

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Elegy for a Scrap

By Barbara Siegel Carlson

Where did the scrap of paper come from
to land here on this rug,
its feathery fiber stranded
from what seed to bloom
into sapling and leaf
that opened when a mother gave birth,
the child laid warm
and wet at her breast?
Long after the tree was cut open,
the sap oozed, seeping into the ground.
While the tissue was pressed into paper,
light left the heart

of seven-year-old Yusof
who, after eating a banana
and kissing his father
goodbye, was found in the rubble.
And twenty-year-old Shira
whose name means song.
And thirty-year-old Lurin who went
to take a shower, pray and rest.
“Struck while praying,” her fiancé said.

Each scrap reveals an unseen world
when it appears at a moment
like the lady’s slipper
hidden in the woods

that looks like a human form, its leaves
like outstretched arms, its blossom
a dark and secret perfume, sprouted
from the forest of ashes, voices and stars.

In a dream I was rapping
on my father's door.
But it was bolted.
When I looked down
I saw a hole in my chest
where so many scraps have vanished,
and one was trying to sing.