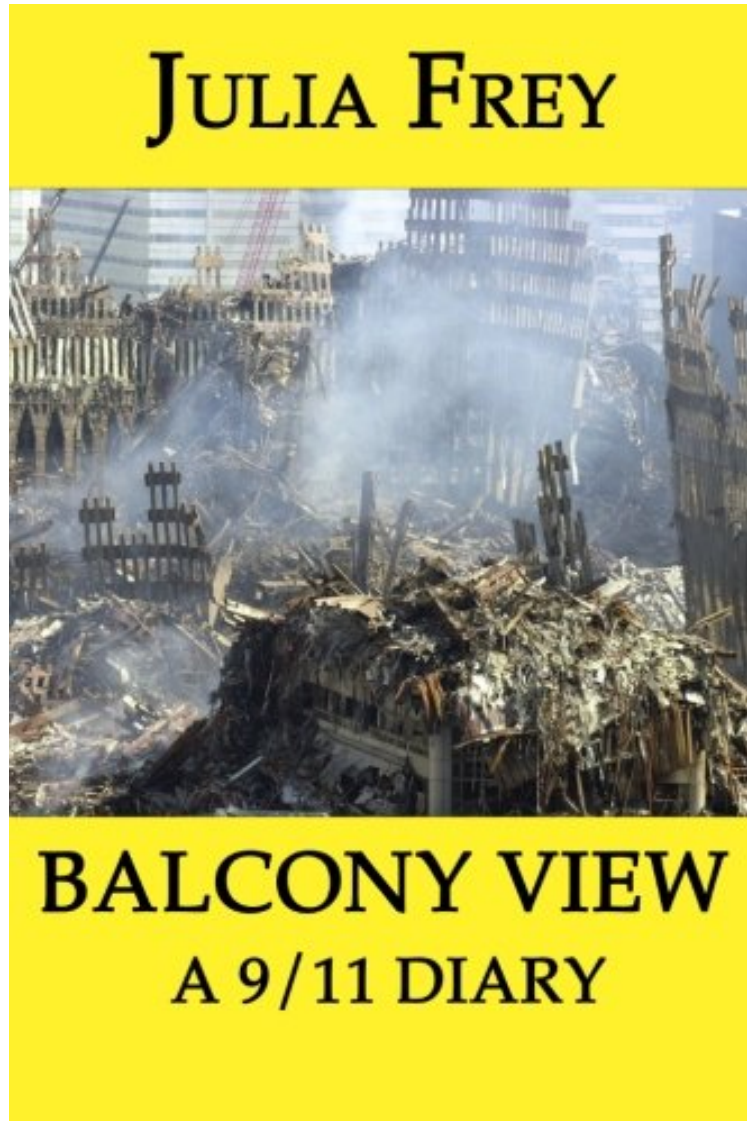


[Download] Balcony View - a 9/11 Diary

Balcony View - a 9/11 Diary

Julia Frey

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Julia Frey : Balcony View - a 9/11 Diary before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Balcony View - a 9/11 Diary:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. the ripples of 9/11 affected so many By yakkityWow what an 'in your face' experience to have one of the worst disasters happening outside your window. This was an amazing recollection of what one woman experienced of 9/11 who lived almost on top of ground zero. How she was reminded every single day of what had happened and what was still happening as the rescue effort changed to body retrieval. I was

particularly touched when she wrote of seeing the rescue personnel treating the remains with so much respect. This was an enormous shock to the whole world but it was happening outside this woman's window and she had a disabled husband as well to consider. I felt I was privileged to be allowed to share her journey through her diary during this time. Thank you Julia for allowing me to look through your eyes for a short time in history.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. So much more

By Roger R. Baumgarte Just one glance at the book description of *Balcony View: A 9/11 Diary* and it would be easy to expect another sad 9/11 tale, made even sadder by the fact that the author was the primary care-giver of her severely disabled husband. But Ms. Frey's story offers so much more. It is breathtakingly dramatic, written with a style that instills the reader with a keen sense of empathy for the unique challenges she and her husband faced that day and for the months that followed. It is a love story, one with some surprising developments and baffling paradoxes. Without giving too much away, there is a love triangle, with all the competing loyalties and jealousies such arrangements can't avoid. While some may be tempted to pass judgment on the author, no one could deny that she tells it all, without inhibition or excuses, with candor and charm that often left me smiling, and just as often left me in tears. It is a story of survival, loyalty and striving to do her best, while agonizing over the grander questions in life, pitting devotion to a loved one against the need to hang on to one's own sanity and well-being. All of this against the backdrop of collapsed towers, lived out in full view of glaring lights over mountains of debris from which bodies were continuously unearthed. Yes, it is a sad story, but so much more than that.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. MOVING ACCOUNT OF A TERRIBLE TIME

By Ruthanne A very powerful and private account of an interesting couple facing health and financial uncertainties as their lives are further complicated by the disaster of 9/11. The author's courage and resilience surprise even her (though people who know her are not so surprised.) The descriptions of the daily work to survive and to maintain a meaningful life as her husband is gradually and certainly dying, and the city itself seems on the verge of failure, are vivid and honest. Those of us who did not live in New York and knew little of life there after the first few days get a searing look at the weeks and months that followed. It is an upsetting and ultimately hopeful view of life in crisis.

