

SEPTEMBER MORNING



TEN YEARS OF POEMS AND READINGS FROM THE 9/11 CEREMONIES  
NEW YORK CITY

*This PDF is NOT the entire book*

## **SEPTEMBER MORNING:**

**Ten Years of Poems and Readings from the 9/11 Ceremonies**

**Compiled and Edited by Sara Lukinson**

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**SEPTEMBER MORNING**

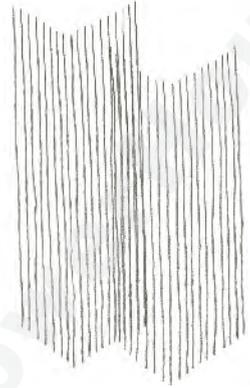
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Foreword by Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor of the City of New York  
Chair of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum

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Brooklyn, New York



**Foreword by Mayor Bloomberg** One year after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our city faced a daunting challenge: hosting a commemoration that was worthy of the memories of those who perished and that offered consolation to family members still mourning the loss of their loved ones. The world would be watching, as so many looked to New York City to remember and reflect on a day that brought unspeakable sadness but also unsurpassed heroics.

This book represents the efforts to create a program that paid tribute to both the national tragedy and great personal grief. The passages are some of the most moving poems, letters, song lyrics, and excerpts from literary and historical works ever gathered. Their words reflect sorrow, but also our resolve to go on, together.

When we began planning our commemoration, we knew that we needed to return to the site of the attacks. Months of recovery and cleanup efforts had cleared the World Trade Center site of rubble, leaving behind only bedrock – the hallowed ground on which we would remember and rebuild.

The plan was to stand together as one and to honor each and every person we lost. In recognition of each individual life and the loved ones left behind, every victim's name was to be read aloud. There was a simple dignity to this approach, and it proved both poignant and inspiring.

Over the past ten years, thousands have come to the ceremonies to read the names. And in listening to those names, we have heard an unspoken story about the World Trade Center: how it brought people together from every race and religion, every culture and country. Family members were joined in the reading of the names by others – including first responders, volunteers, and construction workers – who shared in the loss and recovery efforts.

At every commemoration, family members were asked to speak about their loved ones. With each short speech, a portrait of the men and women who worked and died at the World Trade Center began to emerge. We heard about engineers, pastry chefs, police officers, traders, flight attendants, firefighters – and people in many other professions. Family members told stories about loving fathers, daughters, wives, brothers, and sisters. These personally written pieces helped bring to life the names being read.

To keep the focus on the victims and their families, it was important to us to keep contemporary political rhetoric out of the commemoration. Instead, the program invoked some of the great words from literature and our nation's history. In that first year we quoted Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, reminding listeners that our nation had withstood heartbreak before, and that once again we would "highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." The American spirit of freedom would always be the foundation of this site.

In each succeeding year, readings were chosen to represent different family members' points of view and their personal perspectives of the tragedy. These subjects became the guide in choosing the readings from a wide range of sources and styles, periods and places. They speak of love and loss, remembrance and celebration, courage, compassion, the gentle encouragement to go on, and the rebuilding itself.

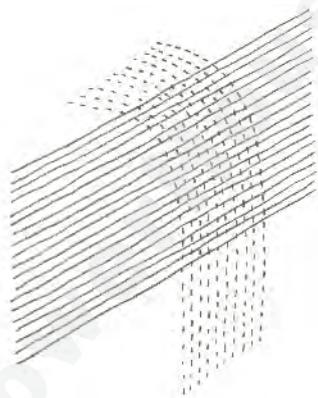
There are, of course, elements of the ceremony that cannot be captured in a book, including the music. The mournful sounds of the bagpipes, traditionally played at funerals for firefighters and police officers, would each year signal the beginning of the ceremony. And throughout the entire reading of the names, classical music was performed by small ensembles and chamber groups from all over the city. One by one, each group quietly took their turn on the stage, rotating throughout the ceremonies and accompanying the readers as they recited at the podium. Children's choirs opened and closed the ceremonies, and as the years went on, noted soloists were asked to sing midway through the tributes. The choice of songs was made as carefully as the choice of readings. The day ended with trumpets playing "Taps."

