

"Therefore choose life": A CALL TO ARTS

A new feature of *Types & Shadows* inspired by the events of Sept 11, 2001.

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Types & Shadows

JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF QUAKERS IN THE ARTS
Issue #23, FALL 2001

Two poems by Elizabeth A. Schultz, Oread MM, Lawrence, KS

THE RIVER TATE

At the end of the war,
The bombs fell
On the factories,
The green onion fields,
And the houses by the river.
With flames flourishing
Like pagodas, the people
Sought the river's sanctuary.
Still the bombs pursued
Them, and they burned,
Floating in their flamboyant
Shrouds until their corpses
Lost their light, sank,
Weighing the river
With dark putrefaction.
Years pass, and the river
Runs with slime, stench,
Awaiting its return
To ordinary loveliness.

from "Return to Japan"

DAYS OF RECKONING

Into the clear sky,
Fireballs, blasts of ash,
Rivets, computer bits,
And people like angels
Illuminated red-gold, in
Some ancient manuscript, soar
Through the scorched air.

Inside the flaming towers,
Others walk down the stairs,
Across corridors, keep on
Walking down the stairs,
Leaving their shoes behind,
Leaning on each other,
Keep on walking out into
The streets of rising ash.

Blackened, they are still
Dressed in suits and ties;
Blood seeps from their ears.
Like those seeking clarity
Amongst Hiroshima's ashes,
They stagger to the river,
Barefooted, thirsting.

September 2001

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How can God send opposing leadings? And why? And how do you figure out who's right?

I have thought long and hard about this, and I have finally figured out the answer, and the answer is: I don't know.

...Logic says that the lion and the lamb cannot lie down together...But the artist tells us something different, the artist says they can lie down together. The poet Isaiah says the wolf shall dwell with the lamb & the leopard with the kid.

And if the poet doesn't convince us, the painter Edward Hicks shows us: there they are, the calf and the lion and the fatling, they're together. And as one of my third graders said once, "Nobody is biting anybody else."

It's not that the question of how or why is wrong; it's that logic won't answer that question. That's why we need Quaker artists, by the way. Art can help us answer some of those questions. And faith can answer those questions.

—William Kreidler (1956- 2000)
(talk to New York Yearly Meeting, 1991)

MEMORIES: SEPT 11, 2001

by Maria Cattell, Lancaster (PA) MM
(in Meeting 9/14/2001)

On this morning like many others,
 a late summer morning
 of sunshine and blue skies,
on this ordinary day
two hundred and forty-six innocents
boarded planes for San Francisco and LA
 246
 innocents
 and 18 with knowledge of evil
began their collision course
thorough sunny blue skies.

On this morning like many others
thousands and thousands
 innocents
went to offices in the twin towers
 and the Pentagon,
went to the end of memories and time.

For the rest of us,
our innocence collapsed in dusty rubble,
the memories were just beginning.

Thoughts About Photography As Prayer

by Skip Schiel, Cambridge (MA) MM

(*Journal entry, July 2001, Blacksburg, VA*)

A workshop participant asked: "Looking at our photographs, where did the prayer go?"

A central question.

Prayer as contemplation—prayer as conversation with the Great Mystery—prayer as travel, soaring thru the core of one's existence to something beyond—prayer as gratitude, as petition, as settling of a tumultuous heart, as thanksgiving, as plea, as grounding.

Photography likewise.

Thru photography, I contemplate. I converse with spirits swirling in and around me. I journey inward and to distant regions. I thank creation for gifts, I request interventions, I am calmed, give thanks, demand or politely ask. And I arrive home-thru silver salts or bytes of electronic information—to where I began: the ocean.

Ernesto Cardinale, the Nicaraguan poet quoting another Spanish-language poet, claimed, "Our lives are rivers, flowing to empty, into the ocean, which is death."

For me, an eternally hopeful observation. Now to find that river, make that photograph.



RECESSIONAL 1982

(with gratitude to Kipling)

by Esther Greenleaf Mürer, Central Philadelphia MM
(previously published in *Friends Journal*)

Deafened by our inner noise and blinded by our greed,
Numbed by rush and conflict, muted by the sight of need—
Need we cannot answer when our spirits have been jarred
By the subway's reeking tube and factory's iron shard—
 Fretful dust, we choke on dust
 And quell each other with our disregard.

Now from dune and headland see our missile silos rise;
Generals and kings demand the same old sacrifice:
Hearts and minds and bodies consecrated to the fire.
Why should we concern ourselves with Nineveh and Tyre?
 Ere we yield our pomp of yesterday
 We aim to make the world our pyre.

Through the drunken mists of power behold a tiny light;
We have often glimpsed it in the stillness of the night.
Now the light grows larger and becomes a rivulet,
Now a mighty flood that shall engulf the nations yet—
 Ocean of light, flow over us!
 Connect us all, lest we forget

That Thou hast given our heathen hearts the power to kill us all,
Power to turn all earthly life to shadows on a wall.
Yet, despite our frantic boasts, a greater might is Thine;
Still hast Thou dominion over prince and palm and pine.
 Lord God of Hosts, join us together
 In thy far-flung battleline

For only as we work together will Thy Kingdom come,
Only as we seek together shall we find our Home;
Only as our inner noise is stilled may there be heard
Messages of truth and right from Thine eternal Word.
 Judge of the nations, spare us yet;
 Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!

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Types & Shadows is published quarterly by the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts. Subscriptions are available through membership in the FQA.

This page added December 2001