

Wilderness House Literary Review 1/2

I watched TV at the friendly Villager Tavern the other night:
One friendly TV featured a basketball game
The other, "September 11th – 6 Months Later".
The news anchor talked about processing the national grief,
That the repetition will help dull the collective senses
So that we can get on with "it".
(What is "it"? which "it" does he mean?
The getting "it", forgetting about "it", dealing with "it"?)
Basketball versus the World Trade Center:
I watch the landmark crumble like dry toast
Then see slam-dunks and punk players high-fiving
Then firefighters racing to the Towers
And people in the street looking up or down
Confused or dazed, or maybe just not awake yet
(Look up in the sky! It's a bird! No! It's a plane!)
Then the Boom. "No one who heard that noise
Will ever forget it," intones the anchor.
That is the minute when my friend Jane blew up
When her skin evaporated and her blood dripped into the
sky
Slowly slowly her fine red mist drifted to cover the ground
Her blood watered roof gardens all over Manhattan
Her skin turned to ash and coated the cars
Driving across the Hudson River
A hairdresser coming out of his shop in the East Village
Was hit on the head by a piece of Jane
Jane burst open, her last song a wail of surprise
Her last song so full of herself
Of her way of drinking beer
And spitting it out when she laughed
How she would stagger, drunk, with me, her accomplice,
Across Mass. Ave. to the all-night pizza joint
How she hopped up and down to music,
Drank too much coffee and smoked
Too many cigarettes, talking
About men while stubbing out butts in the ashtray
Like she was jabbing at them
Those losers who should have loved her
And now it is too late.
I have not gotten over her ending like that
I am still full of tears, embarrassingly so,
And swiveled the barstool to turn away
My chest hot, like a fireball inside.
On the other TV the swanky sports-caster
Talks with the winning coach
"It was a great game tonight", he said
"My guys went out there and
Did their jobs like real pros".
(Probably what Bin Laden said to his troops).