One more element was added to the ceremony that you cannot hear in this book: the moments of silence. It is a time-honored tradition, in all ceremonies marking a moment of national import, to observe a moment of silence. At the ceremonies, we would stop to mark moments of impact and collapse as we turned our hearts and minds to those terrifying and tragic minutes in our nation's history.

In 2011, on the tenth anniversary of the attacks, the National September 11 Memorial was unveiled. On this meaningful day, we drew upon passages read in

previous years to provide a sense of reflection on the past decade as we revealed the Memorial and turned with hope toward the future. At last, the gaping hole where the ceremonies had begun was now rebuilt into an everlasting tribute to all those who perished. The 9/11 Memorial, which includes two beautiful waterfalls in the footprints of each tower, now forever proclaims the names that were read aloud each year, engraved in bronze along the edges of each pool.

While we worked toward creating a lasting memorial that would honor the victims of September 11, our hope was to create a ceremony that was strong and simple and spoke across time, cultures, religions, and backgrounds. The answer to the violence of the attacks would be the humanity of our voices and the kindness we showed to one another. This book is a testament to those ceremonies and the efforts over the past ten years to remember and reflect upon that September morning that changed us forever.



2002

THE FIRST YEAR

2003

THE LOSS OF A PARENT

2004

THE LOSS OF A CHILD

2005

THE LOSS OF A SIBLING

2006

THE LOSS OF A SPOUSE OR PARTNER

2007

FIRST RESPONDERS

2008

THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

2009

A DAY OF SERVICE

2010

REBUILDING

2011

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY

.....

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



2002  
THE FIRST YEAR

## INTRODUCTION

Again, today, we are a nation who mourns. Again, today, we take into our hearts and minds those who perished on this site one year ago; and those who came to toil in the rubble to bring order out of chaos, and those who throughout these last 12 months have struggled to help us make sense of our despair.

Now, we join with all our fellow Americans in a minute of silence, led by President Bush from the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC.

One hundred thirty-nine years ago, President Abraham Lincoln looked out at his wounded nation, as he stood on a once beautiful field that had become its saddest and largest burying ground. Then, it was Gettysburg. Today, it is the World Trade Center, where we gather on native soil to share our common grief.

## LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO OUR FATHERS BROUGHT FORTH ON THIS CONTINENT, A NEW NATION, CONCEIVED IN LIBERTY, AND DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

NOW WE ARE ENGAGED IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR, TESTING WHETHER THAT NATION, OR ANY NATION SO CONCEIVED AND SO DEDICATED, CAN LONG ENDURE. WE ARE MET ON A GREAT BATTLE-FIELD OF THAT WAR. WE HAVE COME TO DEDICATE A PORTION OF THAT FIELD, AS A FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR THOSE WHO HERE GAVE THEIR LIVES THAT THAT NATION MIGHT LIVE. IT IS ALTOGETHER FITTING AND PROPER THAT WE SHOULD DO THIS.

BUT, IN A LARGER SENSE, WE CAN NOT DEDICATE — WE CAN NOT CONSECRATE — WE CAN NOT HALLOW — THIS GROUND. THE BRAVE MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO STRUGGLED HERE, HAVE CONSECRATED IT, FAR ABOVE OUR POOR POWER TO ADD OR DETRACT. THE WORLD WILL LITTLE NOTE, NOR LONG REMEMBER WHAT WE SAY HERE, BUT IT CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID HERE. IT IS FOR US THE LIVING, RATHER, TO BE DEDICATED HERE TO THE UNFINISHED WORK WHICH THEY WHO FOUGHT HERE HAVE THUS FAR SO NOBLY ADVANCED.

