



Clarity of Hindsight

BY LISA DOEGE, MINISTER, NORA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, HANSKA, MINNESOTA.

Knowing what you now know, would you do it all over again? Whatever it is. Marry your spouse? Pursue your career? Buy that house? Go to that college? Enlist? Join the Peace Corps? End that relationship? Plant that crop? Invest in those stocks?

Novelists often make use of foreshadowing to hint at dramatic turns still to come. Movie makers use music in the same way. *Da dum da dum da dumdadumdadum*, from *Jaws* is perhaps the most familiar example. Life, on the other hand, doesn't usually provide such advance notice.

Attention. Heart attack in 45 days. Attention. You'll meet your life partner in this class. Attention. Your child will come home from school with pink-eye tomorrow. Attention. Your position will be downsized before the end of the quarter. Put it on your calendar.

Life isn't a novel or a television show and doesn't come with a musical score. And really, aren't we better off this way?

Our species would have died out long ago if prospective parents had absolute foreknowledge of middle-of-the-night fevers, toddler tantrums, and teen attitude. What decisions would farmers make if they knew in advance that this is the year the drought would be too deep or that a tornado would crisscross the county, leaving their fields in ruins? Who can afford to throw away seed that will not produce a crop? But who can afford empty fields?

None of us knows exactly what our life or even our day will hold, or how our decisions will shift and shape the hours and days and years yet to come.

twenty years you would grow into a strong and confident and capable adult, because of, not despite, the marriage? That you would meet and love people you never would have met outside of that marriage. That you would have children—precious, irreplaceable children—with that partner. And yes, then after twenty years, you would divorce. What then? With that sort of foreknowledge? With the *dadumdadumdadum* of impending divorce woven with lulls of lullaby and the triumphant strains of *Pomp and Circumstance*?

Without a musical score, without an author tossing in a bit of subtle or heavy-handed foreshadowing, we make our own ways through life. Some of us sense meaning in our lives and make life decisions accordingly. Some of us believe that if life has meaning at all, it is something we impose on it, and we make life decisions accordingly. Some of us wake up each morning and say, "I wonder what life will bring today!" and make life decisions accordingly. But none of us knows exactly what our life or even our day will hold, or how our decisions will shift and shape the hours and days and years yet to come.

Deciding to marry is daunting enough knowing the divorce rate is about fifty-percent. What if you knew that the marriage you were contemplating was destined to be one of those that fail? Well, that seems like a no-brainer. You probably wouldn't marry. But what if you knew it would fail after twenty years, but also knew, without a doubt, that during those

Quest

Vol. LXVIII, No. 7

July/August 2013

There are always
flowers for those who
want to see them.
—Henri Matisse

A monthly for religious liberals

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Life, as far as we know it, is an unfolding of a series of endless possibilities. I believe that we would be paralyzed by any certain foreknowledge of how any one of those possibilities would ultimately unfold. And I believe that such foreknowledge would negate our freewill. I believe that Kierkegaard's observation that "*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards*" is a gift. It frees us to live, to determine our own paths, to take risks and to trust the future.

Because only hindsight is 20/20, because life can only be understood backwards but must be lived forwards, because most of us are never given a vision of the date engraved on our tombstones or the events of our deaths, we get to decide how we will move through our years and in what spirit:

Will we throw up our hands, saying, *It doesn't matter what I do because I will never know the outcome until it is too late anyway?*

Will we embrace what comes as a grand adventure, eager and curious about what meaning we may be able to glimpse near the end of our days, looking back upon our lives?

Will we trust that there is a thread pulling us along and stringing together the hidden meaning of our days, and, resting on that trust, move deliberately, thoughtfully through our years, pausing at strategic times to listen and watch before staying the course or choosing a different path?

There may be blessing in each of these choices. Only I can know which is my way forward. Only you can know which is your way forward. But we can support one another in our choices. We can tell the stories and speculate about the meanings. And we can offer thanks that in the mystery of life's never-ending unfolding, possibility abounds for redemption, for surprise, for joy, for love's irresistible embrace. ■



Finding True Identity

BY TIM KUTZMARK, MINISTER, UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF READING, MASSACHUSETTS

Filled with the holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan

and was led by the Spirit into the desert. (Luke 4:1) He's really not much different from us, the man who walked deep into that desert. The one we call Jesus of Nazareth. He, too, was filled with questions. Who are we? Why are we here? Does our life really matter? He, too, knew uncertainty, anxiety, fear. He, too, looked out and saw a world that was changing far too fast, a world where the old rules seemed to give way to something yet to be defined.

