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Memorial Day 1995

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MEMORIAL DAY 1995

by Viki Spencer Pettijohn

The fireman's big arms enfold
A tiny broken body.
The photo shows his tender
Anguished gaze,
The look of utter
Helplessness to mend
The little life.
He carries her in his arms
In an immortal moment;
He will carry her
In his dreams
All his life long,
And so will we all
In Oklahoma.

A mother hugs the men
Who tried to help her child;
A nurse receives
A dying baby,
Leans close to hear
The faintest cry for help:
"Mama..."
That tiny sound rings
Through the state.
Bell-like, booming
In our hearts.
The nurse will hear it as long as she lives,
As so will we all
In Oklahoma.

In uniform,
The Marine met death
At his post —
A good soldier to the last.
The workers found him
Finally
In the rubble
Still at the desk
Where he worked each day.
So many soldiers, sailors, pilots
Before him did the same,
Met death at their posts with honor
And resolution.
They served and sacrificed
To the last moments of their lives;
The nation remembers them,
And so will we all
In Oklahoma.

Not all soldiers are men
In navy blue and olive drab.
Not all wars are declared.
Sometimes our forces are
Little children
Who send teddy bears,
Or musicmen who give
Their songs,
Or strong Oklahoma women who quilt
Their faith and love for others
Into being.
Sometimes our wars are waged at home
Against all that is dark
In the human spirit.
And the uniforms change to firefighter yellow
Or surgical whites and greens.
Some forces wear no uniform that
Anyone can see —
Except love.
And they will feel the power
Of that love
All their lives.
And so will we all
In Oklahoma.