IT IS RATHER FOR US TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THE GREAT TASK REMAINING BEFORE US — THAT FROM THESE HONORED DEAD WE TAKE INCREASED DEVOTION TO THAT CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY GAVE THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION — THAT WE HERE HIGHLY RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN — THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM — AND THAT THIS GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THIS EARTH.

## READING OF THE NAMES

They were our neighbors, our husbands, our children, our sisters, our brothers,  
and our wives. Our countrymen, and our friends.  
They were us.

## YOU WERE THE BEST FATHER

My stepfather, Franco Lalama, was an engineer for the Port Authority. He worked on the 64th floor of the World Trade Center. I read this for his memorial.

I don't remember the last time I told him that I loved him. I would give anything to go back to the morning of September 11 and tell him how much I appreciate everything he's done for me. But I think he knows that now. In my eyes, he died a hero, and how much more could you ask for.

There's a quote that pretty much speaks for itself:

YOU NEVER LOSE ANYTHING. NOT REALLY. THINGS, PEOPLE – THEY GO AWAY, SOONER OR LATER. YOU CAN'T HOLD THEM ANYMORE THAN YOU CAN HOLD THE MOONLIGHT. BUT IF THEY'VE TOUCHED YOU, IF THEY'RE INSIDE OF YOU, THEN THEY'RE STILL YOURS.

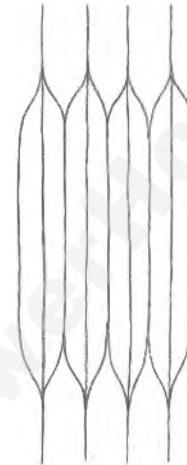
Frank, as I look back on these days, I realize how much I'll truly miss you and how much I truly love you. You were the best father I could ask for. I miss you. And I hope you didn't hurt too much.

Love, Marianne

I CAN HEAR MY DADDY SAY

My father, Keefe, was a chef on the 96th floor of the World Trade Center.  
This poem made me feel like my daddy was speaking to me.

I GIVE YOU THIS ONE THOUGHT TO KEEP —  
I AM WITH YOU STILL — I DO NOT SLEEP.  
I AM A THOUSAND WINDS THAT BLOW.  
I AM THE DIAMOND GLINTS ON SNOW,  
I AM THE SUNLIGHT ON RIPENED GRAIN,  
I AM THE GENTLE AUTUMN RAIN.  
WHEN YOU AWAKEN IN THE MORNING'S HUSH  
I AM THE SWIFT, UPLIFTING RUSH  
OF QUIET BIRDS IN CIRCLED FLIGHT.  
I AM THE SOFT STARS THAT SHINE AT NIGHT.  
DO NOT THINK OF ME AS GONE —  
I AM WITH YOU STILL — IN EACH NEW DAWN.



**THE GROUND WE STAND ON**

One year ago, the ground we are standing on shook, and the earth gave way. Although the buildings fell, the foundation on which all Americans stand will never fall, for it is the sacred principle of freedom and equality on which we build our lives.

**THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (excerpt)**

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED...

AND FOR THE SUPPORT OF THIS DECLARATION, WITH A FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES, AND OUR SACRED HONOR.



2003

THE LOSS OF A PARENT

## INTRODUCTION

Today, again, we are a city that mourns.

We come here to honor those we lost and to remember this date with sorrow, but we also remember with pride. And from that comes our resolve to go forward, our faces and hopes turned toward the light.

In keeping with this, the children of our city and the children who lost loved ones will lead our ceremonies. It is in them that the spirit of New York lives, carrying both our deepest memories and the bright promise of tomorrow.

At this time, please join us and all New Yorkers for a moment of silence.

## HE WORKED ON THE 88TH FLOOR

My father, Pete Negron, worked on the 88th floor of the World Trade Center. I wanted to read you this poem because it says what I was feeling.

