

Old Glory

By Laurie Bonventre

I am the witness.
Flying above shattered glass and twisted steel,
In the smoke of the World Trade Center.
Over firehouses of grieving heroes.
On the porches of women and children...looking...hoping.
I am tattered, torn, but I endure.
I am the witness

I am the record.
My stripes bear the scars of war.
The red of freedom, hard won, of quiet resilience.
The white of courage and of fear,
in the face of a fight that seems impossible.
My stars bear the names of the ones lost in the fight.
The ones who gave without regret.
I am the record.

I am the inspiration.
Held aloft by Marines at Iwo Jima,
In the face of insurmountable odds.
Waved high at Ground Zero by firefighters,
A reminder that even a devastating hit does not mean defeat.
Echoes of courage inherited through the centuries.
I am the inspiration.

I am
(And there I will remain
Tattered...scarred...resilient...steady)
Old Glory.