**A Cool Death in Black, White, and D’Ambrosio**

There is no need to imagine the attack of 9/11. Video clips of the event resurfaced as recently as 3 days ago on the *infamous twitter account*. Yet, describing the interior of the World Trade Center that day would be like describing a painting blindfolded: nearly impossible.

To the mind of someone too close to the event (my mother, the ever-consistent patriot) or too far from it (my mind, unawake at age 1) the gravity of 9/11 disallows poetic parallels. Yet in *Shades of Grey in Philipsburg*, D’Ambrosio does just that. He likens the falling of the World Trade Center to the failing of society, and, to the falling mill (two dead kilns, no?). He is mining metaphor, wrought with viscera experienced by a nation, to analogize the scope of poetry. The Twin Towers were symbolic of the hierarchy of Western civilization in a way that mining towns never were; The death of the Twin Towers was brutal, the death of mining towns, natural.

“In the case of Philipsburg, only a poet spoke out, from his own isolation, to say something about devastating pain.” D’Ambrosio moved to Phillipsburg because a poet wrote about a dying town. We, the Nation, went to war in response to a highly poetic attack on western values. The difference is the type of death, not the gravity. In aligning these two ideas, D’Ambrosio has not lessened the scope of 9/11, but heightened the scope of poetry.

The immensity, the calamity, the sheer magnitude of 9/11 is imbedded deeply in the minds of those who were conscious enough to experience it. In the years since it’s passing, a well-meaning sense of unity has become cliché: Answer, quick! exactly where were you and what you were doing? And now, a mere 18 years later, clichés are the only means by which the event is conveyed. My own and only knowledge of the attack is from my mother: she was at school. Thus, I hesitate to characterize the event in any of my own terms. I will not appropriate adjectives to serve an event I have never known. I will not re-open a wound I was absent for the creation of, nor will I bandage it too neatly. My perception is obfuscated by the clouds of misinformation, mischaracterization, and media. On an edge, I am unsure on which floor I stand. There is a danger in falling. So, I can make space to speak to what it has become now, unmarred by the shrapnel of hate, but blinded by the plumes of ignorance.

In my youngest years, I was full of unanswerable questions: *Who? What?* *Why?* Once a year, adults around me would explain who was responsible, and what took place. But *why* seemed to be tied, inconceivably, with *who*. As my burgeoning consciousness bloomed further into what I like to think of as awareness, I began to notice an undercurrent of subtext: a black haze of hatred and violence against *other*, unrecognizable as it masqueraded on news and in class as patriotic. And I began to see that “hatred organizes space.” And I watched the threads of vengeance leading overseas, tangled in hate or boredom, which D’Ambrosio and Hugo both rightly claim as causal.

*In boredom, we become victims of a sameness within a hierarchy whose original principle of design was a now-forgotten, vestigial loss of proportion*

Boredom didn’t kill the Philipsburgs of America, obsolete design and unmoving indifference did. Indifference in the face of and for the sake of progress, and in that progress, we have found hate. For proof of hate, I look no further than my screen. I am left with today what I can only imagine is the residual. The *infamous twitter account*. The response to the response to hate. *The Mother of all Hate.*

So now, at the bottom of everything (and yes, I suppose, the bottom of the World) I will leave you with the impression I was left with, both from the words of Hugo and the words of D’Ambrosio. They are colors, coinciding with the trauma points of 9/11. Failed love *white* failed spirit *blue* and failed society *red*.