Shabbat Ki Tavo/17 Elul 5777
September 8, 2017

Dear Shir Tikvah:

Looking at the faces of people devastated by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, by the floods in South East Asia, by the mudslides in Central and South America, by the wild fires in the west; by cruel politicians in Washington, D.C., by the conflicts in Syria and South Sudan and Myanmar and so many places on our planet; looking at the faces of DACA community members, my heart shattered this week. I wrote the follow poem/prayer/mediation for each of us whose tender hearts feel busted by the forces of the universe and who need a little extra gentleness this Shabbat.

How do you pick up the pieces of a shattered heart?
It isn't the smoothness of beach sand running
through your fingers
or the sweetness of spring daises
or grasping the sticky hand of a toddler.
The pieces of a shattered heart are
jagged like broken shards of a soda bottle
or ruins of ancient memorial temples
and agonizing arrows used as weapons to seek and destroy.

How do you pick up the pieces of a shattered heart?
Tenderly
Softly
With the wisdom of hands weathered by grief
and tears who illuminate
what lies deep beyond the eye's horizon,
With laughter and fingers
who have picked up dirt and
hurled it onto caskets
And with sorrow that chokes the gut and
heaves the lungs like polluted urban trails
and airplane cabins who lose cabin pressure in an instant.

How do you pick up the pieces of a shattered heart?
With the passing of the midnights into mornings
where dry toast is no longer bitter on our tongues and
oxygen is once again breathable and
redemption might be possible because it keeps creeping in to the crevices of our knuckles and
the tendrils of our knees
and with the steadiness of those who hold the truth
that in the wilderness of midnight
emerge a few brave souls
who might gather the shattered pieces of our hearts
into hands strong enough to wake the dawn.

How do you pick up the pieces of a shattered heart?
With the only thing that ever matters.
Love.

Shabbat Shalom,
Michael