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A New Lamentation for America

George Henson

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A New Lamentation for America

George Henson

World Trade Center and Pentagon,
your country remembers you.
You were monuments to American ingenuity
and democratic ideals,
steel and geometry made fragile
by cowardice and fire,
symbols of life and liberty,
tombs of innocence,
shrines of martyrdom,
altars of sacrifice,
towers once billowing upward,
then plummeting heroically to earth,
shattering serenity like panes of glass,
fracturing spirits like cymbals
crashing in terrorists' symphony,
testament of zeal and inhumanity,
as ash and dust fell on tear-filled faces
and broken bodies.

Fallen countrymen,
in Washington and Manhattan,
and heroes in the air,
and we mourn you,
as a husband mourns his wife
raped by sub-human men;
we bow our heads in reverence;
we lament your torment and suffering;
we exalt your courage and bravery;
we honor your sacrifice and agony;
we glorify your memory;
we celebrate your life and death.

I ate
the power bars
that were on
the counter

that you
were probably saving
for breakfast.

Forgive me.
I was so hungry
and exhausted after
I got home from gym.

Americans, everywhere, wake up!
Cry out in united voice
and grieve in unrestrained measure!
Proclaim your sorrow,
not in a hushed whisper,
but in a deafening chorus!
Write new Lamentations!
Sing to your fallen heroes
like a plaintive mother who lulls
her ailing child to sleep!
Let the world hear our pain,
from lower Manhattan
to every corner of Afghanistan!
Civilized nations, join us in concert as we
remember forever our martyrs,
and lift them up in unending praise!

*On a poem by William Carlos Williams,
"This is Just to Say," 2002...George Henson*