

TUESDAY, 14 AUGUST, 2007

First Day of School

Poem: "The Worriers' Guild" by Philip F. Deaver, from *How Men Pray*

### The Worriers' Guild

Today there is a meeting of the  
Worriers' Guild,  
and I'll be there.

The problems of Earth are  
to be discussed  
at length  
end to end  
for ~~five days~~ 180 days  
end to end  
with ~~1100~~ 50 families countries represented  
all with an equal voice  
some wearing ~~turbans and smocks~~ <sup>jeans sneakers</sup>  
and all the men will speak  
and the women  
with or without notes  
in ~~38~~ 28 languages  
and nine different ~~species of~~ <sup>intelligences</sup> logic.

Outside in the autumn  
the squirrels will be  
chattering and scampering  
directionless throughout the town  
because  
they aren't organized yet.

# For the Falling Man

by Annie Farnsworth

**MONDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 2006**

**Listen** (RealAudio) | **How to listen**

**Poem:** "For the Falling Man" by Annie Farnsworth from *Bodies of Water, Bodies of Light*. © Annie Farnsworth. Reprinted with permission. ([buy now](#))

## For the Falling Man

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.

### **Literary and Historical Notes:**

On this day in 2001 **terrorists flew two planes into the Twin Towers in New York City, causing both towers to collapse.** In the hours after the collapse, healthcare officials in New York City expected that they would have to handle a huge surge of injured patients. They asked people to donate blood, and they took volunteers to help staff makeshift hospital stations around the city. But it turned out that very few of the survivors of the attack had suffered serious injuries. And when cleanup at the site of the attack began, there were almost no identifiable bodies of victims. Almost everything had been buried.

For weeks, no one knew how many people had died in the attack. It was as though thousands of people had just vanished. Relatives of the victims had no way of knowing if their loved ones were even dead. Missing-person posters began to appear all over the city, around the entrances of hospitals, on storefronts, bus shelters, and lampposts, asking for help in locating the missing people in the photos. It was believed that some of the victims might be unconscious in unknown hospitals, or wandering the streets in the wake of the attack. The posters kept appearing, even days after it was clear that few, if any, of the missing would be found. Many of the photos were wedding pictures, or pictures at birthday parties, or pictures of the victim holding a new baby.

Journalists at *The New York Times* quickly realized that there wouldn't be an official list of the dead for weeks or even months, and so on September 14th, a half-dozen reporters divided up 100 missing-person fliers and began calling the phone numbers on the fliers, interviewing the friends and relatives. And on September 15, 2001, the *Times* began publishing portraits in a section called "Among the Missing." The title was eventually changed to "Portraits of Grief." The journalists involved decided that they would try to write portraits of every victim of the attack whose family they could reach. And they decided that the stories would focus on how the victim lived, not how he or she died.

The portraits were shorter than the average *Times* obituary, at about 150 words, and they skipped things like college degrees, jobs held, and names of surviving family members. They just tried to capture some detail or anecdote that would express each person's individuality. There was a firefighter who wore size 15 boots; a man who put toothpaste on his wife's toothbrush when he got up before her, almost every day; a grandmother who wore pink rhinestone-studded sunglasses and a metallic gold raincoat. Ultimately, 143 reporters worked on the project, and they managed to write about 1,910 of the 2,749 victims. They would have written about every victim, but some families didn't want to participate or couldn't be found. The portraits were collected in the book *Portraits 9/11/01*(2002) ([buy now](#)). Two other *Times* reporters, Jim Dwyers and Kevin Flynn, set out to tell the story of the final moments inside the Twin Towers, and the result was their book *102 Minutes* (2005). ([buy now](#))

*The New York Times* won six Pulitzer Prizes for its coverage of the terrorist attacks that year, including one for the section of the paper devoted to the Portraits of Grief. It was the first time in the Pulitzer's history that any paper won more than three awards in a year.

1st of  
October

## **Analysis of Baseball**

*by May Swenson*

It's about  
the ball,  
the bat,  
and the mitt.

Ball hits  
bat, or it  
hits mitt.

Bat doesn't  
hit ball, bat  
meets it.

Ball bounces  
off bat, flies  
air, or thuds  
ground (dud)  
or it  
fits mitt.