## STARS

I LIKED THE WAY THEY LOOKED DOWN FROM THE SKY  
AND DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND THE WAY I CRIED.

AND DIDN'T SAY, "NOW WIPE AWAY THOSE TEARS,"  
OR, "TELL US, TELL US WHAT'S THE MATTER HERE!"

BUT SHINING THROUGH THE DARK THEY CALMLY STAYED,  
AND GENTLY HELD ME IN THEIR QUIET WAY.

I FELT THEM WATCHING OVER ME, EACH ONE —  
AND LET ME CRY AND CRY TILL I WAS DONE.

## READING OF THE NAMES

Last year America's Poet Laureate, Billy Collins, wrote a poem he called "The Names" about the 2,792 who perished that day. Here are its closing lines:

NAMES ETCHED ON THE HEAD OF A PIN.  
 ONE NAME SPANNING A BRIDGE, ANOTHER UNDERGOING A TUNNEL.  
 A BLUE NAME NEEDLED INTO THE SKIN.  
 NAMES OF CITIZENS, WORKERS, MOTHERS AND FATHERS,  
 THE BRIGHT-EYED DAUGHTER, THE QUICK SON.  
 ALPHABET OF NAMES IN A GREEN FIELD.  
 NAMES IN THE SMALL TRACKS OF BIRDS.  
 NAMES LIFTED FROM A HAT  
 OR BALANCED ON THE TIP OF THE TONGUE.  
 NAMES WHEELED INTO THE DIM WAREHOUSE OF MEMORY.  
 SO MANY NAMES, THERE IS BARELY ROOM ON THE WALLS OF THE HEART.

## I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT (excerpt)

I'd like to read these lines from a poem by Stephen Spender:

I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT.  
 WHO, FROM THE WOMB, REMEMBERED THE SOUL'S HISTORY  
 THROUGH CORRIDORS OF LIGHT WHERE THE HOURS ARE SUNS  
 ENDLESS AND SINGING. WHOSE LOVELY AMBITION  
 WAS THAT THEIR LIPS, STILL TOUCHED WITH FIRE,  
 SHOULD TELL OF THE SPIRIT CLOTHED FROM HEAD TO FOOT IN SONG.  
 AND WHO HOARDED FROM THE SPRING BRANCHES  
 THE DESIRES FALLING ACROSS THEIR BODIES LIKE BLOSSOMS.  
 ...  
 SEE HOW THESE NAMES ARE FÊTED BY THE WAVING GRASS  
 AND BY THE STREAMERS OF WHITE CLOUD  
 AND WHISPERS OF WIND IN THE LISTENING SKY.  
 THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO IN THEIR LIVES FOUGHT FOR LIFE  
 WHO WORE AT THEIR HEARTS THE FIRE'S CENTER.  
 BORN OF THE SUN THEY TRAVELED A SHORT WHILE TOWARDS THE SUN,  
 AND LEFT THE VIVID AIR SIGNED WITH THEIR HONOR.

## LITTLE BOY OF MINE

My son, Carl, was a firefighter with Ladder 2 in midtown Manhattan.  
I wrote this poem for my son. Everyone who was killed that day was someone's  
son or daughter.

IN THE QUIET OF MY HEART  
I HOLD YOUR HAND  
LITTLE BOY OF MINE.

I HEAR THE GIGGLE OF YOUR LAUGH  
AND I SEE THE SMILE IN YOUR EYES.  
I WATCH YOU GROW  
AND OF YOUR FUTURE DREAM.  
I WANT ALL YOUR DREAMS FOR YOU.

I WANT ALWAYS TO BE THERE  
TO HELP IN ANY WAY.  
TO ALWAYS MAKE THINGS RIGHT FOR YOU  
TO KEEP THE HURTS AWAY.

IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT YOUR AGE  
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY BABY BOY.

