Fall 2019 9/11 Readers’ Theatre

Writing Prompt for 9/11-- our shared event

Wife at World Trade Center

The wife calls her husband after the first plane strikes.

I’m coming home

Honey.

There was a plane

Crash! An accident.

a plane flew into

the tower

 next to mine!

The husband replies:

What? A plane

Crash?

I’m sure every

Thing

Will be

Okay

Dear.

The wife responds relieved:

Oh, I’m so startled I think I’ll

Come home

To you

now.

A loud crashing sound interrupts the conversation,

As the building begins to rumble and rattle.

The wife in a panicked voice says:

I think we just got hit!

Oh

God! My tower

Got

Hit too!

I don’t think

It’s an accident anymore.

I’m coming home

Honey. Chantel

It was an early school morning like every other school morning.

Except it wasn’t like every other morning.

My mother wasn’t making coffee in the kitchen,

Like she usually was.

I searched and searched the house to find her in her room.

Hand clasped to her mouth,

Tears streaming down her face

Quiet.

The television was always on silent in the mornings

“They’re jumping out of the windows. The god damned windows” She said.

She held me, and my brother, and my sister

and we sat there

and watched, what she called

History. Presley

The fire is rampant and breathing is almost impossible to do  
Everywhere I run I cannot seem to escape the heat and smoke  
I tear up because of the smoke and the thoughts of my family  
The roar of the fires strike terror, but I finally see a way out  
Hope arises as I run, but as I look down there is no one there   
I can no longer escape and despair fills me  
I am no longer in the building and the breeze feels nice

Henry

I looked around the classroom to make sure

no one was watching me check on Brownie.

Probably bringing my puppy to school was a bad

idea because he kept moving more and more.

I thought to myself, “My mom is going to be so mad.”

I zipped up my backpack and ran back

to my seat.

Mrs. Elrod started crying at her desk watching the TV screen.

Something felt scary.

“Can I call my mommy?” I asked.

We all started crying. Ariana

We were still trying to find out why one of the towers was smoking, by the time the second plane hit.

My family and I were in downtown, and then suddenly we weren’t. This wasn’t New York

This was a warzone. The headlines of foreign wars were simply chatter and objects of conversation until we were thrust into a war of our own creation.

The first tower came down, then all of downtown went brown

The dust, dirt, debris, and death swallowed us whole.

My mom clutched her rosary and cried a prayer, my father coughing up his life.

My eyes betrayed me. I grabbed them and dragged them towards the faint smell of the Atlantic. Rushes of wind, maybe bodies, maybe ghosts passed through my hair. I was a blind man leading the blind. Something I continue to do, to this day.  Jon

I was a stranger visiting from far away.

As I turned on the TV I saw a plane hit the building

And

Then another plane hit the building.

I didn’t know why or who did it

I was confused and unaware. Alberto

The morning is cool

But not too cool to have left my hoodie at home

The campus is empty but there are a few people

Standing among themselves with shocked faces.

It’s about 7:20 am.

I like getting to school early to play football.

Mr. Gregg (who usually has the football) has the TV on

His eyes are bloodshot

And tears have stained his face.

He is on the phone and speaking frantically.

It’s impossible to make out.

On the television set there is a building that looks to be on fire

The dark clouds of smoke act as a foil

For the bright and beautiful morning.

For the first time, I hear the word “terrorist”

It sounds so alien.

My young fun-loving teacher is beside himself.

I try and ask him what’s wrong

I’m met with, “My mom won’t answer the phone”

He starts to cry again.

I’m unsure why everyone is so sad

But I feel hollow in my lack of grief. Jesse

i saw mama clasp

her hands to her mouth,

tears running down her

face.

i had never seen her cry

like that before.

i couldn’t understand the

man on the intercom.

i just heard all the

silent screams around

me,

as the plane went down

down.

down. Steph

I jump from my criss-cross apple sauce position

on the carpet

The television shines bright orange hues

I look in awe

It was like the roaring fireplace

Dad set up for winter

But only more compact

Too small

And it radiates no heat

concrete debris settled on the corners of

the television like greyed coals

The flames grew and did not settle to a

comforting flicker

I felt nothing

I turned off the television and

Returned to my position on the floor Sabino

The world is ending.

