

# Promise to the Fallen

By Holly Lisle

*Darkness devours the sun; the sky throws down  
A rain of stones, a snow of ash and pain.  
Two mountains fall that were a city's crown;  
And fire devours the star of empire's reign.  
Heroes leap in – this is a hero's place –  
Bring light to darkness, free the trapped and lost,  
Move on with name unknown and unseen face,  
And in a moment's horror pay the cost.  
In smoke and fires of hell the brave maintain  
The search, the fight, the war for others' sons  
And their own lost, caught in this new-born plain;  
Scarred earth ungraciously gives back those it has won.*

*We hold you in our hearts, we will not let  
Your faces fade; and we will not forget.*

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In the first week following the September 11 terrorist attacks, I couldn't write. I spent the week torn between tears and murderous rage. I did some posts in the community, but there was no fiction inside of me.

At the end of that week, Lazette Gifford posted a call for memorial material for the next issue of **Vision** – and I decided to do a poem. As has happened before in my life (see *Life, Well-Lived, Will Weep*, also available here in **Short Stuff**), poetry brought me through a dark place and out the other side. After I finished this poem, I could move on and get back to writing fiction again.

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