He's really not much different from us, the one we call Jesus of Nazareth. He, too, wondered what he was meant to do with this life he was given. He, too, wondered if his work, his job, meant anything in the long run. He, too, yearned for real spiritual connection and a sense of community. He, too, wondered who he truly was. He, too, was getting older, and looked back at the life he'd already lived, and looked ahead to what might be and wondered what would happen in the small number of days still to come.

And so he did something that most of us don't do. Jesus left it all behind. He left family, he left home, he left life as he knew it. He walked deep into the wilderness. He entered the wasteland, to live within his questions, to earn his answers. There he waited, in heat, in sun, in stillness, in thirst, in hunger, in yearning. Days went by. Weeks went by. He was unshaven, unwashed, unfed, but unwilling to give up his need for an experience of the True. On the fortieth day in that desert, he awoke, too tired to demand, too tired to ask, too tired to search. All thoughts had been purged from his mind, save for

one word. Softly, he breathed his own name, his own true identity. The time to leave the desert had come.

In Sanskrit, our identity is called *Nam*. *Nam*, in its most functional translation, means "name"; it is the label we attach to identify something or someone. But *Nam* has a much deeper meaning than simply a surface name. *Nam* penetrates to the core of being. *Nam* is the essence of something.

Most of us tend to identify with the obvious surface of our lives. Most of us tend to identify with the way we feel at any given moment. Consider the thoughts that float through our head over the course of our day. We have thousands upon thousands of thoughts. I'm happy. I'm discontented. I know what's right. I'm not sure. I need to do that. I can't do that. I really want to eat that cookie. I really want to lose some weight. I'm bored. I have so much to do. I love you. I hate you. I miss you. Give me some space. I feel great. I feel lonely. My body aches. I'm looking pretty good. My wrinkles aren't going away. I can't get sick because I need to take care of things. When will he die? How will I die? Round and round and round.

Most of us identify with this commotion of emotion that swirls inside our head. We think that is who we are. And it is unceasing, isn't it? Thought after thought after thought, always shifting, changing, sweeping us into a new feeling. It is like a ride at the state fair. One of those rides that spins you around and around and around. You're pressed to the sides, the bottom drops away, and you just hang there, helpless in the endless whirling. The ancient teachers had a name for that whirling ride of the mind. They called it *chitta vritti*, "the turnings of thought."

But beyond the *chitta vritti*—beyond the constant change of our minds—there is *Sat*. *Sat* is a Sanskrit word meaning the absolute, eternal, unchanging Being. *Sat* is the reality at the root of ourselves. *Sat* is the stillness in the center of our storm. *Sat* is the stasis at the basis of life. Simply put, *Sat* is truth. Put *Sat* and *Nam* together and you get *Sat Nam*, which means “true identity.”

Spiritual teacher Philip Moffitt says:

Many people fail to distinguish between their true nature and their personality traits, particularly their less desirable traits. The fact is you are not the worst characteristics of your personality.....You may feel overwhelmed by the circumstances of your present life or bound by past traumatic events. Again, this is a failure in perception. They are just mind-states....They can be seen as impermanent and not belonging to you and, therefore, they do not ultimately define your true nature.

Think back to Jesus in the desert, worn and weary after forty days of searching. He crawls out of the wasteland back towards his home, his town. He knows he is unkempt and unshaven. He knows he is sunburned and parched. He knows he reeks from lack of bathing. He knows he is gaunt and half-dead, aged beyond his years. But he knows something else. He now knows who he is.

Yogi Bhajan Singh Khalsa, a yoga master from the Sikh tradition, says:

You are a human being. What does this mean? Let's break it apart. Hu/man/being. Hue means light; man means mind; being means now. Light. Mind. Now. Put it all together. Human being means: Now you are the mental light.... You are a living existence of light.... When you become light and you radiate, there is no darkness. A candle has one future: to spread the light.

A human being has one future: to spread the light. The job of the human

being is to radiate through the finite self the infinite light of love. As the ancient scriptures say: “In the end, three things will remain: faith, hope, and love. And the most powerful of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

The light of love is what burns within Jesus, the human being. The light of love is what burns within us.

