

MY HOME TOWN

by Mike McKeivitt, January 2013

We knew the storm was coming,
they tracked it on T.V.
they said "it's headed landward"
not blowing out to sea.
But we're a beach community
we've been through this before
a little inconvenience
nothing less and nothing more.
We stood up on the boardwalk
resolved to stay, not run
why all the fuss and worry
just a category one.....my home town

But soon it was apparent
something different was at play
with seven hours till high tide
the ocean reached Broadway.
As Sandy's fury peaked
aided by full moon and tide
we watched in total disbelief
and sadly stood aside.
It came in fast and steady,
three feet, four, or more
water rushing down our streets
flooding every home and store.

Some waded through the water
with darkness all around
seeking homes with second stories
or homes on higher ground.
It took about two hours
for the storm to have its way
the tide surge was completed
the ocean met the bay.
And as the tide receded
our homes, if safe, not sound
fires fanned by gale force winds
burned several to the ground.....in my home town

When we emerged at dawn's first light
the damages to ascertain
debris and sand everywhere
evoked a deep collective pain.
Power down, cars destroyed
we had no heat or light
our infrastructure shot to hell
just magnified our plight.
We had no gas to travel
Most couldn't come or go
Winter introduced itself
And covered us in snow.

They slapped us with a curfew
to keep us safe at night
while choppers over head did aim
their shining beams of light.
The National Guard and Red Cross
their help appreciated
of 40 thousand residents
one half were dislocated.
You couldn't find professionals
to pump, rip out, or fix
and the city's ruptured sewer pipes
just added to the mix.

We couldn't wash and couldn't flush
just ask anybody
how reluctantly we stood on line
to use the port-a-potty.
No heat, no light
no water, no food
no telecommunication
existing in the cold and dark
summed up our situation.....in my home town

But something else emerged that day
a force no storm could sweep away
a city spirit that bonds us all
to rise as one and heed the call
No longer Me, now it's We
who struggled through this mess
to help our neighbors in time of need
brought out the very best.....in my home town

On the corners in the West End
where people chose to meet
to laugh and joke and conversate
while getting something hot to eat
And OH our precious ice rink
"relief central" for the town
providing clothes, supplies, and food
where volunteers abound.....in my home town

And in the days that followed
as service went back on
our efforts turned towards cleaning up
and repairing all the harm.
So now we're on the rebound
we've all be through the test
re - energized and strengthened
less post traumatic stress.

Nature came and taught us
a lesson we had to learn
DO NOT FORGET! BE PREPARED!
You know she will return.....to my home town