

Cover

Editorials

Columns

Arts

Next Issue coming out on the 28th

In This Issue:

Pacifism Marien Helz

I have been a pacifist all my life both by nature and by conviction. I have trouble, however, carrying this to its ultimate extreme. How many of us can really believe that World War II was unnecessary regardless of how much we deplore war? When a renegade government takes over a country and not only murders millions of its own people but is determined to take by force other countries...

in [Editorials](#)

Word Worth Awards

The Real Martyrs Susan Johnson



...by the dawn's early light...

in [Columns](#)

Word Worth's Site of the Month Society of Professional Journalists

Poetry Reading by Alastair Reid

The Morning After Ruth Hitchings

"...women were serving mugs of tea to a few fire fighters, wet, dirty and dispirited, so tired that they could hardly stand, the lines in their faces emphasized by ash."

This was written not about NYC in September, 2001, but about Exeter, England, May 4, 1942.

in [Arts](#)

Word Worth Volume II issues are available in [Archives](#)

September 2002 V II N9

Editorials: *Pacifism*—Marien Helz
Columns: *The Real Martyrs*—Susan Johnson
Arts: *The Morning After*—Ruth Hitchings

June 2002 V II N6

Editorials: *Losing Ally McBeal*—Marien Helz
Columns: *Chef Portale*—Susan Johnson
Arts: Poetry & Photography—Ilina Sen

March 2002 V II N3

Editorials: Timeless Poetry—M H Perry
Columns: Lotusland—Susan Johnson
Arts: Selected Poetry—by Alastair Reid

August 2002 V II N8

Editorials: *David and Diana*—Marien Helz
Columns: *Extreme Gardener*—Susan Johnson
Arts: Photography—Word Worth

May 2002 V II N5

Editorials: *Tabooing of Language*—Marien Helz
Columns: *The Ethics of Silence*—Susan Johnson
Arts: Water Color-Ink—Pei-Hua Chiang

February 2002 V II N2

Editorials: *Frederick Douglass*—Marien Helz
Columns: *Xeriscaping*—Wayne Johnson
Arts: Photography—Armin W. Helz

July 2002 V II N7

Editorials: *All Things Being Equal*—Marien Helz
Columns: *Victorian Gardens*—Susan Johnson
Arts: Photography—Armin W. Helz

April 2002 V II N4

Editorials: *Innocent by Insanity*—Marien Helz
Columns: *A Right to Silence?*—Susan Johnson
Arts: Photography—Tiffany M. Stuck

January 2002 V II N1

Editorials: *Choosing A College*—Marien Helz
Columns: *Winter Landscape*—Susan Johnson
Arts: Photography—Tiffany M. Stuck

Word Worth Volume I archives are available in page [2001](#)

December 2001 V I N12

Editorials: Season of Evergreen—Marien Helz
Columns: Bah Humbug!—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

September 2001 V I N9

Editorials: The Censorship Conundrum—Marien Helz
Columns: Organic Gardening—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

June 2001 V I N6

Editorials: East of the Dawn—Marien Helz
Columns: Buffalo in Bloom—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

March 2001 V I N3

Editorials: The Peter Pan Generation—Marien Helz
Columns: Thyme for the Millennium—Susan Johnson
Arts: Photography by David Clark

November 2001 V I N 11

Editorials: Tolerance: Double.... —Marien Helz
Columns: Suddenly, It's Clear—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

August 2001 V I N8

Editorials: Pro Life and Choice—Marien Helz
Columns: Oriental Rugs—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

May 2001 V I N5

Editorials: Parents as Friends—Marien Helz
Columns: Wedding Flowers—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

February 2001 V I N2

Editorials: Driven to Distraction—Susan Johnson
Columns: A Valentine for My Mother
Arts: Photography by Armin Helz

October 2001 V I N10

Editorials: Learning the Right...—Marien Helz
Columns: Fall Colors—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

July 2001 V I N7

Editorials: Independence Values—Marien Helz
Columns: The Sixth Extinction—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

April 2001 V I N4

Editorials: Everyday Linguistics—Marien Helz
Columns: Great Lakes Racing—Susan Johnson
Arts: Father Heart—Banwell Goddard

January 2001 V I N1

Editorials: Hale Chatfield—M H Perry
Columns: Havasupai—Susan Johnson
Arts: Poetry By Hale Chatfield

