



Some Days

“The way to heaven is not through the clouds. It is in the joy with which you look at the world despite your pain and sorrow.”

“Beata Viscera,” Perotin. c. 1200-1225

Some days, most days, since my friend Cynthia died, I wake and think: no more shelves to dust, no more deodorant to buy, no more bras to put on, no more wood to haul, snow to shovel, cars to maintain, bills to pay, smiles to smile, teeth to brush, no more no more. If I die at the same age as Cynthia, I have nine years still to have to clean the house, wash the dishes, do the laundry, bathe, shop for groceries, cook, feed the cats, mow the lawn, dispose of garbage, pay taxes, and, if I want to feel healthy, exercise. Sometimes I think I can't do these simple tasks one more day. And then I think about a poem Cynthia assigned in her “Introduction to Literature” class. It was about washing dishes. What it was truly about was that if you can't find pleasure and joy in daily chores, you won't be able to experience all the joys, big and small, that life has to offer. And yet, on days when I wake to a loss of joy—deadly shootings at schools, girls abducted to become sex slaves, more wars being made by men, another inane tweet—I remind myself to be grateful for another day that I can read another book or article or email from a friend that found its way to me.

“Perhaps there is some secret sort of homing instinct in books that brings them to their perfect readers. How delightful if that were true.”

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society