LENTEN READING

WELCOMING BLESSING

When you are lost
in your own life.

When the landscape
you have known
falls away.

When your familiar path
becomes foreign
and you find yourself
a stranger
in the story you had held
most dear.

Then let yourself
be lost.
Let yourself leave
for a place
whose contours
you do not already know,
whose cadences
you have not learned
by heart.
Let yourself land
on a threshold
that mirrors the mystery
of your own
bewildered soul.

It will come
as a surprise,
what arrives
to welcome you
through the door,
making a place for you
at the table
and calling you
by your name.

Let what comes,
come.

Let the glass
be filled.
Let the light
be tended.
Let the hands
lay before you
what will meet you
in your hunger.

Let the laughter.
Let the sweetness
that enters
the sorrow.
Let the solace
that comes
as sustenance
and sudden, unbidden
grace.

For what comes,
offer gladness.
For what greets you
with kindly welcome,
offer thanks.
Offer blessing
for those
who gathered you in
and will not
be forgotten—

those who,
when you were
a stranger,
made a place for you
at the table
and called you
by your name.

—Jan Richardson
from *The Cure for Sorrow:*
A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief