

Reckoning

When a student's isolation and angst
 manifested as violence and rage
 The Hokie's buried 32 young stars.
 Their light extinguished in their prime.
 We bathed in a sociopaths manifesto,
 while seeking someone, anyone, to blame.

Still, it is a beautiful world.

When Katrina came crashing against our shores,
 and the enormous weight of her water
 came crashing through the levees.
 We watched in terror as death tolls rose to 1,836,
 and civilization came apart at the seams .
 Listening as evil preachers said it was divine punishment,
 watching as authorities failed to deliver relief.

Still, still I remind myself, it is a beautiful world.

When the Earth shifted one inch to the side,
 trying to rub an itch it couldn't quite reach.
 Water's life giving hands clenching into fists,
 and mercilessly pounding shores.
 Its fingers digging through sand and dirt,
 dragging 230,000 souls back into suffocating blue silence.

Still, is it a beautiful world?

When transportation was transformed into a weapon,
 America found itself digging through the twin's remains.
 We collectively mourned 2,751 civilians taken before their time.
 Then we found ourselves responsible for nearly 100,000 civilian deaths,
 and General Franks said,
 "We don't do body counts"

Still, still I wonder, is it really a beautiful world?

Michael Beatty