Introductory issue December 2000 VI N ii

Editorials: Election 2000—Marien Helz Columns: Natural Born Killers—Susan Johnson Arts: Season's Poem and Photograph

[[Editorials](#)] [[Columns](#)] [[Arts](#)]

Word Worth Publisher: M H Perry Senior Editor: Susan Johnson Editor: Marien Helz Associated Editors: J Aurelia Perry Scott H H Perry
Contributors: Banwell Goddard David Clark Tiffany M. Stuck Wayne Johnson Alastair Reid Pei-Hua Chiang Ilina Sen Ruth Hitchings
Distinguished Selections: Hale Chatfield Armin W. Helz

©2002



Word Worth®—On line monthly magazine of Ideas & the Arts



Pacifism

by Marien Helz

I have been a pacifist all my life both by nature and by conviction. I have trouble, however, carrying this to its ultimate extreme. How many of us can really believe that World War II was unnecessary regardless of how much we deplore war? When a renegade government takes over a country and not only murders millions of its own people but is determined to take by force other countries and decimate their inhabitants at will, one must either take up arms or be willing to see one's family and neighbors slaughtered and all that humankind normally reveres destroyed.

I gained insight as to how societies go wrong when many years ago I read an account by a man who had as a boy barely escaped pogroms in Armenia. He came home from school one day to find his home destroyed and his family gone. He saved himself by running into the woods. He was discovered by a tribe of shepherds who belonged to the ethnicity who had killed his family. Knowing that if they heard him speak, they would discover that he belonged to the victimized people, he feigned being deaf and mute and forced himself not to respond even when loud noises were made behind him.

Since they could not establish that the boy was one of the hated people, they took him in; however, one of their group was a sadistic and malicious personality. When his efforts of making sudden loud noises behind the boy failed to prove the boy could hear, he spent a night whispering threats into the boy's ear. As a result, the boy didn't sleep all night, and when given the job of tending the sheep the next day, he was overcome by sleep giving the sadist an excuse to beat him brutally—allegedly for neglecting his duty.

One day soldiers came by with a captive whose capital crime was being one of the boy's people. The sadist talked the soldiers into letting him be the one to shoot the captive. He tormented him first, and then shot him.

I fathomed from this how societies degrade. In a small group like that tribe, one bully who enjoys brutalizing others lowers the bar until the group accepts behavior which humanity normally finds unacceptable. No one wants to stand up to the bully because unless everyone sticks together, anyone who speaks out will be the bully's next target. Even when the group starts out together to stand up against the bad behavior, bullies are good at sidling up to one person and then another and breaking the initial resolve of those who want to maintain standards until only the best are left with their initial resolve, and then they can be easily dispatched.

In larger groups, the scenario is simply magnified. Hitler and his cronies took over when most Germans were too discouraged to vote. Once in, they bullied their way over their people and neighboring countries.

The ancient Aztecs were once a fine people with an outstanding culture. Then priests who demanded human sacrifice came into power and the most vile murders were sanctioned in a culture gone bad. Babies were murdered painfully each year with the claim that their tears made the corn grow. Apparently, at the outset of the degradation of the Aztec culture there was a priest who railed against human sacrifice. He was exiled and banished into the forests.

When cultures really go bad as in the case of the Aztecs, the Romans, the Nazis, the Taliban, it takes extraordinary measures to stop the fall.

The Japanese realized not long ago that they needed to take bullying seriously when a young school child committed suicide because he was being bullied by others. Bullying exists too often

in school settings, and becomes dangerous when the authority figures don't combat it, or as in the case of William Goldings' *Lord of the Flies*, there is no authority figure.

Whether it occurs in the microcosm of the family in which an aberrant adult bullies and brutalizes a spouse and children, or the macrocosm of nations in which one nation or group seeks to overtake and destroy a segment of humanity, we need to raise the standard for humanity through a global lowering of tolerance for bullying and brutalizing.

On the international level, this becomes a precarious issue. War and the instruments of war are destructive to all in their reach—usually, they stray to unintended targets. In addition, whenever war is widely accepted as an alternative, leaders with an agenda can entice the citizenry with deceptive arguments and insufficient facts, and it's very difficult to discern what is actually happening in a country with a different language and culture from one's own—that doesn't mean, however, that the unacceptable should be accepted.