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As Unitarian Universalists, we have, throughout our history, seen Jesus as human. We haven't made him God; we haven't made him a Christ; we have kept him fully rooted in the human world. We see him as a brother, as a teacher, as a great guide, a prophet. But with this humanist belief comes a responsibility. If Jesus was someone just like us—just like one of the guys, one of the gals—then what Jesus did, we can do. What Jesus did, we should do.

As he crawled out of the desert, something shifted within him. A moment before, he was a worn, broken wanderer. But as he returned to his hometown, he was transformed. He remembered his *Sat Nam*, his true identity. And so, on a day not unlike this one, Jesus walked into his town's synagogue, his house of worship. Standing on shaky but determined legs, he asked to recite the morning reading for the service. When the words of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah were handed to him, he unrolled the scroll, and then spoke. As a human being not so different from us, he could have spoken from his fears, his tears, his limitations. He could have spoken from his *chitta vritti*, the endless whirlings of his mind. But as a human being not so different from us, he chose to speak from the inner light that is beyond all that commotion of emotion. In a voice that gained power as he pro-

ceeded, he spoke aloud his *Sat Nam*, his true identity:

“The Spirit of Life is upon me,” he says.

Because Life has asked me,

Life has anointed me,

Life has called me,

To bring Good News to those who are lacking,

Good News to those who are poor.

Life has called me to proclaim liberty to those held captive,

Recovery of sight to those who are unable to see clearly,

And freedom to those who are imprisoned in body or in mind or in spirit—

I have come to proclaim a time of Love's favor.

I have come to proclaim a return to Love.

(Luke 4:14-10, adapted)

In a world that overlooked and marginalized the differently abled, the disabled, the poor, the sick, the vulnerable, the outcast, the homeless, the woman, the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, the laborer, the peasant, and the foreigner, Jesus was saying that the time had come for things to be different. The time had come to do things differently. “I have come to proclaim a time of Love's favor,” he said. With these words, Jesus claimed his true identity as one who stood with the forgotten on the side of love.

As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to reach beyond the turning of our minds, the *chitta vritti*, the whirl and twirl of chaos and confusion. We are called to be the conscience of compassion in this world.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells his followers: “Be compassionate as God is compassionate.” Biblical scholar Marcus Borg writes in his book *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*:

“Compassion means ‘to feel with’ ... Compassion means feeling the feelings of somebody else in a visceral way.... Compassion is...feeling the suffering of somebody else and being moved by that suffering to do something.”

Borg says that in Hebrew, “the word usually translated as *compassion* (love) is the plural of the noun that in its singular form means *womb*.” Jesus says: Be compassionate as God is compassionate. “To say that God is compassionate is to say that God is ‘like a womb,’ is ‘womblike,’ or to coin a word that captures the flavor of the original Hebrew, *wombish*.” And so, “for us to be compassionate is to be like a womb...it is to feel and to act ... in a life-giving and nourishing way.” It is to nurture and sustain life with, within and from our very being.

This is our true identity. This call to be a womb to the world, to nurture the world, is our true identity. This all-encompassing love that demands connection, relationship and action is our true identity.

Our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors believed in compassion. Our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors believed in love. They believed that we are called to become—like Jesus—fully realized, loving human beings. They believed that human beings have within themselves not original sin, but original blessing. They believed that if the original blessing within us is nurtured, we have the potential to create much good in the world.

Our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors believed that all human beings are worthy of love. They believed that we must act as if all human beings are worthy of love. They believed that we should live not in fear or judgment, but through love.

This is our inheritance. This is our vision. This is our true identity, as human beings, and as Unitarian Universalists. ■



Possibilities and Limits

BY **GEORGE TYGER**, UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST ARMY CHAPLAIN

We are on a dismounted patrol to the top of some ancient ruins. A short walk, but the ground is loose and steep. Rocks and dirt slide down as we walk up. The only way to make it up a steep hill while laden with gear is to look ahead but watch where you put your feet.

