

The sky above is incredibly clear, a glorious shade of blue, and a cool breeze is blowing.

Lucy is being her happy dog-self, running around the roof, while I sit on the steps, in the early morning sun, watching her and looking at the window cleaning machine as it slowly inches it's way down the long, long, right leg of the World Trade Center.

A beautiful day, a clear morning, and I think again, what a smart thing. I watch this machine, as I have hundreds of times over the 21 years I've lived in this place, and I think again, that's smart.

I watch these towers like I have thousands of times before. I think of them as Big Eleven. They are tall companions to the life I live, and I watch them in the snow, the rain, the dusk, the dawn, with the afternoon sun dipping in back of them, with a crescent moon a hammock in between.

I think of the people inside vacuuming all the floors when the lights are lit at night, and when the fog eats those slabs of steel and glass in the early morning drizzle, I pretend that they don't exist. They were never built, and the white sky swallowing them is open and deep.

In the last few months, satellite dishes have sprouted on the roof of my elevator. They sit alert, pointed at the south, aiming at the blue slice left open between the far tower and the 20 story building across the street.

I'd better get mine up soon, or there won't be any open sky left.

Back inside, I can turn off the air conditioner. It's a great day to push up the windows and crank open the skylight.

I hear the noise as I type in my password on the computer. A loud sound, a roar, a jet, and I spin and jump to the window, craning my neck, looking up, up----excited, I don't want to miss the show if there's something great going on.

The sound is enormous, filling more and more of the sky but I can't see the plane. A ripping sound, velcro coming apart, amplified a million times, and the seam tears open--so so slowly it seems--The red spilling out so red, so hot against the cool, blue sky.

'Oh my god," I scream.

"What, what? ' Jim is at my side.

"The World Trade Center just exploded. Oh, the people."

It was hard enough to see this happen, so shocking, but each event that day seemed like it was orchestrated to top the last---to twist your brain, your heart, your comprehension.

A sound, an event, turned into an explosion, an accident,--and oh my god the sound again, another plane, diving out from behind the building and coming at us, hanging there, enormous against the blue sky, no way to stop it,

no no no----the second building----

There is no where to put this in your brain. All those people.
oh the people

and the white sky swallowing them is open and deep.

There was, of course more---The most monstrous moments have no photos,
we could barely watch with our eyes.

But isn't that enough?

Two weeks ago, overworked and overwhelmed, I started yelling, "Stop! I just
want it to stop--just stop for a while"--the construction, the development of
the neighborhood, too much work to take care of. I tried to imagine
everything coming to a stand still--

I think of that now and can't help but feel--
Be careful of what you wish.

Even with the windows closed, the dust has a way of seeping in, drifting
around, settling in on everything, everywhere.

There is so much talk about a health risk, but health is the furthest
thing from my mind. The dust to me is much more sacred than that. More
than anything, it is in the dust that the finality of what happened here
becomes truly apparent. It is in the dust that I can begin to understand that
the lives of thousands of people were lost.

I touch my fingers to the dust and look at tiny sparkles that were once
the windows of the World Trade Center.