

An accounting
—for the victims of the Triangle Factory Fire, 1911
(from words gathered at the Triangle Coalition launch, 3/24/09)
—Adelphi University Students and Faculty

Look up
and count
eight floors high.

100 years ago
146 beloved children
some young men
mostly
young women
from other lands.
young
women's hands
in search of music
like the songs I play
e' la dolce vita

Women's hands
at the feet of liberty
dedicated to family
women's hands
sewing
paving the way
erasing a border
dreaming
a better life.

yet overlooked,
as just hands
women's hands
—until too late.

Bound inside
working hands
dreams of hope
locked away
hands
troubles ignited.
The history of the laboring.

Cries for help
dreams ignited
women falling

closed eyes, open arms
sisters together, scared mothers, women's hands.

More could have got out.
They didn't tell us.
If these stones could shout.

We know the number
146
death too soon.
But how may we ever count—
years of life
or years stolen?
potential?
generations?
The fire never dies.

To remember
one must learn:
women's hands count
laboring hands count
every body
her dream
the music
my mother Anna
each family
my grandmother's cousin Rose
Women even today in sweatshops
on Lower Broadway.
They count.

A circle, hands joined.
Beloved.

Lizzie
Anna
Annina
Rose
Vincenza Yetta Bessie
Jacob Morris Gussie Rosie Sarah Ida Ada
Laura Tessie Francesca Josephine Albina Rosina Michelina Josie Clara Nettie Celia
Rebecca Daisy Jennie Molly Esther Lena Bertha Dinah Rachel Fannie Pauline Becky
Benjamin Kate Lucia Sadie Julia Antonietta Freida Emilia Israel Theodore Santina
Sarafina Violet Golda Margaret Isabella
Dora Simie Unknown Unknown Unknown Unknown——

Account for All.