WE WALK THROUGH MY DREAMS  
AND TALK OF THINGS TO COME.  
AND THEN THE DREAM GROWS DARK AND DIM  
I FEEL YOUR HAND LEAVE MINE.  
I FEEL YOUR WARM GENTLE KISS  
AND WAKE TO THE TEARS ON MY CHEEK.  
MY BABY BOY IS GONE.

## YOU LEARN BY LIVING (excerpt)

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote about the courage it takes to face our fears. She spoke  
from a personal sense of loss, during a time of global uncertainty.

PAINFULLY, STEP BY STEP, I LEARNED TO STARE DOWN EACH OF MY FEARS, CONQUER  
IT, ATTAIN THE HARD-EARNED COURAGE TO GO ON TO THE NEXT. ONLY THEN WAS I  
REALLY FREE.

OF ALL THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WE ACQUIRE IN LIFE THIS IS THE MOST DIFFICULT.  
BUT IT IS ALSO THE MOST REWARDING. WITH EACH VICTORY, NO MATTER HOW GREAT  
THE COST OR HOW AGONIZING AT THE TIME, THERE COMES INCREASED CONFIDENCE  
AND STRENGTH TO HELP MEET THE NEXT FEAR.

I HAVEN'T EVER BELIEVED THAT ANYTHING SUPPORTED BY FEAR CAN STAND AGAINST  
FREEDOM FROM FEAR.... COURAGE IS MORE EXHILARATING THAN FEAR AND IN THE  
LONG RUN IT IS EASIER. WE DO NOT HAVE TO BECOME HEROES OVERNIGHT. JUST A  
STEP AT A TIME, MEETING EACH THING THAT COMES UP, DISCOVERING WE HAVE THE  
STRENGTH TO STARE IT DOWN.

## FOR MY FATHER

My father, Gregg Froehner, was a Port Authority police officer.  
This is a poem that I would like to read to you today.

LIFE IS FOR ME AND IS SHINING!

...

I DO NOT WANT

FIRE SCREAMING UP TO THE SKY.

I DO NOT WANT

FAMILIES KILLED IN THEIR DOORWAYS.

LIFE IS FOR US, FOR THE CHILDREN.

LIFE IS FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS,

LIFE IS FOR THE TALL GIRLS AND BOYS

IN THE HIGH SCHOOL ON HENDERSON STREET,

IS FOR THE PEOPLE IN AFRIKAN TENTS,

THE PEOPLE IN ENGLISH CATHEDRALS,

THE PEOPLE IN INDIAN COURTYARDS;

THE PEOPLE IN COTTAGES ALL OVER THE WORLD.

LIFE IS FOR US, AND IS SHINING.

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO SING.

## GO FORWARD TOGETHER

Six decades ago, Winston Churchill's beloved country also suffered a terrible  
blow and faced what seemed to be insurmountable dangers and despair.

He taught me, and I remember on September 11, that he always believed, and  
we believe that people who live in freedom have something to live for, something  
to fight for, and even something to die for. And they will prevail over those  
who live in oppression. Winston Churchill taught us that our ideas and ideals  
of freedom and democracy will prevail.

He said:

WE SHALL NOT FAIL OR FALTER; WE SHALL NOT WEAKEN OR TIRE. NEITHER  
THE SUDDEN SHOCK OF BATTLE NOR THE LONG-DRAWN TRIALS OF VIGILANCE AND  
EXERTION WILL WEAR US DOWN.

He also said:

REPAIR THE WASTE. REBUILD THE RUINS. HEAL THE WOUNDS. CROWN THE  
VICTORS. COMFORT THE BROKEN AND BROKEN-HEARTED. THERE IS THE BATTLE WE  
HAVE WON TO FIGHT. THERE IS THE VICTORY WE HAVE NOW TO WIN. LET US GO  
FORWARD TOGETHER.

CLOSING

I want to thank the children of New York for helping us commemorate this day. Their world is still in the making. As a mayor and a father, I hope it will be a wise and just world. And that our city will always be the place where people live in peace.



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