

9/11

by Susan Gibb

He laughs and runs just like the other boys even though he doesn't have a father now, just his mom. Wild-eyed, big-grinned, crazy-legged games of tag with hands held open at the ready. On a schoolyard in Missouri, grassy brown and littered with the colors of September, he is happy, unaware of any threat except for maybe Brandon who's a bully and likes to pick on younger kids.

Something needles through the moment and he slows and for a moment stops and listens. Eyes dart at the subtle hum that only he can hear off in the distance. Shoulders pull together at an imagined rush of wind that brings the scent of smoke so strong he holds his nose. Brown-black curly head dipped down, he cringes as a plane glides overhead. Sometimes his friends will tease him but most times they somehow know and don't, remembering what Miss McCallum told them about that picture in their history book. About that day.

He's just a little boy and he was only two all those years ago in New York City.