The same holds true when moving toward any goal in life. Becoming fixated on a goal to the exclusion of the present moment can cause embarrassing and injurious tumbles. But too much attention to the details without looking ahead can cause unnecessary detours. This is the balance of possibilities and limits. The possibilities: reaching the top, hitting on a great idea, realizing a vision of justice and peace, or just getting through the deployment and getting home. The limits: an uncertain course, unstable foot-

ing, the dangers of this place, waning physical and emotional stamina. We have hopes, dreams, goals we seek to make real in our lives. We struggle with fear, loneliness, hardship. We must navigate the obstacles while keeping our sights on all that is possible.

We crest the hill and stand atop thousand-year-old ruins. We look out across the city. Children play as well-armed soldiers stroll the streets. In the distance, the earth curves and the horizon falls away. So much possibility. So many limits. Where will we be six months from now? What is possible for our lives? Will we reach our homes safely? Whatever the answers to these questions may be for you, there is only one sure way forward—look ahead, but watch where you put your feet.

From War Zone Faith: An Army Chaplain's Reflections from Afghanistan, published by Skinner House in 2013, and available from the UUA bookstore (www.uua.org/bookstore or 800-215-9076). ■

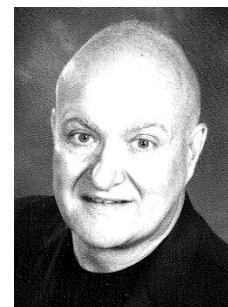
Solemn Te Deum for Peace

BY MARK BELLETINI, SENIOR MINISTER, FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF COLUMBUS, OHIO

Can you imagine it?
 Palestinians and Israelis settling down together
 in their common lands
 bound together by the silver covenant of Jordan,
 marrying each other,
 reading each other's books,
 singing each other's songs, laughing?
 Can you imagine it?
 Afghani pilgrims in turbans and tunics,
 women dressed with ancestral modesty,
 coming to Al Quds to bow at the site
 where Muhammad dreamt he leapt to heaven,
 nearby joining their *sabra* friends
 as *seder* guests?
 Can you imagine Judith and Bill Kaufman
 from Columbus, Ohio,
 living on that court not far from Aladdin's
 visiting their friends Omar and Fatima Al-Din
 in Baghdad, their pink-cheeked children
 joining in dancing till they're dizzy with joy
 under the backyard fig-tree
 while the grown-ups discuss the writings
 of Iqbal over fried artichokes?
 Can you imagine wide-eyed Cubans
 from La Habana vacationing in LA or Miami?
 And the other way around?
 Can you hear it?
 Tears lubricating the clatter of Spanish and
 English into laughter,
 no more the crack of ricochets
 breaking the earshot of those who now
 embrace shoulder to fleshy shoulder,
 with hands stroking backs fiercely,
 with deep and wracking sobs?
 Can you imagine it? Really, can you see it?
 The president of the United States
 extending a hand the color of Ethiopian coffee
 to sign her witness on the marriage certificate
 of her daughter Charlene to her partner Chantal?
 Can you imagine it?
 Not saying "I have no money to give you today"
 because no one has to ask?
 Can you imagine not having to fret
 about traveling here or going there,
 or wanting to slink past the man in the tarry coat
 asking for spare change?
 Can you imagine childcare and soulcare as if
 children and the spirit really mattered?

Can you imagine it?
 Can you imagine healthcare by healers
 instead of by insurance cartels?
 Can you imagine no one lying to you
 about their need for cocaine or Coors
 because addiction and all of its sources
 have been taken seriously?
 Can you imagine no one calling sex
 "dirty" or their foul moods "black"?
 Can you imagine no one hiding behind
 the safety of their guilt and blame?
 Can you imagine it?
 Can you imagine people not having to shout
 because they are already heard,
 or people going to work instead of overwork?
 Can you imagine it?
 When I fail to have this vision before
 the eyes of my heart, daily, hourly,
 written into my pulse and breath
 tattooed in them as a saving text,
 then come, Spirit,
 Purveyor of Peace, Paz, Paix, Pace,
 Friede, Salaam, Shalom, Mir,
 You Reality beyond doubt,
 Incandescent Nameless
 No Thing at the center of all things,
 and annoy me, burn in me, jar me, jostle me,
 overcome me, shake me, startle me,
 until I am willing to see what must be
 even more clearly than I see what is.
 And let me never be embarrassed by my vision,
 nor ever again confounded.