Bat waits  
for ball  
to mate.  
Ball hates  
to take bat's  
bait. Ball  
flirts, bat's  
late, don't  
keep the date.

Ball goes in  
(thwack) to mitt,  
and goes out  
(thwack) back  
to mitt.

Ball fits  
mitt, but  
not all  
the time.  
Sometimes  
ball gets hit  
(pow) when bat  
meets it,  
and sails  
to a place  
where mitt  
has to quit  
in disgrace.  
That's about  
the bases  
loaded,  
about 40,000  
fans exploded.

It's about  
the ball,  
the bat,  
the mitt,  
the bases  
and the fans.  
It's done  
on a diamond,  
and for fun.  
It's about  
home, and it's  
about run.

Great for Fluency  
Rhyming Patterns  
Baseball Unit  
Imitate Analysis

Nov.

## The Poor Voter on Election Day

To-day, of all the weary year,  
A king of men am I.  
To-day, alike are great and small,  
The nameless and the known;  
My palace is the people's hall,  
The ballot-box my throne!  
The rich is level with the poor,  
The weak is strong to-day;  
And sleekest broadcloth counts no more  
Than homespun frock of gray.  
To-day let pomp and vain pretence  
My stubborn right abide;  
I set a plain man's common sense  
Against the pedant's pride.  
The wide world has not wealth to buy  
The power in my right hand!

# John Stoffel - The Writer's Almanac for December 2, 2010

**From:** "The Writer's Almanac" <newsletter@americanpublicmedia.org>  
**To:** <jstoffel@hccsc.k12.in.us>  
**Date:** 12/2/2010 1:35 AM  
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> The Writer's Almanac with Garrison Keillor
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dec. 2, 2010</b>	
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*- To read on first day of Snow  
& Connect to Grizzly Bear in  
Crow & Weasel!*

*Discuss "Manna" = Bread, but  
also symbol  
for giving  
life.*



## Manna

by [Joseph Stroud](#)

Everywhere, *everywhere*, snow sifting down,  
 a world becoming white, no more sounds,  
 no longer possible to find the heart of the day,  
 the sun is gone, the sky is nowhere, and of all  
 I wanted in life  so be it  whatever it is  
 that brought me here, chance, fortune, whatever  
 blessing each flake of snow is the hint of, I am  
 grateful, I bear witness, I hold out my arms,  
 palms up, I know it is impossible to hold  
 for long what we love of the world, but look  
 at me, is it foolish, shameful, arrogant to say this,  
 see how the snow drifts down, look how happy  
 I am.

"Manna" by Joseph Stroud, from *Of This World*. © Copper Canyon Press, 2009. Reprinted with permission. ([buy now](#))

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SATURDAY, 26 JANUARY, 2008



Poem: "The Lanyard" by Billy Collins

### The Lanyard

The other day I was ricocheting slowly  
off the blue walls of this room,  
moving as if underwater from typewriter to  
piano,  
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,  
when I found myself in the L section of the  
dictionary  
where my eyes fell upon the word *lanyard*.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist  
could send one into the past more suddenly—  
a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp  
by a deep Adirondack lake  
learning how to braid long thin plastic strips  
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard  
or wear one, if that's what you did with them,  
but that did not keep me from crossing  
strand over strand again and again  
until I had made a boxy  
red and white lanyard for my mother.

She gave me life and milk from her breasts,  
and I gave her a lanyard.

She nursed me in many a sick room,  
lifted spoons of medicine to my lips,  
laid cold face-cloths on my forehead,  
and then led me out into the airy light

and taught me to walk and swim,  
and I, in turn, presented her with a lanyard.  
Here are thousands of meals, she said,  
and here is clothing and a good education.  
And here is your lanyard, I replied,  
which I made with a little help from a counselor.

Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,  
strong legs, bones and teeth,  
and two clear eyes to read the world, she  
whispered,  
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.  
And here, I wish to say to her now,  
is a smaller gift—not the worn truth

that you can never repay your mother,  
but the rueful admission that when she took  
the two-tone lanyard from my hand,  
I was as sure as a boy could be  
that this useless, worthless thing I wove  
out of boredom would be enough to make us  
even.