



Navigating the Road to Renewal - Poetry from 2018 Retreat

What to Remember When Waking

In that first hardly noticed moment in which you wake,
coming back to this life from the other
more secret, moveable and frighteningly honest world
where everything began,
there is a small opening into the new day
which closes the moment you begin your plans.

What you can plan is too small for you to live.
What you can live wholeheartedly will make plans enough
for the vitality hidden in your sleep.

To be human is to become visible
while carrying what is hidden as a gift to others.
To remember the other world in this world
is to live in your true inheritance.

You are not a troubled guest on this earth,
you are not an accident amidst other accidents
you were invited from another and greater night
than the one from which you have just emerged.

Now, looking through the slanting light of the morning window
toward the mountain presence of everything that can be
what urgency calls you to your one love?
What shape waits in the seed of you
to grow and spread its branches
against a future sky?

Is it waiting in the fertile sea?
In the trees beyond the house?
In the life you can imagine for yourself?
In the open and lovely white page on the writing desk?

~ David Whyte ~



A Blessing for One Who Is Exhausted

(We shared the bolded text. This is the entire poem.)

When the rhythm of the heart becomes
hectic,
Time takes on the strain until it breaks;
Then all the unattended stress falls in
On the mind like an endless, increasing
weight,

The light in the mind becomes dim.
Things you could take in your stride before
Now become labor-some events of will.

Weariness invades your spirit.
Gravity begins falling inside you,
Dragging down every bone.

The tide you never valued has gone out.
And you are marooned on unsure ground.
Something within you has closed down;
And you cannot push yourself back to life.

You have been forced to enter empty time.
The desire that drove you has relinquished.
There is nothing else to do now but rest
And patiently learn to receive the self
You have forsaken for the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken
And sadness take over like listless weather.
The flow of unwept tears will frighten you.

**You have traveled too fast over false
ground;
Now your soul has come to take you
back.**

**Take refuge in your senses, open up
To all the small miracles you rushed
through.**

**Become inclined to watch the way of
rain
When it falls slow and free.**

**Imitate the habit of twilight,
Taking time to open the well of color
That fostered the brightness of day.**

**Draw alongside the silence of stone
Until its calmness can claim you.
Be excessively gentle with yourself.**

Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.
Learn to linger around someone of ease
Who feels they have all the time in the world.

Gradually, you will return to yourself,
Having learned a new respect for your heart
And the joy that dwells far within slow time.

--[John O'Donohue](#), from "Blessings"