*From Sonata for Voice and
 Silence: Meditations, published
 by Skinner House in 2008 and
 available from the UUA bookstore
 (www.uua.org/bookstore or
 800-215-9076). ■*



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From Your Minister

BY MEG RILEY
SENIOR MINISTER,
CHURCH OF THE
LARGER FELLOWSHIP

In the dream, I am alone in a round stone tower. I do not want to be there, but I am trapped in its dark, damp, cold, airless space. And then, almost in a whisper, comes a soft voice, "Keep looking...there is a door...." And suddenly the door is there. I can see light, I can walk out. I am not trapped anymore.

Vision is what gets me out of the trap. The one with the voice knows that in what looks like a solid stone wall, there is actually a doorway. This is a dream fragment, but I have experienced the relief of finding my way out of many airless, closed rooms in waking life as well, because someone else could see a door I could not.

Vision is what gets me out of the trap.

These are the people with vision: the ones who see doors where others see only walls. The people with the boldest vision are the ones who actually walk through those doors that they see, beckoning to the rest of us who are back in the tower to see that we, too, could choose to walk out into the day.

I remember the first time I experienced this kind of leadership. I was in a justice-centered group which was sadly off-track, mired deeply into a fight—a fight complete with sides and self-protective armor wrapped around most folks to protect them from judgments as sharp as swords. And then, as we suffered in that cramped airless tower, one bold woman threw open a door that none of us had known was there. The key for opening it was to clearly state her grief at what was going on, and to state how sincerely she wished it were

different. Where we saw sides, she saw a roomful of people she loved, all of whom were suffering.

Was it her sheer bold loving, or our respect for her as an elder in the organization, or were we all just weary of fighting and looking for a door? I've revisited that moment many times and I still don't know why her words changed everything. I only know that suddenly the solid stone wall had a door in it, and the whole lot of us tumbled through it—everyone's anger turning to tears, longing, remorse. Once that door was open it was clear to us all that the anger was longing in disguise, a longing for connection and acceptance and to be respected. A longing shared by all, because suddenly we saw ourselves as she saw us—a roomful of beloved people, suffering.

I've been privileged to experience such bold leadership in action a number of times in my life—visionary leadership. It doesn't require degrees or titles or wealth or status or physical prowess. My first introduction to it, as a kid, was probably the story "The Emperor's New Clothes," in which a young child dares to trust and name what is visible to all, but spoken by no one else: that the vain emperor, believing himself clothed in a gorgeous new outfit, is strutting through town naked.

What does it take to be similarly bold, to trust and name what we see, whether others see it or not? Too many of us, told young that we must be imagining things, start to doubt our own vision and mute our own voice. I've heard family therapists say that if you want to hear what's true in a family, ask the three-year-old—they'll still speak up clearly. Later, almost everyone adjusts their own sense of truth to fit into the family.

There can be a price, of course, to claiming our vision. No matter what our age, others might say we're delusional, that what we claim to see is not real. In such cases our best choice is to stop listening to those people and walk

out the door. The fresh air and change of scenery will speak for itself!

"There are those who look at things the way they are and ask why.... I dream of things that never were, and ask, why not?" This quote from Robert Kennedy, Jr. was on my bulletin board when I was in Junior High, and to some extent it still exemplifies my greatest hope for my own life. What about you? What do you see that others don't? What do you dream of? What is your vision? What door do you see that others have missed, and how will you help them to walk through? ■

Thank You!

The CLF applauds the vision of the members of the congregations listed below. We are deeply thankful that they have chosen to hold special collections during their services to benefit the CLF's Prison Ministry. If your bricks and mortar congregation holds special collections, we hope you will consider joining them in supporting this life-changing ministry.

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West Shore UU Church ■*

REsources for Living

BY LYNN UNGAR, MINISTER FOR LIFESPAN LEARNING, CHURCH OF THE LARGER FELLOWSHIP



What if you had x-ray vision like Superman? What would you use it for? Of course, real x-rays let you see through skin and muscle to the bones underneath, but they wouldn't let you look through the walls of buildings to see what the villains were up to inside. But never mind. It's our game of pretend, and we set the rules. So what would you want to look at if you could see through any surface to get a clear picture of what was underneath?

You could see fish swimming at any depth, no matter how murky the water. You could see birds in trees, no matter how dense the leaves. You could see what your sister or brother (or child) was doing in their room after they told you to go away. You could look for gold or diamonds under the earth or find your missing sweat-shirt out of the pile of clothes without having to move things around. It would be awesome, although it could also be potentially embarrassing.

