

DEATH COMES

by Karen Jeffery

Death comes crashing, senseless, crazy
Into twin towers
During morning rush hour

It comes quietly
In hushed sobs
Over a phone line at midnight

Death wails in the ashen face of a mother,
Softens as friends scatter leis
with prayers,
Remembering her honey-haired boy

Death sits by the bedside of my patient,
Being patient
Until the daughter arrives

Death rushes in with an earthquake
To shatter whole communities,
Taking thousands

Or one by one,
waiting in the shadows
Until the knife is plunged

Death speaks to
Old people, waiting...
Surprises bright-eyed youths

Death runs rampant in war,
Howling like the crack
Of bullets entering bone

It floods over coastal bayous,
Drowning sweet boys and girls
Without thinking twice

Spins daisy chains in old folk homes,
Whets its appetite on newborn flesh,
Then carries them into light

Death comes in the look in a friend's eyes
On a rose-colored dawn,
Before her steps reach my verandah

Death caresses the limbs
of the terminally ill,
Then rocks them gently to sleep

Death comes in an early June
When my boyfriend dies suddenly
And years later I still ask God, "why?"

My dad dies
My children's dad dies
And something in us dies a little too.
But far more lives on...because of them

Death closes chapters
But the stories go on,
Relentlessly, inexorably
Bigger than all deaths

Sacred, timeless immortality waits
In the embrace of friends...and memories
There are universes beyond the reach of death