The movie, *Sergeant York*, was made about pacifist Alvin C. York who ultimately decided to participate in the army into which he was drafted, but did so with the idea that the war was going on and should be won as quickly as possible. At one point, armed with only a Springfield rifle and a Colt .45 pistol, he single-handedly captured a German machine gun squadron, but did so in such a way as to save as many lives as could be.

When one's land is invaded, one's monuments destroyed, and people murdered, when a regime becomes so aberrant that neighboring civilizations are threatened, action must be taken. What that action should be is a question for statesmen and stateswomen, not for politicians. Military offense must always be that last, most dreaded, alternative.

[[Up](#)] [[Editorials](#)] [[Columns](#)] [[Arts](#)]

Word Worth Publisher: [M H Perry](#) Senior Editor: [Susan Johnson](#) Editor: [Marien Helz](#) Associated Editors: [J Aurelia Perry](#) [Scott H H Perry](#)
Contributors: [Banwell Goddard](#) [David Clark](#) [Tiffany M. Stuck](#) [Wayne Johnson](#) [Alastair Reid](#) [Pei-Hua Chiang](#) [Ilina Sen](#) [Ruth Hitchings](#)
Distinguished Selections: [Hale Chatfield](#) [Armin W. Helz](#)

©2002



Word Worth®—Online monthly magazine of Ideas & the Arts



Immortal Spirits

by Susan Johnson



The jackals who rammed the World Trade Center with hijacked aircraft described themselves as martyrs. They are not martyrs; they are murderers. It is those whom they killed who are the true martyrs. Their deaths were cruelly senseless, terminating lives that touched others in a thousand meaningful ways—in a thousand points of contact through which their memory lives on, immortalizing their spirits and condemning for eternity the actions of their killers.

This is for Beth and for Rick, to whom I owed unpayable debts of kindness.

For some reason, I grew up thinking that everyone in New York City was a gangster. Maybe that's typical when you live in a village so small that you have to walk down and pick up your mail at the post office. On my first trip to Manhattan, I huddled nervously in the back seat of my taxi, trying to look urbane, as the driver hurtled into town from the airport. When the car pulled up in front of the hotel where I had reservations, a huge bellman opened my door before I had a chance to pay the driver.

He crouched down so that he could look over the seat at the driver and said in a singsong Jamaican lilt that belied the stern look on his dark face, "How much you charging this lady?" The driver answered, "\$35", a sum \$15 less than what he'd just told me. The bellman hovered over me protectively as I paid the suddenly reduced sum, and then he swung my bags onto a cart. "Illegal cab. They overcharge people who look like they don't know any better," he said, letting me know that, despite my efforts, I still had *Hick* stenciled on my forehead. His custodial kindness was my first clue that not everyone who lived or worked in the city was a gangster.



My next clues came at the American Stock Exchange where I met two people who would forever change how I felt about them and their city.

The first was Beth Logler. She was young and beautiful and smart—part of an AMEX team whose job it was to change just-appointed corporate representatives from timid babes in the woods into savvy authorities who could perform useful functions for their companies' respective securities.

Beth first had to contend with stubborn small town reticence. She worked hard to convince me that when potential shareholders called the company, it was perfectly proper and altogether necessary for me to insist on some upfront information. *Who are you? Whom do you represent? What are your intentions?*

My reaction was, "Well, I don't want to be abrupt and snappy like people from New York." Beth was nothing if not persistent. Her response was, "Susan, this is remedial." She illustrated for me how much time is wasted and how many errors could be made by trying to guess at information. The idea of asking questions point blank wasn't immediately comfortable for someone who had grown up beating around the bush, amassing information as it was offered rather than by extraction. In the end, it was only the fact that someone as bright as Beth was—who so confidently strode the halls of the American Stock Exchange and understood its complicated routines—and who spoke straight from the shoulder to portfolio managers representing

billions of dollars—that convinced me that I could and needed to become forthright.

Rick Harvey, President of Harvey Young Yurman, Inc. and part of my company's specialist team at the AMEX, had a similarly difficult time with his small-town protégée. Escorting me downstairs to the trading room floor, he had to make himself heard above the cacophony of the exchange—talking to me in abbreviated terms that were completely foreign. I gaped back at him, blankly confusing *bid* with *asked* and *puts* with *takes*. Despite the frenetic behavior of buyers and sellers who pressed forward to deal with him, Rick calmly translated for me what was transpiring during each transaction.

