

# Peshawar kids

*by* Rachna K.

I see them gasping for breath,  
the ink still wet on their notebook,  
now streaked with blood.  
Light headed, they try to focus  
on the dark faces as their classroom  
perishes into a cloudy graveyard.  
I weep for humanity and wonder  
if the chubby girl on the left,  
remembered her mother holding  
her mittens this morning or if  
the skinny, dark boy smiled thinking  
of his favorite lunch waiting at home.  
If her grip on the pen is still firm,  
if his answer is on the paper yet.  
If the burden of these small souls  
is too much for the earth to bear.  
I wonder if they've forgiven us  
for bringing them where there  
is so little laughter and love,  
and so much hurt.

