface of the bay.
Azure and snow festoons above.

The day we call Labor
becomes a line drawn in the sand
Between endings and a restart.

We slip into September like Cinderella's slipper
Clicking days off our calendar
with checkmarks scratching off their completion,
And then we glimpse two upright stick figures
Harshly at attention
And we know we have to stop
Revisit
Recall
And long to disremember.
But we do stop
Revisit
Recall
The memory that is tethered to our hearts
And wait for tomorrow to exhale again.

From Susan Ceely Philips