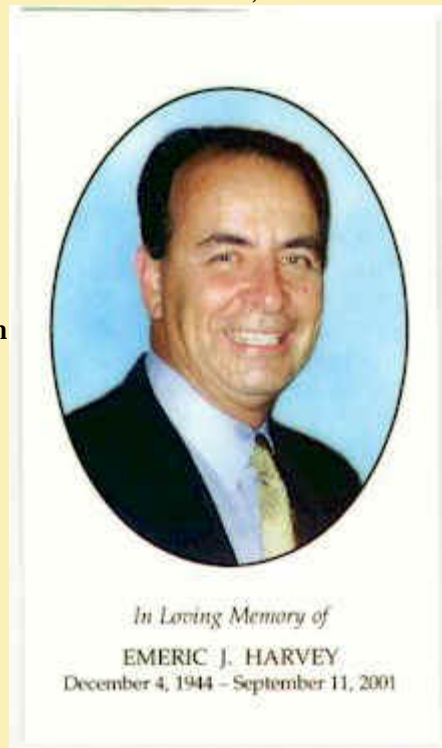
Asked by the AMEX to help our company as it struggled with a tightly held, illiquid shareholder base, later than evening Rick took me and others from the company to a beautiful Oriental restaurant where he and his partner, Kenny Hipkins, shared their golfing stories and listened to ours. When everyone was suitably relaxed and receptive, Rick deciphered for us some of the vagaries of the securities market and suggested ways that our company could increase its shares outstanding and attract a more diverse shareholder community. In this convivial atmosphere, Rick turned what had been an adversarial relationship between the exchange and our company into a partnership that respected one another's position.

What I didn't understand when I first met Beth and Rick was that a New York minute goes by in less time than it takes to snap your fingers. People who work in the city don't have time to beat around a blade of grass, much less a bush, so they've become highly efficient and to the point. They know who to go to, and they know how to get things done. Wired into a different language, they operate at a sophisticated level.

Every company and its shareholders benefit from this sort of direct and succinct approach. Beth and Rick both knew that, and they knew another secret—that it's so enjoyable working and dealing with smart people who are all on the same track, that, once taught, no one would willingly go back to their status quo.

Some people who own this sort of specialized expertise are condescending when they meet others who aren't merely a step slower but light-years behind. Not Beth and Rick. They were determined to teach me their shorthand so that I could be efficient too and so that all of our dealings with each other could be mutually enjoyable.

Travelling to New York City has become a regular occasion for me and I look forward to it. I'm not the same person that hurtled into town on her first trip—for every illegal cab driver I now know there are thousands of wonderful people. Unfortunately, Beth and Rick, two of the kindest and smartest among them, are gone. They had everything to live for: Beth had recently been named Vice President of Investor Relations for eSpeed and was engaged to be married; Rick's business was doing well and he was newly married. Lost among the ashes, they'll never again help someone learn to love New York City and its people, but everyone who knew them will remember them forever.



[[Up](#)] [[Editorials](#)] [[Columns](#)] [[Arts](#)]

Word Worth Publisher: [M H Perry](#) Senior Editor: [Susan Johnson](#) Editor: [Marien Helz](#) Associated Editors: [J Aurelia Perry](#) [Scott H H Perry](#)
Contributors: [Banwell Goddard](#) [David Clark](#) [Tiffany M. Stuck](#) [Wayne Johnson](#) [Alastair Reid](#) [Pei-Hua Chiang](#) [Ilina Sen](#) [Ruth Hitchings](#)
Distinguished Selections: [Hale Chatfield](#) [Armin W. Helz](#)

©2002



Word Worth®—Online monthly magazine of Ideas & the Arts



The Morning After

by Ruth Hitchings

"I'll see you to the train at St Davids," said my mother, "then I'll go and pick up a couple of ounces of wool at Bobby's. I've got the coupon." She added, "poor Exeter got it again last night. We could see the sky lit up and hear the thumps."

We caught Hart's bus at the foot of the hill in Budleigh, I in my V.A.D. uniform on my way back to Windsor. The bus was almost empty and everyone seemed subdued. At Woodbury we were stopped by a policeman and he and the driver talked quietly for a few minutes. "I'll go as far as I can," said the driver to us, "but it might be better if you got out and caught a bus back."