What if you had a dying child, spouse, lover, parent, and the world caved in? It could happen. What was it like, after the Towers fell, to live in a war zone with a gravely ill husband? Julia Frey's *BALCONY VIEW* is far more than a 9/11 story. In this unique, historic diary -- the handwritten original is in the 9/11 Museum in New York -- Frey, a distinguished biographer, found herself in the unenviable position of writing about a life as it was falling apart -- her own. Her vivid, wry, tender book describes living for six months at Ground Zero with writer, Ron Sukenick during his terminal illness. It's a beautifully written, clear-eyed portrait of simple courage, remarkable humor, generosity and decency.

Douglas Penick, writer, literary critic The view from this balcony is compelling and utterly unique. Julia Frey has a first row seat for the two tragedies which mark her existence -- the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and her husband's progressively disabling malady. She peers down at the excavation of Ground Zero and brings us an account both riveting and thoughtful, despairing and buoyant, graceful and frank. As she navigates post-9-11 Manhattan, and a marriage that has been dealt the blow of untimely illness, we get to see, up-close, how ordinary people get through extraordinary times. With her deft touch and her sharp-warm humor, Frey is the perfect guide for such daunting territory.

Elizabeth Scarborough, author: *Phoenix, upside down* Very quietly Ron said, You know, I think the Towers are going to go. Maybe we'd better get out of here. If either of the Towers fell at a certain angle, our building was directly in the line of fall. Above the raging flames, the steel I-beams were beginning to bulge out, softening in the heat. Again his unnaturally quiet voice, I can't stay here. If the Towers start falling on us, I'll die of fright. (*BALCONY VIEW - a 9/11/ Diary*) Julia Frey's remarkable account begins on September 11, 2001, as the couple decide that no matter how weak Ron is, they must somehow flee. They abandon his wheelchair. He is too frail to climb on a boat. Later that day, covered with ashes, they struggle home through a neighborhood pitched into destruction and chaos, to look out his study window at their new view: the stage-set for Dantes *Inferno*. The domino effect of one burning, collapsing building setting fire to the next one makes it clear that their own building could still go. The electricity was out. Ron could never go down 26 flights on his rear end. We were trapped in the sky. That's when Julia decides to write it all down -- if only for the people who will find their bodies. Describing the first night in the ruins, being evacuated, then returning weeks later, to live at Ground Zero, she discovers that their world has totally changed, yet finally not changed at all. Our previous problems didn't magically disappear. They were just waiting for us to come back in the door. This hugely powerful narrative of double coping -- with Ron's progressive illness and with the after-effects of 9/11 -- describes a situation the manuals don't cover -- caregiving in a disaster. Her intense yet humorous you are there style moves the diary swiftly along, catching us in a gripping, touching, brave, and yes, funny story of falling towers, a failing husband and a floundering marriage. Nothing happens in a vacuum, she says, weaving in the leitmotif of a love affair. Unflinchingly, she faces the ruins outside and her frightening, inner ambivalence as she sacrifices creative and professional life to nurse her husband. Ron is no angel either -- the self-centered, willful novelist insists she take a lover, then wants her to give him up. What makes him think he can turn us off and on like televisions? she wonders. In a poignant Coda, she describes an almost supernatural series of events after Ron dies. There is even a happy ending.

About the Author Julia Bloch Frey was born in Louisville, KY in 1943. She attended Antioch College, the University of Texas at Austin and Yale University, where she earned a PhD in French literature. She was also trained in Paris as an artist and printmaker. During a 25-year academic career, she taught at Yale, Brown, Sarah Lawrence and the University of Colorado, where she is Professor Emerita. Her biography, *Toulouse-Lautrec: A Life*, won the 1995 Pen Center USA West Literary Award in Nonfiction, was chosen a notable book of 1995 by The New York Times Book and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in biography. In the UK it was chosen one of the best books of 1994 by the London Spectator and the outstanding art biography of 1994 by Apollo Magazine. It was a Finalist for the W.H. Smith Literary Award. She now lives in France. For more information see <http://juliafrey.blogspot.com/>