

THE TRUTH OF CONSEQUENCES

Foreseeable or not, it made us
wince the way that Kennedy's
public murder made us wince.

We headed for home exactly
as we did four decades back.

We sat like mutes before
a screen and watched.

And watched.

Overnight, the President renamed
America the "Homeland."

Travail

and travel by air became
one and the same.

Architects
competed to design the ultimate
memorial.

Pulpit and public
oratory droned like Muzak
on demand.

Attempting to assuage,
one mayor noted that three
thousand victims numbered less
than one month's highway deaths
across the country...

But nothing
could blur the filmed moment
of impact, the slowly buckling
floors and girders and glass,
a blizzard of papers swirling
in smoke, and finally two people
out of thirty-nine who chose
to jump instead of burn— a man
and woman, probably co-workers,
plummeting together hand-
in-hand from the hundredth floor
to ground zero at thirty-two
feet per second per second.