

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

*Edited & Introduced by Wesley McNair,
Maine Poet Laureate*

Poets usually write elegies — that is lamentations for the dead — for people they know. But in this elegy, Annie Farnsworth of Arundel addresses a person she has never met except in a newsreel. Perhaps you saw him, too, on a grim day of September in 2001.

For the Falling Man

By Annie Farnsworth

I see you again and again
tumbling out of the sky,
in your slate-grey suit and pressed white shirt.
At first I thought you were debris
from the explosion, maybe gray plaster wall
or fuselage but then I realized
that people were leaping.
I know who you are, I know
there's more to you than just this image
on the news, this ragdoll plummeting—
I know you were someone's lover, husband,
daddy. Last night you read stories
to your children, tucked them in, then curled into sleep
next to your wife. Perhaps there was small
sleepy talk of the future. Then,
before your morning coffee had cooled
you'd come to this; a choice between fire
or falling.
How feeble these words, billowing
in this aftermath, how ineffectual
this utterance of sorrow. We can see plainly
it's hopeless, even as the words trail from our mouths
—but we can't help ourselves—how I wish
we could trade them for something
that could really have caught you.

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