

## **Like The Lotus Flower - Girls Have Rebirth in Afghanistan**

**(This poem was written to honor all our lives on September 11, 2022)**

### **Part I**

**A blue sky breaking into morning words & coffee,**

**nannies pushing babies in strollers**

**into the park by the college,**

**yellow cabs & cars honking horns in traffic.**

**I am holding two sets of essays to grade,**

**since it is too beautiful to go inside a building,**

**I listen to birds in a colonial garden in front of PS 234.**

**A plane flies too low & hits the North Tower,**

**stopping traffic.**

**We stare at that jetliner**

**hanging out of one Twin Tower**

**like a hot dog in a child's mouth.**

**Bright red fire circles appear as the first fire humans**

**ever lighted to cook hunted animals.**

**This fire bursts out in angry balls &**

**then smoke commits suicide in front of us.**

**“Uurrr...uurrr...uurrrrrrr....” sounds of sirens scream**

**over disbelief & the tranquility of a mighty empire.**

**A second jetliner arrives,**

**crashing into the other Tower,**

**people jump from a steel mountain,**

**some holding hands in twos – leaping away from chasing fires.**

**Later on tv we see the president reading to children,**

“Freedom will be defended,” he says on the news,  
& so irony rules.

The heart does not want to go to war,  
the heart does not want another Vietnam  
of harming the innocent with murdering missiles,  
& yet irony rules.

The heart does not want more blood shed  
as revenge is a weed in a garden – giving us the Patriot Act of tyranny,  
& yet irony rules

as we are told we go to war to liberate women in Afghanistan  
where their men see education of the female an insult.

The idea of freedom lessens our suffering thoughts,  
so we do not protest this war – all of the tv stations show the skyscrapers dying daily,  
& we forget our innocence when at dinner time once  
television showed us napalm burning children during the war in Vietnam,  
Dr. King speaking out against that war like a prophet,  
the monk burning himself for Peace.  
& yet irony rules.

## Part II

Television is our eyes,  
it shows life in Afghanistan & in Pakistan & in Muslim countries,  
Malala Yousafzai takes an exam  
& is leaving school when a gun man shoots her in her head.  
This Pakistani activist,  
speaking for the rights of girls and women to be educated,  
lies between her feudal past and her womanist future  
in a hospital & in our love.

Love has no borders,  
love for our girls is like a lotus flower,  
the lotus's stem growing in disgusting mud,  
the lotus reaching upwards into its beauty  
as the young sister survives.

*Girls are breasts,  
life giving bearers of milk  
that their murderers & saviors once drank as babes.  
Girls are emerging like a rising sun,  
Girls are delicate,  
Girls are steel,  
Girls are sperm,  
Girls are eggs,  
Girls are the zygote which is female before becoming a male.  
Girls are the beginnings of all children  
Girls are female children  
Girls are male children  
Girls are blood flowing to a moon's cycle – shaping our clay existence.  
Girl are a sun,  
Girls are a moon,  
Girls are stars  
Girls are destiny,  
Girls are the future of birth,  
& yet irony rules.*

You eat raisins – I eat raisins,

**You eat apricots – I eat apricots,  
You eat figs – I eat figs,  
You eat pomegranates - I eat pomegranates,  
Mother Earth's fruits unite us as we fired missiles at each other.  
In New York city at Marble  
ribbons with names of the dead American soldiers  
are tied to a fence, moving in wind to Peace.  
In 2022 Afghanistan girls go to school in separate buildings  
with the hijab covering  
the hair & shoulders & culture,  
studying with female teachers & only with other girls  
while their teachers are not paid salaries,  
& now female students cannot be educated past high school,  
as American & Afghani men put down their guns & weapons  
they aimed at each other for twenty years,  
& so irony rules.**

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