Of course, people who aren't superheroes—which is to say all of us—don't have this amazing ability. But we do have a different kind of x-ray vision that is its own kind of superpower. While we can't see objects that are hidden behind or underneath something else, we can see meanings that hide below the surface. We can look at tiny green buds along the branch of a tree and know that those little knobs mean that spring is on its way. We can look at a bank of fog coming over the hills and know that the weather is going to cool off. We can look at the tight face of a friend and know that although they say everything is fine, they really could use some support. We can look at a drooping plant and know that it needs water.

But our x-ray vision can help us see even deeper below the surface than

these straightforward predictions. We can hear a baby laugh and know that, for all its terrible tragedies, the world is a beautiful

place. We can look up into a sky full of stars and know that we are a tiny part of something more immense and complicated and creative than we can imagine. We can look into the eyes of a dog and know that love conquers all. We can witness a ten-year-old standing up to a bully and know, with Theodore Parker and Martin Luther King, Jr., that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Of course, we can't see these things with our regular eyesight, and so we can't prove that they are true in any scientific way. That's what makes this kind of seeing beneath the surface a supernatural superpower. Sometimes it's called *faith*. Now, I'm not a fan of the kind of religion that says that you have to accept things that simply aren't true as a matter of faith. It's not seeing below the surface to declare that the earth is only 6,000 years old because that's what it adds up to in the Bible, or that men have one fewer rib than women because God took a rib out of Adam to make Eve. You can hold fossils that are far, far older than 6,000 years old in your hand. Heck, you can see pictures painted by people in Spain something like 40,000 years ago. And you can use regular old x-rays to determine that men have just the



same number of ribs as women. Religion that asks you to believe in things that contradict the plain evi-

dence of science is just as much of a fantasy as a superhero comic book. The surfaces of things, what they really are, matters, and we don't do anybody any favors if we pretend to see something that simply isn't there. But in addition to seeing the truth about the surfaces, it's also possible



to see things that don't show up with our ordinary vision. We can look at a tadpole and see in its legless body and flipping tail the frog it will become. But we can also see in a tadpole the truth that every change involves some loss, and that every loss opens us to becoming somehow new. How a tadpole becomes a frog is science, what we learn through careful attention to what we see. The nature of change as expressed by a tadpole is religion, what we know by paying attention to what lies underneath what we see.



It turns out that a lot of real-life superheroes have this particular superpower. In the 1700s Universalist Judith Sargent Murray looked at what the world called "womanhood" and, unlike the rest of her society, saw intelligent human beings who deserved the same rights and responsibilities as men. In the mid-1800s Unitarian Dorothea Dix looked at the mentally ill and saw, not the surface that the world called "crazy," but rather the deeper truth of the worth and dignity of all people. In the mid-1900s Rachel Carson looked at what much of the world regarded as "natural resources," and saw an interdependent web of life in which all beings—people, plants and animals alike—depend on one another for their survival. Martin Luther King, Jr. saw the reality of oppressors and oppressed, but he also saw the deeper vision of brothers and sisters all connected by the love of God.

OK, there might be superpowers that you would rather have. It would be very cool to be able to stretch out your arms and fly, or swing from buildings on your spider webs, or see through someone's pockets to know what they are carrying. But as superpowers go, being able to find deeper meanings in the details of life isn't at all bad. At least this kind of superpower is available to all of us who are willing to take the time not only to look, but also to see. ■



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On Living (Part I)

BY NAZIM HIKMET (TRANSLATED FROM THE TURKISH BY
RANDY BLASING AND MUTLU KONUK)

Living is no laughing matter:
you must live with great seriousness
like a squirrel, for example—
I mean without looking for something beyond
and above living,
I mean living must be your
whole occupation.
Living is no laughing matter:
you must take it seriously,
so much so and to such a
degree
that, for example, your hands tied behind
your back,
your back to the wall,
or else in a laboratory
in your white coat and safety glasses,
you can die for people—
even for people whose faces you've never seen,
even though you know living

is the most real, the most
beautiful thing.

I mean, you must take living so seriously
that even at seventy, for example, you'll plant
olive trees—
and not for your children, either,
but because although you fear death you don't
believe it,
because living, I mean, weighs heavier.

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