

I share with you some thoughts I wrote down this April as I drove with the workgroup into the lower 9th ward....

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I stand in the midst of bones  
the bones of the houses of the lower 9<sup>th</sup> ward  
    the weathering, bleaching skeletons of  
    homes passed down for generations  
I imagine the water yards above my head  
    I see the people huddled  
    on the buckling roofs –  
        reaching up to heaven  
            reaching up to helicopters  
                reaching up to us

“Save us...

we are terrified,  
    we are hungry,  
    we are thirsty,  
    we are devastated,  
    we are numbed with all we've lost  
        we are forgotten in the machinations  
            of ruthless politicians

I hear their echoes reverberating through my whole being

~ ~ ~

And even **now** their voices are raised from the bridges of their lives  
    from Baton Rouge,  
        from Metairie  
            from Seattle, San Diego  
                Houston, Springfield

They wait on a bridge  
    they are *frightened* for their lives  
        *longing* for community  
        *crying out* for friends and families  
        *longing* for schools and churches  
        *longing* for rivers and bayous  
        *longing* for city streets  
                            and sounds of music

**Today** they thirst  
    **today** they hunger  
        **today** they are lost

Waiting on bridges....

~ ~ ~

And we – do we still not run to their aid?  
Do we forget to notice their pain?  
Do we turn to the comforts of our daily  
routines to dull the echoes?  
Do we still leave them on what were to be only  
temporary bridges of shelter  
leave them– longing, thirsting, striking out?  
Can we look around us here,  
in this moment,  
at what seems so solid, enduring, secure  
and even now not see the vulnerable  
fragility we share?

~ ~ ~

God, give us voice to add to theirs.  
Wrap us in love and clarity as we turn and look  
toward the unimaginable loss  
and growing anger  
Give us vibrant hearts  
and strong hands  
and clear voices  
Help us not to look away, but rather ...  
- to slake the hunger,  
- to ease the thirst...  
They wait for us on bridges...  
- their pleading echoes from the rooftops...

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