Lyn Lifshin - A Wet Cold Winter to Come

A WET COLD WINTER TO COME THE PAPER SAYS

the geraniums hang on, the
oak leaves are copper. The

news on the phone is never
easy. Comfort is my cat in the
cove of my knees. One minute
it was fall then sky went lead,
spit ice crystals.

The news on the phone is never easy,
full of warning. In the driveway,
something without a head, a clump
that looked like lint from the
dryer but with tiny pink feet.
I want someone to tuck
me in, rub my back. Instead, I
put the geraniums to bed under
quilts like babies.

Something without a head but
with tiny pink feet. I think of the
crows circling the crumbs,
swopping down to the squirrel's
nest. My cat, 20, is on insulin.
Yesterday when the sky went
lead like the news she followed
me from room to room. I think
of the crows how often the dark
birds in films are metaphors for
what no one wants to say

SOMEONE SAYS THEY LOOKED LIKE CARTWHEELING BIRDS

the quietest moments some
one will say are the worst.
Someone doesn't know what to
do with new wedding photos.

Someone eats, not tasting
what she swallows. Someone
who just got her law degree
goes home to the rooms she

will lie in alone, can't
imagine looking for a job
now, watches a video of
the wedding weeks ago,
"After he finished speaking, I immediately signed up as a volunteer..."

-Senator John F. Kerry (page 130)

how handsome her husband looked, how "we wish you a lifetime of happiness" on a card now stings. Some child says the falling birds were flame birds

**SOMEONE GOES OVER OLD LOVE LETTERS**

someone forgets for a moment, thinks of going next door to borrowâ€”then falls apart. Someone still expects a woman with strong arms coming back with groceries and a joke. Some one waits for a black Honda, thinks of the smell of coffee. In another house, someone starts to make lunch but there’s no one to make lunch for. She can’t stop seeing the shapes tumbling from the sky. Someone sets up an altar with incense and a drawing. Her child stops before it, says "come eat dinner Daddy"

**AFTER SEPTEMBER 11**

one child writes words with plastic letters, brings them to an altar with a drawing of his father. Look, Daddy look. Someone who used to talk to her mother kneels near the fish tank, still sees her car in the drive way, talks to the fish now, tells them it’s just us, Sarah is gone

**AFTER SEPTEMBER 11**

Stephanie Nolasco - Patriot Act R... Joe Rector - Rose Marie Buccheri - Voting Cons... Pat Poggi - Choice Moments In DC
someone keeps calling his answering machine to hear his voice even as the building is burning, is stunned in days to hear: "this number is no longer in service." Someone cancels a deposit on a new house, a trip, a life, can't eat pistachio ice cream and not remember. Someone hugs a pillow, still smells cologne of someone missing, can't make her self move his coffee cup from where his lips last touched it.

SOMEONE SAVES THE LAST 8:41 E MAIL

"Tuxedo for wedding
September 11, 2001"
don't forget to get measured, the account is under my name." His friends save the message to their hard drive. His mother says she's glad he had so many happy thoughts in his last moment. His fiancee could not look at the message for many days.

SOMEONE RE-PLAYS THE E MAIL

how good the bachelor party was. Another keeps happy news, a 75 dollar win from a football wager. Somebody pays all phone bills just to be able to hear her brother's voice. "that is all we have left of him." Someone wishes she'd saved instant messages, his last one, "I love you, Karse." Another looks at an e mail signed off at 8:49:35, says it's like watching someone die.

SOMEONE SAYS HIS OFFICE WAS ALWAYS FILLED WITH FLOWERS

plants and roses
and in his house. His woman stood among them watching the leaves burn across the harbor. Some one says he was sprinting toward the fire, helped others at first, the last anyone saw he was headed to the towers. Someone says "if I had been there with him I couldn't have been able to stop him from doing this. It was a passion to help."

SOMEONE SAYS SHE GAVE ME VISION

someone says his last words to his wife were "Everything will be ok." Someone's last words were to his father, "don't worry, Big Guy, it's all under control." Some one said his friend enjoyed life, fit a lot in during his 37 years. Another says her big brother was always there to protect her, doesn't say he was her twin, born one minute earlier, always there and now, not.

IT WILL BE OK

honey, my mother always said when something seemed scary. Ok. Honey. Always. I'm strong. "Honey, I'll be ok," the last words on a phone tape from the tower on an answering machine. On another answering machine, "Ok, yes, we're highjacked and they've got knives. I love you." It will be ok and good by from the man

Nicole Matthews - Compassion for...
Steve Falcone - Stone's Throw
James S. Dorr - Peace on Earth
Ralph Monday - The Subduer
Tom Doughty - Rat Bait
Toby Tate - The Muffin Man
Daniel DiPrinzio - A Week with th...
Beate Sigriddaughter - The Movie...
Jeff Haas - A Model Citizen
P. J. Galdubh - The Deal
J. B. Hogan - Click It or Ticket
Utahnah Faith - Mis-Take, a tale i...
Raktabh Mahesh - Rachin's Eng...
Charles Blackstone - Terrorist Ta...
Peter A. Pascaris - A Capitol Ide...
Trent Hudley - And to Believe I S...
Karen Malpede - The Voice of Read...
Harry Tru - Howard & George
Ed McDermott - Going
Phillip Routh -
Brent Powers - Cleanup
Mark Olson -
Alfred Brock - George W. Bush'
Barbara Jacksha - The Red Trout
Margaret B. Davidson - Strange J...
Terese Ficyk-Pampellonne - A Play
Amanda Lam -
Dave Yost - A Story
John Young - Liquid Gold