The war at home has begun. The next moments will shape history.

My family is what’s important. We need food to survive, and food is not around in a world that has ended, so before the world ends I will gather what I can.

The outlook is unclear.

But it is getting worse. A second plane has come. What is next? Where is next? What do we do?

I miss the problems I had earlier today, when the world was still going, but as for the end of the world I must prepare. I don’t have time to miss the world, because my family is still around.

Scotty

I stood there with ice cream in my hand

as people began to run.

It was so loud, I felt like my ears

were bleeding.

Someone knocked me over, as another person

picked me up and began to run.

I couldn’t see anything, just

Peoples scared faces.

When mommy found me, she was crying.

My mommy told me later

there was an accident. Drew

Firefighter

I saw the fire before I had my uniform on.

a tragedy

crept through the sky,

and we didn’t see it.

My ears full of alarms,

But my heart frozen in panic.

My body moved with the motivation of duty.

Speeding down the street headed straight

Into the tragic scene I saw it.

another plane hit,

fires rose and the screams became more clear.

Diving head first through the fiery doors,

my body moved before I could think.

Partners helped me move rubbish and

try to find anybody that wasn’t crushed

or burnt alive.

That was the last time I saw those partners.

I’ll never forget. Michael

2 and a half years old I am

downstairs in the living room

playing with

the hot wheels cars my dad got

me

when

all of a sudden something from the TV

makes my mother gasp and put her hands

together

coming closer to me she holds me tighter

than usual.

I become confused looking at the TV screen

of planes crashing.

Holding me my mother cries calling my dad

in New York

to see if he’s okay. Kayla

I get up to fill

my coffee cup

for the third time

this morning.

The hot liquid pouring

into my cup, my mind

trailing off as I glance

out the window.

A sudden flash fills the

sky, a loud boom

rings out, down the block,

and I see the tragedy in the distance.

From the safety of

the break room,

I see one of

the towers crumble.

I look down

at my cup,

hot coffee spilling

on the floor.

I look back out the

window at a smoke

filled sky. Everything

blocked by a grey haze.

I pick up my mug and

walk back to my desk. Courtney

The TV screen flashed with the crumbling building

again.

Mom is off at work. She says she may not be home tonight

Of course

Dad already knows what she means.

My siblings and I don’t know what to make of it.

People are saying it’s awful

Our youngest sister, she’s too young

too young to know Sophia

Seeing the commotion on the news,

we weren’t sure how to feel.

scared, confused,

angry,

however you like.

Teachers explained what happened as best

they could to us, even though we didn’t

understand.

“broken,”

“mourning,” “fighting,” “we will be okay,”

All these years later,

growing. Ellie

The fire alarm went off in our fire station on 42nd and Sutter

The alarm code rang for a high demand emergency.

I took a deep breath and thought “whose life am I saving today?”

As we lined up, started the truck, I hopped in the passenger side.

We turned on our sirens. “We’re heading to the

Financial District of Lower Manhattan. It’s awful,” my fire captain

states. “Brace yourself,” he continues.

I look up, smoke and screams fill the air. Our truck stops, I stop.

Jennifer

When I woke up to the shout of the passenger next to me,

I was pissed off, asking myself why on earth nobody would

let me sleep

From my mom to my brother

When can I have a good and satisfying sleep anyway?

When I’m gone maybe:

Anyway, why do people look so terrified?

Who are those people with black masks?

Holy shit! They’re the bombers!

Damn! It’s not good!

I haven’t seen my family for so long.

I should’ve come back last year when I had the time

but I was crazily making money

so I skipped every call that my mother made.

Please God! I really want to see my mother and my niece and

my nephew.

I want to see my brother, ask him how he’s been.

We would play video games together like the old times.

Please God! My family is waiting for me!

