*“To shut your eyes is to guess nothing of blindness. Beneath your world of skies and faces and buildings exists a rawer and older world., a place where surface planes disintegrate and sounds ribbon in shoals through the air”*

*-*Anthony Doerr in *All The Light We Cannot See*

Occurring in September of 2001, the 9/11 terrorist attacks wreaked havoc upon the lives of American people, causing us to reevaluate our identities and the morals that we believe in. While time moved on, it soon became apparent that our world would never be the same. Since, a rise in terrorism can be noticed, and has inadvertently changed our lives in every possible way. Being a college student, my perspective is extremely limited considering that I was very young at the time of the attacks. To get a better understanding, I set out to interview people of different age groups to get a reading of their thoughts about our culture and how it has fluctuated. Although it may be considered a convenient sample, I decided to interview different members of my family. A collection of illustrations describing post-9/11 life follow, with each addition representing a different perspective and its subsequent values. A family, united by blood, separated by view.

**A Reflection of Post-Terrorism World**

By Jacob Compton

*The Wave of Sadness*

The waves crash behind me, the sound filling my ears. A curious rumbling that envelopes into a whirlwind of excitement. I should feel something; some inkling of emotion that shows me that I am alive, or at least an existence. However, there’s nothing. My insides are silent, an eternal absence. A bright light begins to surround my gaze, and I glance towards the water; not knowing what or who this intrusion is coming from. In the middle of the water stands a man; by looking at his clothes and skin, I can tell that he’s a sailor. His face is covered entirely by the shadow of the lantern held in his hand. I stare, strangely not frightened by the sudden appearance of this figure. With the strength of a little child, he slowly raises his arm and beckons me to follow him.

PART ONE

*The Strength of the Hopeless*

The time is not quite 9am. The windows in our room echo with the rays of sunshine that bellow through. My eyes widen at the TV screen, the smoke filling my surroundings. It’s as if I can smell the horrible odor of it all. I glance over at the crib in the corner of the room, and then revert my attention back to the reporter currently talking. She’s walking down the streets of New York, well actually engaging in a half-trot. Her hair flutters in the wind, a beautiful mix of blonde and brown. *I wonder where she had that done,* I think. Her lips are colored a soft maroon, which perfectly matches the tone of her sweater. Her mouth is moving, but her voice is drowned out by the sounds occurring around her. This is the event she’s been waiting her whole life for, her one shot. *Too bad*. I turn the TV off and walk over to my beautiful angels. Their arms and legs are linked together, a result of being together for nine months. I don’t know how to protect them from this, but deep down, I know that there’s nothing I can do. The world they grow up in will be something that I never had expected; one in which might alter their very existence. If I had known, would I have kept them? How were we supposed to know?

*It’s all about the Radicals*

I slowly open the doors, one by one for the arriving visitors; each person wearing their impurity upon their face. “Good morning, sir” and “Welcome, ma’am” are the only things that I can think to say. The sharp rise in attendees has caused the ushers to set out as many folding chairs in the back and even in the hallway as they can; protruding into the common spaces of the church. It’s been like this for a couple of weeks, now. Foreign faces fill my view, and I’m almost dissatisfied at the outcome. More people need to be here, to repent through the grace of the Holy Gospel. This was prophesied, you know, in the Bible. *It was bound to happen, at some point.* I look around the building, trying to find a familiar face. I see her instantly, her smile radiating through the pews back at me. She is chatting with some of her friends, an everyday task that almost seems inappropriate, or at the very least inconsiderate. *That’ll never stop her,* *she’s always been one to go against the grain,* I notice. The lights flicker on and off, and I mentally check the stability of my legs, hoping that they make it through the service. There’s nowhere to sit, so I guess I’ll just have to stand.

*My Savior*

Each day, my mind races through the pictures of the dead. The daughters, sons, mothers, and fathers; all taken before their time. The teardrops slowly fall from my eyes, caressing my cheeks in a soft manner; *we see you*. I lean over to the dresser cabinet, on my right, and open the first drawer from the top. Inside lays my family Bible; a book that has traveled through generations of kin. Opening the cover, I run my fingers over the names of my relatives, assuming a mark of remembrance for each in my mind. *I won’t let you go.* I won’t. He will get us through this catastrophe. I have hope.

PART TWO

*Out of the Black*

I can’t bring myself to enter the darkness. The unknown terrors haunt me. I glance through the window and fail to find distinctive differences between the trees and people. They all look the same to me; definitive threats to my safety. I should really start taking my medications again, but the rush leaves me in an even more confused state. The doctors can’t find anything wrong with me but tell me that my condition is a result of a traumatic event. Everybody is scared nowadays, I tell them. Who knows when the next bomb will go off or when the next building will collapse? It’s better to stay inside where its safe, at least for a little bit. Until the darkness begins to creep indoors, that’s when we’ll have to worry.

*Deadly Force*

My fellow officers and I were told exactly what to do. If any person come near the power plant and refuse to leave, deadly force must be placed upon them. No exceptions shall be granted. It’s been a couple days, now; surrounding the nuclear plant as if a secret treasure were hidden inside. Because constant surveillance is required, I’m not allowed to leave. My wife and kids are back home, and I wish that I could let them know that I am safe. I wish I could do a lot of things, but now that is not possible. My job will revolve around one duty, to find the threat before it surfaces. Sounds impossible.

*The Kids are Gone*

The quiet creeps into my thoughts, slowly. As I sit on the porch steps of my childhood home, I reminisce about the olden days. My brother and I would play for hours in the backyard and on the streets, creating games from the imagination of our minds. Now, the streets lay barren; no shadows dance across the pavement. Instead, the children stay inside, caging their inner thoughts and inadvertently ridding themselves of their innocence. It’s a generational shift in perspective, but I still think that something is missing from today’s youth. The poor kids.

PART THREE

*The Indifference of a Generation*

The world revolves; each day a continuation of the last. A never-ending carousel. I’ve noticed that this is a sentiment that has lost meaning nowadays. In actuality, everything has lost meaning. Conspiracies have forced us to distrust those around and disbelieve in the notion of hope. My generation denies the past; hoping to create a brighter future despite this dejectedness. We believe that tomorrow will bring better times, a promise that is false in every way. Going through every mindless activity to get through each day, this is our resort. Leaving our eyes on the forward enables us to lose a perspective; one of those lost. However, I find myself falling into this thought cycle. Every rotation of the sun brings many tragedies; robbing our nerves of their ability to feel. Nothing is surprising, as death is inevitable. Nobody can save us, nor should they.

*A House Divided Will Not Stand*

At this point, another attack will occur. We are a wounded country, and many cracks can be seen throughout our surface. It’s only just a matter of time. Apathy has ruined our perspective on those that matter, on those that pose as a threat. We’ve truly let our guard down, and one day we will pay the price. Every day, I see people take for granted our promise of safety. They recklessly live their lives, as if nothing could ever happen to them. Well, I’m here to say that this is false advertisement. We don’t know the day or the time, but something will come. `1