POETRY

Tony Barnstone - Alladin in Oakla...
George Wallace - A Prayer in Time...
Ruth Daigon - The Young Dead
John D. Smith - On Pacifism
Ellen Hopkins - Ugly in Black
Alan Shapiro - Dog and Owner
Richard Newman - What I Carry wit...
Rosemary Musachio - Twenty-four
H...
Collin Kelley - AIDS Suite
Orville Lloyd Douglas - I Am Not ...
Michelle Gibson - Prayer after 9...
Lisa Harrison - The Answer
Randy Lofficer - I Heard It on t...
Lyn Lifshin - A Wet Cold Winter t...
Bruce Boston - Concrete Poem for...
Clayton Couch - Combat Poem
Dee Rimbaud - Atom Dead Latex
Donna Spector - When the Storm Co...
Gil Allen - Wardrobe
Estelle Villas - Onoma
Alan Catlin - Three Views from a ...
Robert Covelli - Heretic!
Joan Payne Kincaid - Policies of ...
Radomir Luza Jr - Yo (I Liked Ron)
Corrine De Winter - Why Not to Vo...
Elisha Porat - In Netanya, above...
Marge Simon - Patriots' Day
Rich Murphy - Terrorized
SEPTEMBER 24, 2001

I watch each person boarding the metro. On Saturday, at Shrimshari, the Persian restaurant, a blaze of candles in every window. Waiters in red, white and blue like the tablecloths. On the back of each T shirt I Love America September 11. Fog hasn't lifted, rain in the air. The dogs, I hear, at ground zero get depressed not finding bodies, think they are doing something wrong so later, back where they sleep, their trainers hide under a table or in a closet so the dogs can find them.

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OCTOBER 18, 2001

Mist on the pond, his blue eyes sky. Jeweled grass. I think of my mother's bedroom vanity
buried in Johnson's baby powder, snow thick, deep enough for a box of money to be camouflaged in it. Footprints trailing powder thru the house. We wore masks clearing the house out. Talcum in drawers, in shoes, in cashmere. How today it would be evacuated

OCTOBER 15, 2001 news of another hijacked bus. Lately, after I pet the cat I turn on the news for the disaster de jour. In Dupont Circle last night 3 beggars spitting and snarling, "got a knifeâ€ you be my deer." Every one's walking a tight rope and, as if to mimic those cart-wheeling birds, the ones jumping from the burning towers, falling and crashing

IN THE ONE TREE OF SINGING BIRDS after Sept 11 I never saw them, it's like a boat made of birds. Sycamore maybe, long thin leaves. Past crows and geese, like crystals in a grey house or stained glass on a morning nothing seems bright. I never see the birds, maybe too many to see one as one, a hill of feathers, a beach ball of singing, the only thing I can't see but believe

OCTOBER BIRDS not the cart wheeling birds of fire, bodies flaming in circles
from the top floors, 
a tree of birds, loud 
and bright. Eve tells 
me of days with her 
mother, how she 
is escaping, a kite 
without any string 
and I think of my 
mother's last days, 
yelling that one night 
aid was a murderer. 
After ballet, a startling 
blue sky, stunning 
as the day the planes 
tore holes in it. Or 
today's headline 
"Capital shut down"

AFTER A WEEKEND 
after September 11

of blackness, 
each stab of 
news, only 
bad, a 
swoop of 
crows. I was 
not hungry, 
ate cookies, 
wild for some 
thing sweet 
and slid into 
the dark of 
the film, wanting 
to escape, not 
think of the 
next trip, the 
last months, 
the days 
losing light

OCTOBER 29 2001

yesterday, the 
twisted faces on 
tv, ground zero 
memorial. A 
woman who 
couldn't speak 
without sobbing, 
"I wanted to 
breathe him in, 
I wanted him 
to be inside 
me. I wanted 
to tell him he 
has to help us, 
get us thru. He
has to help
his daughter,
his brother, his
sister. He has
to be inside me,
fill me, help me"

OCTOBER 29

After September 11

another wildly
bright clear blue
day. Cloudless
except for the
shade, the huge
dark inside. A
cloud seeded
with poison, a
black hill of ice
that stains what
ever moves near,
wild bright and
crisp, the nicest
fall except that
it's this fall

OCTOBER 29, 2001

wild and bright
like that Tuesday,
September. Not
a cloud, nothing
not ordinary. But
today all the rusty
oaks, their leaves
burnt sienna. What
has always been
there, spilling
across for the
goose, a blaze
against a concrete
sky like those in
front of a firing
squad or on the
105th floor of a
doomed building
about to leap

OCTOBER 29, 2001

I can't think of
Riti's baby blooming,
only wonder how
she must hold her
belly with each
wave of news.
Inside, he's safer. Her diamond glittering in her nose, her smile rhinestones. The news, a miscarriage

OCTOBER 30, 2001

When I leave the house, the cat's found her spot of sun near the orange tree. I'd like to curl into myself, I could imagine lying down beside her. Last night when I couldn't sleep, on CNN, a plastic tent for 4 where you could live for 4 days, escape gas and I forget what else.

What next, October's mantra tho the oaks glisten in flame and the geraniums are exploding in gorgeous nail polish red as if nothing could stop them

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