

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP SESSION
"COMMON THINGS"
First Universalist Church UU, Auburn, ME, Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING

A long opening poem to set our memory in motion, to loosen the images of the “things” we have come to treasure -

MUSINGS

I have a crazy,
crazy love of things.
I like pliers,
and scissors.
I love
cups,
rings,
and bowls –
not to speak, or course,
of hats.
I love
all things,
not just
the grandest,
also
the
infinitely
small –
thimbles,
spurs,
plates,
and flower vases.
Oh yes,
the planet
is sublime!
It’s full of pipes
weaving
hand-held
through tobacco smoke,
and keys
and salt shakers –
everything,
I mean,
that is made
by the hand of man, every little thing:
shapely shoes,
and fabric,
and each new
bloodless birth

Ode to Common Things by Pablo Neruda

of gold,
eyeglasses
carpenter’s nails,
brushes,
clocks, compasses,
coins, and the so-soft
softness of chairs.
Mankind has
built
oh so many
perfect
things!
Built them of wool
and of wood,
of glass and
of rope:
remarkable
tables,
ships, and stairways.
I love
all
things,
not because they are
passionate
or sweet-smelling
but because,
I don’t know,
because
this ocean is yours,
and mine;
these buttons
and wheels
and little
forgotten
treasures,
fans upon
whose feathers
love has scattered
its blossoms
glasses, knives and
scissors –

all bear
the trace
of someone's fingers
on their handle or surface,
the trace of a distant hand
lost
in the depths of forgetfulness.
I pause in houses,
streets and
elevators
touching things,
identifying objects
that I secretly covet;
this one because it rings,
that one because
it's as soft
as the softness of a woman's hip,
that one there for its deep-sea color,
and that one for its velvet feel.
O irrevocable
river
of things:
no one can say

SILENT REFLECTION

CHECK-IN: (40-50 minutes)

FOCUS: "COMMON THINGS"

"Ode to French Fries":
What sizzles in boiling
oil
is the world's pleasure.

"Ode to a Chestnut on the Ground":
perfect
as a violin that has just
been born in the treetops
and falls
offering the gifts locked inside it, its hidden sweetness.

o this is
the moral of my ode:
beauty is beauty
twice over
and good things are doubly
good
when you're talking almost a pair of wool sock
in the dead of winter.

that I loved
only
fish,
or the plants of the jungle and the field,
that I loved
only
those things that leap and climb, desire, and
survive.
It's not true:
many things conspired
to tell me the whole story.
Not only did they touch me,
or my hand touched them:
they were
so close
that they were a part
of my being,
they were so alive with me
that they lived half my life
and will die half my death.

DISCUSSION:

LIKES AND WISHES

CLOSING WORDS:

Pablo Neruda's "Ode to Clothes," is the harmonious and interdependent relationship the poet enjoys with his clothes:

and so,

clothes,

I too go forming you, extending your elbows, snapping your threads,

and so your life expands

in the image of my life