"I have to get my train," I insisted, "my leave's up."

"And I really do need the wool to finish my jumper," said my mother.

Everyone else got out and we completed the twelve miles by a circuitous route ending at Cowley Bridge.

"You'll have to walk from here," our driver told us.

We walked to St David's Station along an empty silent road.

The Station Master was adamant. "There are no trains running, and when they start these people have priority."

We saw that the platform was covered with bundles of humanity such as we'd already seen on the Pathe newsreels of civilians escaping before the advancing forces on the other side of the Channel. Not much in the way of suitcases but bags and greatcoats, clothes tied into counterpanes, headscarves hiding their misery or faces staring blankly into an uncertain future. No-one standing, little groups sitting on the ground not talking, utterly exhausted.

"But I must get back," I insisted. Bombs I could take, but the thought of Matron's reaction to me being late terrified me.

"Try again tomorrow," suggested the Station Master kindly.

We walked on up the hill. Someone had fixed a piece of fluttering paper onto a lamp post—it was a list of already identified casualties. The quiet was uncanny, only a few figures who seemed to be slipping like alley cats down side streets. There was evidence of the night's action, but it wasn't until we got to the end of Queen Street and turned into the High that the full horror struck us.

For High Street had virtually disappeared. Where during the previous year I had rushed up and down with my fellow students talking and laughing, there was an eerie avenue of rubble. It was even difficult to identify many of the plots for what the bombs had missed the fires had destroyed. The timber framed house where Prince Rupert was supposed to have stayed during the Civil War when the City reaffirmed her motto of *Semper Fidelis* was gone. It had been a bookshop for years—fine books on the ground floor, poorer on the second overhang and fascinating detritus even higher. Always a stand of penny and tupenny literature by the open door. It must have burned like a torch.

And Lyons where for a shilling one could get a meal and a better one for one and sixpence. Where we penniless students had to remember not to catch the eye of the cheerful old tramp who would come in for a cup of tea and then get the nippy to bring his bill to the most sympathetic looking customer—where was Lyons?

And then Dellers, grand and wonderful Dellers, more than a cafe, an institution. A must for families who had been to the Pantomime or been taken to admire the Giraffe in the Museum. Dellers was massive and strong, Italianesque, with an orchestra and a balcony decorated with painted stucco bambini and bunches of grapes, where one could sit in the boxes while boys tossed paper pellets to the unseen girls on the other side. Dellers could not have disappeared, but it had and nothing that had been in it was identifiable.

We picked our lonely way among the rubble and sick at heart turned to come back. I grabbed my mother's arm and pointed. Lying in the street was a heap of knitting wool that someone must have tried to salvage before the fires took over. It was tangled, dirty, soaked and grey, but it was the very wool my mother had hoped to get.

"Take some," I said, "it's only thrown away."

My mother looked at me and shook her head. "I couldn't—it would be looting."

We turned into the Cathedral Close. The Cathedral seemed almost untouched, but the Archdeacon's Close had been gutted. What had happened to the two Miss Smiths who used to entertain us in their upstairs room? A mobile canteen had been set up and women were serving mugs of tea to a few fire fighters, wet, dirty and dispirited, so tired that they could hardly stand, the lines in their faces emphasized by ash. It was opposite what had once been a shop which sold antique jewellery. On the pavement were scattered broken brooches and trinkets which were being crushed underfoot. No-one could be bothered to pick them up.

It was May 4th 1942, the morning after the Blitz on Exeter, and nothing would ever be quite the same again.

[[Up](#)] [[Editorials](#)] [[Columns](#)] [[Arts](#)]

Word Worth Publisher: [M H Perry](#) Senior Editor: [Susan Johnson](#) Editor: [Marien Helz](#) Associated Editors: [J Aurelia Perry](#) [Scott H H Perry](#)
Contributors: [Banwell Goddard](#) [David Clark](#) [Tiffany M. Stuck](#) [Wayne Johnson](#) [Alastair Reid](#) [Pei-Hua Chiang](#) [Ilina Sen](#) [Ruth Hitchings](#)
Distinguished Selections: [Hale Chatfield](#) [Armin W. Helz](#)

©2002



Word Worth®—Online monthly magazine of Ideas & the Arts