

'Learning the Tender Gravity of Kindness'

Reflection for Week of August 3, 2020

May we be conscious of the transformative power of sorrow that softens our hearts toward kindness.

Suggested Music: [Let Your Beauty – Margaret Rizza \(click here\)](#)

Kindness

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

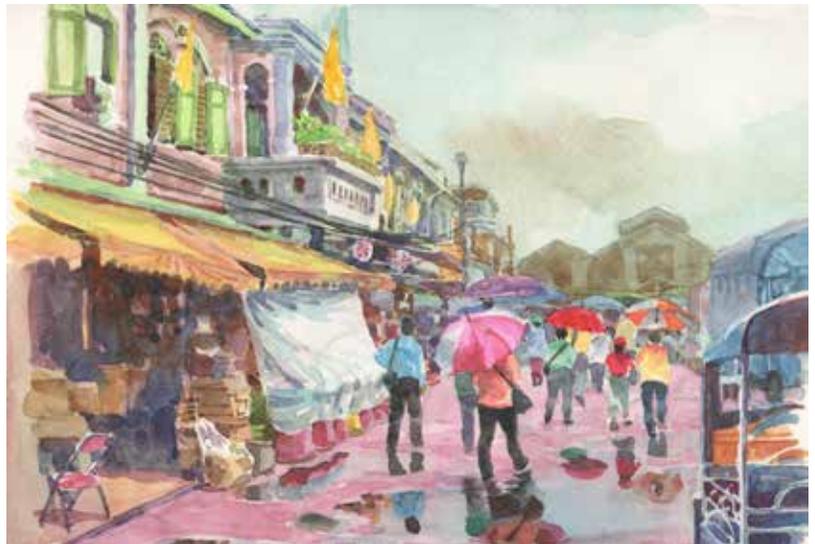
Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes

and sends you out into the day to
mail letters and purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

-- Naomi Shihab Nye

The Holy Spirit produces a different kind of fruit: unconditional love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
-- Galatians 5: 22-23



For Your Reflection:

Recall moments when you know both sorrow and kindness during these last months.

Having experienced both sorrow and kindness as “the deepest things inside,” how might you incorporate some practice of kindness toward others in your own life, believing that acts of kindness can change the world?

Concluding Prayer

O God, help us to bear gracefully our own sorrow and the sorrow of the wider world. May that sorrow help us to deepen our appreciation of kindness and be sources of kindness to others. Amen.