

“All Kinds of Love Sunday, 2020”

Poetry Selections

Rev. Lynn Harrison
First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto
9 February 2020

“Celebration” by Mari Evans

I will bring you a whole person
and you will bring me a whole person
and we will have us twice as much
of love and everything

I be bringing a whole heart
and while it do have nicks and
dents and scars,

that ony make me lay it down
more careful-like

An; you be bringing a whole heart
a little chipped and rusty an'
sometime skip a beat but
still an' all you bringing polish too

and look like you intend
to make it shine

we be bringing, each of us
the music of ourselves to wrap
the other in

Forgiving clarities
Soft as a choir's last
lingering note our
personal blend

I will be bringing you someone whole
and you will be bringing me someone whole

and we be twice as strong
and we be twice as true
and we will have twice as much
of love
and everything

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“I Wrote a Good Omelet” – Nikki Giovanni

I wrote a good omelet...and ate
a hot poem... after loving you
Buttoned my car...and drove my
coat home...in the rain...
after loving you
I goed on red...and stopped on
green...floating somewhere in between...
being here and being there...
after loving you
I rolled my bed...turned down
my hair...slightly
confused but...I don't care...
Laid out my teeth...and gargled my
gown...then I stood
...and laid me down...

To sleep...
after loving you

§

“If” by Paul Dunbar

If life were but a dream, my Love,
death the waking time;
If day had not a beam, my Love,
And night had not a rhyme, --

A barren, barren world were this
Without one saving gleam;
I'd only ask that with a kiss
You'd wake me from the dream.

If dreaming were the sum of days,
And loving were the bane;
If battling for a wreath of bays
Could soothe a heart in pain, --

I'd scorn the meed of battle's might,
All other aims above
I'd choose the human's higher right,
To suffer and to love!

**From “The Drum Major Instinct”
Martin Luther King, Jr.**

If you want to be important—wonderful.
If you want to be recognized—wonderful.
If you want to be great—wonderful.

But recognize that he who is greatest among you
shall be your servant.

That’s your new definition of greatness.

And this morning, the thing that I like about it...
by giving that definition of greatness,
it means that everybody can be great.

Because everybody can serve.

You don’t have to have a college degree to serve.
You don’t have to make your subject and your verb agree
to serve.

You don’t have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve.
You don’t have to know Einstein’s theory of relativity
to serve,

You don’t have to know the second theory of thermodynamics to
serve.

You only need a heart full of grace.
A soul generated by love.

And you can be that servant.

**“When Someone Deeply Listens to You”
- John Fox**

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you’ve had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.

When it balances on top of the brim,
you are understood.

When it overflows and touches your skin,
you are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem
begins to glow in your mind’s eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you
your bare feet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

§

From “Thirsty: Part 1” – Dionne Brand

This city is beauty
unbreakable and amorous as eyelids,
in the streets, pressed with fierce departures,
submerged landings,

I am innocent as thresholds
and smashed night birds, lovesick,
as empty elevators

let me declare doorways,
corners, pursuit, let me say
standing here in eyelashes, in
invisible breasts, in the shrinking lake
in the tiny shops of untrue recollections,
the brittle, gnawed life we live,

I am held, and held

why, the touch of everything blushes me,
pigeons and wrecked boys,
half dead hours, blind musicians,
inconclusive women in bruised dresses
even the habitual gray-suited men with terrible
briefcases, how come, how come

I anticipate nothing as intimate as history

would I have had a different life

failing this embrace with broken things,
iridescent veins, ecstatic bullets, small cracks
in the brain, would I know these particular facts,

how a phrase scars a cheek, how water
dries love out, this, a thought as casual
as any second eviscerates a breath

and this, we meet in careless intervals,
in coffee bars, gas stations, in prosthetic
conversations, lotteries, untranslatable
mouths, in versions of what we may be,

a tremor of the hand in the realization
of endings, a glancing blow of tears
on skin, the keen dismissal in speed

§

“I’m Really Very Fond” - Alice Walker

I’m really very fond of you
he said.

I don't like fond.
It sounds like something
you would tell a dog

Give me love
or nothing.

Throw your fond in a pond
I said

But what I felt for him
was also warm, frisky,
moist-mouthed
eager

and could swim away
if forced to do so

“A Poem Of Friendship” – Nikki Giovanni

We are not lovers
because of the love
we make
but the love
we have

We are not friends
because of the laughs
we spend
but the tears
we save

I don't want to be near you
for the thoughts we share
but the words we never have
to speak

I will never miss you
because of what we do
but what we are
together

§

“All Souls” – May Sarton

Did someone say that there would be an end,
An end, Oh, an end, to love and mourning?
Such voices speak when sleep and waking blend,
The cold bleak voices of the early morning
when all the birds are dumb in dark November—
Remember and forget, forget, remember.

After the false night, warm true voices, wake!
Voice of the dead that touches the cold living,
Through the pale sunlight once more gravely speak.
Tell me again, while the last leaves are falling:
“Dear child, what has been once so interwoven
Cannot be raveled, nor the gift ungiven.”

Now the dead move through all of us still glowing,
Mother and child, lover and lover mated,
And wound and bound together and enflowing.
What has been plaited cannot be unplaited—
Only the strands grow richer with each loss
And memory makes kings and queens of us.

Dark into light, light into darkness, spin.
When all the birds have flown to some real haven,
We who find shelter in the warmth within,
Listen, and feel new-cherished, new forgiven,
As the lost human voices speak through us and blend
Our complex love, our mourning without end.

“Touched by an Angel” - Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight

live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies

old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.

Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity

In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave

And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.

Yet it is only love
which sets us free.