

## "Therefore choose life": A CALL TO ARTS

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

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# Psalm for Our Days

by Charleen Smith, Grand Rapids (MI) MM

The Wholeness of God I view through the multiplex lens of a fly's eye,  
Each image complete, amplified into a new significance.

The Beauty of Creation I find in the sweet stink of putrefaction  
As the strength of life leaches back into the soil.

The Wisdom of the Father is explained to me through the dementia of the aged,  
Those who have begun to grasp life's meaning

The Perfection of the Lord I see in the asymmetry of deformation  
Where the potential in the irregular reveals the poverty of standard.

The Heavenly Chorus is broadcast through the advertising  
Of our misunderstood needs.

The Bounty of the Earth is packed in the bags of the street people  
Who hold it in proxy for the rest of us.

The Peace that passes All Understanding hides out in the desert places of my soul,  
and my Faith rests in the assurance that Nothing matters.



## My Revised Wish List

### A Letter to My Meeting

by Marybeth Bland, Olympia (WA) MM

I am craving the ordinary mundane aspects of life. A plugged toilet would be welcome, if that was to be the catastrophe of the day. I wouldn't even mind burning my dinner, if I was just outside with my binoculars watching the fall migration of gray warblers.

The terrorist strikes changed my perspective on life. What I once found annoying, I would now eagerly embrace. I want the women in the locker room to return to talks of menopause, hot flashes and weight gain. Debating whether or not knitting

needles would pass airport security is something I do not want to discuss after my long meditative swim.

I have to believe these terrorist strikes will not be the norm in life. One day the black smoke hanging over Manhattan will turn to drizzling sun.

I have to believe there is more good in this world than evil, and people do care for one another. I have to believe.

When we come together as a community to sit in silence and look inward for the light, I feel at peace. Birds chirp in the trees. The children try to sit quietly and sometimes someone is moved to sing. That is beauty.

I yearn for more beauty in the world. Let us lead the way.

# SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

by Marian Kaplun Shapiro  
Cambridge (MA) MM

## Here on Earth (before)

Here on earth

we need air  
water  
fire, and  
spirit. Here

on earth we  
need air. The oak  
trees crack open  
yellowbeige bare  
broken in angles  
of hurricane. We

need water. Floodings  
of mud in basements,  
carrying off our computers  
our photographs our dishes  
our life savings. Here  
on earth we need

fire. Volcanoes sweeping  
towns into dustbins, pets  
and livestock and the  
occasional human being  
who couldn't get out in  
time. Here on earth

we need spirit. Here on  
earth.

## Here on Earth (after)

Here on earth

we need air  
water  
fire, and  
spirit. Here

on earth we  
need air. Peace  
shatters in rainbow  
storms of bloody  
glass bullets  
and severed hands. We

need water. Punctured  
sewer pipes, mouths  
and ears and noses filled  
with fetid excrement  
of man and rat. Here  
on earth we need

fire. We/they smash  
buildings/bodies into  
tombstones, ashes of  
asbestos and the bones  
and bones and bones of our  
children. Here on earth

we need spirit. Here on  
earth.

# Aunt Samantha

by Skip Schiel, Cambridge (MA) MM

She is a giant. Aunt Samantha has a voracious appetite and is known in her neighborhood as tough, sometimes a bully. Also capable of sweetness and generosity. She throws her garbage wherever she wishes, even into the backyards of her neighbors. Recently someone played a prank on her, threw firecrackers at her, blew off one finger, severely damaged another. But this prank or maybe it was a deliberate attack to get her to stop being so mean and ravenous infuriated her. She bellowed, "I'll get you for this, I'll hunt you down, but first let's pray.

Aunt Samantha praying struck some of her neighbors as a bit odd because she rarely attends any sort of church, isn't known as a particularly religious person, despite her claims of being Christian. And since she was so mad, turning red, trembling, calling her giant buddies together to plan a counter attack, praying in the midst of preparing to fight didn't ring right. As she prayed, she nursed her finger, wiping off the blood, applying a bandage, bemoaning the loss of one, injury to the other, and said how much she'd miss them, how much they contributed to her life. She'd used the lost finger for counting money, the injured finger for jabbing people in the eye.

Not too long after the attack, she reverted to her old habits, intensifying some of them. She ate more food, as soon as she found a way to gobble food without the 2 fingers. She just couldn't seem to quell her eating habit, poor thing.

What happens next to Aunt Samantha?

She might abandon old habits, slim down, dispose of her garbage properly, stop bullying, join with others, not only the other giants in her block, and cooperate.

Or she might strut, shout, rant, strike out randomly, gaining herself more and more enemies, even among the giants. She might eat more and more, eventually die of a heart attack, a direct result of overeating.

Or she might simply do nothing, despite all her blustering, forget how angry she was at the attack, lose memory of all the resolutions she made, merely wander off, never to be seen again.



*Water station at Quabbin Reservoir, Massachusetts.*

*Photo by Skip Schiel, who writes:*

*"Because of fears that this water supply for the Boston area might be attacked, it is closed, denying hundreds of people its graces. A reasonable response to Sept 11? More was destroyed than the obvious."*

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