What day is it today? It’s September 11, 2001

The babies and kids are so scared that they are starting to cry

The bombers say something and there is a man translating

“If the babies and kids won’t shut up, they’ll shoot everyone

of the kids.” Ngoc

So much I didn’t know on Sept. 11, 2001

I was in my office at Western Carolina University

when a colleague came in to tell me

that a plane had flown into one of the

Twin Towers in NYC.

I asked myself, what are the Twin Towers?

I went off to my class – freshman writing

held in a computer classroom

The previous professor had left CNN on.

I didn’t know death could be so real

until my students and I watched the

2nd Tower fall

watched people jump to their deaths.

I didn’t know until I moved to CA -- three

years later that the plane that crashed

in a field in PA was a flight

bound for San Francisco, piloted by an

SJSU alum

I didn’t know till I heard the clips of the

passengers on that plane how important

it was to have cell phones, to call loved

ones and say goodbye

In 2011, I didn’t have a cell phone.

Dr. Warner

I gripped the arm rests so hard that my knuckles turned snow white

my eyes were squeezed shut

my mouth was open to scream but nothing came out

time stopped

I thought about my parents and how much I would miss their

calls every Sunday

I wondered if my roommates would remember to take Ivy to dance practice

while I’m gone

even though it was only supposed to be for the weekend

piercing screams rang in my head and time started again

this was it

time doesn’t stop for anyone Emma

9/11/01 was my 1st day at work,

At 21, I turned my internship into “employment- ship”

my cubicle decorated with pictures of Mom and Dad

I made them proud; 1st generation graduate,

Big Apple success—

Today was the start of my American dream

Connie

In school, the teacher showed the news on TV

“BREAKING NEWS: PLANE HIJACKED, CRASHES INTO TWIN TOWERS IN NYC”

I sit at my desk, trying to figure out

my teacher’s facial expressions, while coloring in my art sketches.

She stares, so I stare, but I turn away from the violence and

chaos on the TV – I don’t like what I see.

My teacher lifts her had to her mouth,

frozen in her stance.

We sit in silence. Katherine

EMT – Emergency Worker

It’s been a slow day today,

I’ve spent my entire day just sitting

at the back of this ambulance

with nothing better to do.

Who would have

thought you would actually hope

somebody would get hurt so your

workday would go faster.

Just when I’ve checked my

fingernails for what feels like

the 100th time, the alarms

go off, my colleagues are

rushing to their ambulances, drivers

are firing up the engines at lightning

speed.

I stay still, having no idea what is

going on when my colleague runs

up to me screaming, “look alive! Planes

just crashed into the Twin Towers! We

gotta go.”

I can already tell this will end up being

a day I will never forget. Christopher

They told me I had been

one of the lucky ones

near the ground floor when it hit

close enough to be rescued when

the building began collapsing in the flames

They said I fainted and had to

be carried out by someone in the office

A stranger? A coworker? A friend?

We were all so confused

then

and now

and what about the unlucky ones?

Who was there for them? Erykah

I woke up late.

Mom knows it’s a bad habit of mine,

so last night she got my suitcase together so we could fly.

Dad was up with the sparrows like usual, he doesn’t sleep.

Someday I’ll stay up like that but I

always wake up late. In the rush to

get to the airport I leave my favorite

jacket behind. I beg Mom to let me go

back but she won’t let me and I cry.

I doze through the long lines and the

bagel breakfast until we sit down.

If I had my jacket it’d be so covered in crumbs

I wish I had it any way. I fall asleep

again. Darkness that smells

like my mother as her weight presses down

atop me. I’m immediately struggling and

she snaps at me. She snaps at me and

my favorite jacket is gone and I’m tired

and I can’t see and I start crying. I can

hear other people crying and yelling

but in my cocoon I can’t hear anyone

but me. Rebecca

I was small, digging clams along the shore,

setting crab traps along the docks,

listening to the crashing waves along

the edges of the endless ocean

which was being constantly interrupted by the radio.

When the clams stopped rising from the sand,

and the crab traps shook

and the endless ocean ended.

And the radio ended.

And the walking of tourists and dock workers ended.

And the comfort of the ocean ended.

And after my dad ran toward me

Told me what happened.

I still felt ignorant. Anthony