

Transience v. Immortality

Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Bremerton, WA, Rev. Liz Stevens, 2006-2007

Opening Reading: The Gift by William Stafford

Time wants to show you a different country. It's the one
that your life conceals, the one waiting outside
when curtains are drawn, the one Grandmother hinted at
in her crochet design, the one almost found
over at the edge of the music, after the sermon.

It's the way life is, and you have it, a few years given.
You get killed now and then, violated
in various ways. (And sometimes it's turn about.)
You get tired of that. Long-suffering, you wait
and pray, and maybe good things come – maybe
the hurt slackens and you hardly feel it any more.
You have a breath without pain. It is called happiness.

It's a balance, the taking and passing along,
the composting of where you've been and how people
and weather treated you. It's a country where
you already are, bringing where you have been.
Time offers this gift in its millions of ways,
turning the world, moving the air, calling,
every morning, "Here, take it, it's yours."

Discussion Questions:

What of us lasts, even after we die? What doesn't? How does paying attention to the difference change our living?

If you only had one day left to live, how would you spend it? If the world were ending in a day, what would you do? Is there a difference? Why?

What do you carry with you as legacy from your ancestors, good and bad? What do you hope to leave for future generations?

Closing Reading:

Hold on to what is good
even if it is
a handful of earth.

Hold on to what you believe
even if it is
a tree which stands by itself.

Hold onto what you must do
even if it is
a long way from here.

Hold on to life even when
it is easier letting go.

Hold on to my hand even when

I have gone away from you. -Nancy Wood, *Singing the Living Tradition* #688